



CABINET

Subject Heading:

Safeguarding adolescents from serious youth violence and exploitation in Havering

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Benham, Cabinet Member, Education, Children and Families

SLT Lead:

Tim Aldridge, Director for Children's Services

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

This report proposes a multi-disciplinary partnership approach, to tackle root causes by intervening earlier to safeguard young people vulnerable to a wide range of exploitation factors.

Financial summary:

This report recommends the creation of an integrated adolescent safeguarding approach, via investment of £750,000 over two calendar years (September 2019-August 2021) in Children's Services.

Is this a Key Decision?

This is a Key Decision on the grounds that expenditure is over £500,000 and has a significant effect on two or more Wards

When should this matter be reviewed?

Consistent with annual budget monitoring and annually at the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Reviewing OSC:

Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

- Communities making Havering
- Places making Havering
- Opportunities making Havering
- Connections making Havering

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SUMMARY

This report provides a proposal to establish a multi-disciplinary adolescent safeguarding approach to address serious youth violence and exploitation in Havering. This is a preventive, multi-disciplinary and long term approach to safeguard children and young people vulnerable to a range of exploitation factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

- i. Approve the approach outlined in the Report below and the request for resources allocated to Children's Services, to enable the development of a multi-disciplinary adolescent safeguarding approach to address serious youth violence and exploitation. This would be the mechanism through which to deliver the actions contained in the Serious Group Violence and Knife Crime strategy relating to children and young people, approved at Cabinet in April 2019.
- ii. Agree £750,000 funding over two calendar years (three financial years) over which time this approach will be fully evaluated and other (external) sources of funding can be explored. Following this, the service will be core funded from an allocation of demographic growth and a permanent budget adjustment to carry this work forward. Refer to financial implications and risks at section four.

REPORT DETAIL

- 1.1 Havering is increasingly seeing the effects of serious youth violence and gang activity impacting on our children and young people. Younger children across Havering are being exploited by criminal gangs and whilst we have improved our social work practice around familial safeguarding, sexual exploitation and children who go missing, this report is intended to reinvigorate our approach to "adolescent safeguarding" across a spectrum of 10-18 year olds (up to 25 with SEND) focussed on risk outside of the familial context. One of the key recommendations from the Ofsted inspection of June 2018 was to address our response to children at risk outside of the home.
- 1.2 Adolescent safeguarding makes greater connectivity between areas impacting the welfare of adolescents (exploitation, missing, serious youth violence, trafficking, harmful sexual behaviours and domestic abuse). The local partnership has been re-assessing its approach to addressing serious youth violence over the past few months.

- 1.3 At the Havering Safeguarding Children's Board in December 2018 a proposal was agreed, in principle, to develop a strategy which works across the partnership to develop a multi-disciplinary adolescent safeguarding approach to addressing serious youth violence and exploitation, managed by the Local Authority Children's Services Department. In terms of governance, monitoring of progress will take place consistent with the Children's Services improvement plan which includes addressing Ofsted recommendations (June 2018) relating to risks outside of the familial context.
- 1.4 The development of the adolescent safeguarding approach will better target young people at risk by refocussing our offer to be delivered in places where young people socialise. We have been successful with a funding bid to The Home Office in relation to youth crime and have "reached" over 2,000 children in schools with knife / crime safety workshops and assemblies since November 2018. Detail of projects and programmes dedicated to tackling serious youth violence are included at the foot of this report for information.
- 1.5 Late last year a knife crime all member briefing took place. A further event is planned for the summer of 2019. Later this year (around October) a violence reduction summit event will be hosted by Havering, including the boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge with representatives across the partnership.
- 1.6 In operational terms, early identification and increased support are key to increased likelihood of prevention of violence and criminal exploitation. Funding will be used to recruit specialist staff and commissioned projects and programmes for young people, in addition to training on safeguarding adolescents. Our approach will be as follows:
- Prediction- use of business intelligence and data from across agencies, held and analysed in one place, to identify risk factors much earlier and therefore be able to offer targeted support and engagement with children and families. We will respond to the needs of adolescents with SEND and mental health factors, who may be at higher risk of abuse. Other known risk factors include the use of social media and substance misuse by the young person and / or in the family.
 - Prevention- a universal offer to schools and communities, with some targeted engagement work for example to address prior trauma in a young person's life. We will respond to peer networks, pull factors, and the influence of individuals and groups that cause harm to adolescents and can increase the vulnerability in relation an increase in the risk of exploitation.
 - Intervention- specialist multi-agency interventions with young people and families, including speech and language support, CAMHS services, clinical psychology, targeted youth work, systemic work, police support, schools and other settings to work towards diversion and engagement.

- Disruption- there is still a need for enforcement in some cases and enforcement will be part of our multi-disciplinary offer and led by our policing partners and supported by our youth offending service.
- 1.7 This approach aims to ensure that adolescents are safeguarded from risks outside of family and home. It will maximise the use of intelligence to deliver prediction, prevention, intervention and disruption with a focus on earlier intervention (age 10+). This multi-disciplinary, integrated offer will support adolescents to improve their life chances and lead change in safeguarding culture and practice across the partnership. Further detail of the approach can be found on the diagram in Appendix One of this report.
- 1.8 With regards to staffing of the adolescent safeguarding team, most officers will be recruited (seconded) from existing teams in Children’s services. Health provision will be via recommissioned health posts (funded by the local authority and refocused to deliver to this priority). The additional resource subject to this report (£750k over three financial years) is required to: embed data analysis across the partnership to identify children at risk; recruit intervention-based staff to work with families and children at a threshold below statutory social care; two additional workers to engage with adolescents; and also to strengthen leadership capacity in this field.
- 1.9 The proposed funding will also enable packages of support for families and young people, such as diversionary activity. These will be commissioned from local providers as consistent with the local authority’s procurement arrangements. These projects and activities will be informed by engagement and consultation with young people over the summer of 2019 and ongoing. The model of operation for the adolescent safeguarding approach is outlined in the diagram at the foot of this report.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

- 2.1 Whilst Havering remains a London borough with a relatively low rate of crime, the types of crime involving the exploitation of children and young people (youth violence in particular) have increased in recent years. The number of victims of reported serious youth violence in Havering has risen in recent years, to levels similar to neighbouring boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge.
- 2.2 The published Ofsted ILACS report (June 2018) contained a recommendation to improve safeguarding practice related to risks present outside the familial setting.
- 2.3 The aim of the multi-disciplinary team is to use business intelligence for earlier identification and intervention for children and families, for children as young as 10 years old. The approach will deliver a trauma-informed practice and look from a “contextual” safeguarding perspective, working across

partnership agencies. An additional two specialist youth roles will target interventions for young people at risk, based on data and intelligence. This approach will work with families, not just young people, and include schools, police and health input. Mental health screening in particular will be embedded in the service, to screen for neurodiversity at a younger age than at present.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 3.1 A significant risk at this stage is that the successful implementation of an integrated team would be curtailed without an adequate resource allocation, both inside the local authority and across the partnership. External partners (police and health in particular) are diverting resources to support the development of this approach. Subject to deployment of additional Safer Schools officers, we are working with the police to target this resource in areas of most need. In addition, there are projects ongoing commissioned by the Safer Neighbourhood Board and the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime such as Sparks2Life and Advanced Minerva, in addition to the Early Intervention Fund (via MOPAC) which prioritise this agenda. Refer to Appendix three for examples.
- 3.2 A further significant risk is an escalation of demand, should we not identify and intervene earlier with younger children and their families. An enforcement approach is more costly and does not offer the opportunity to deliver improved outcomes for young people.

4 Financial Implications and Risks

- 4.1 A business case has been presented and approved to provide corporate funding over two years of the programme (£750k total). However, this will likely be required into the third financial year due to the implementation period, with £146k being required in 2021/22 as a result of likely slippage.

	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2021/22 £000s	2022/23 £000s	Total £000s
Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Adolescent Safeguarding	254	350	350	350	1,404
Funded by:					
Corporate Business Risk Reserve	(254)	(350)	(146)	0	(750)
Approved growth from prior yr				(204)	(204)
Available Funding / (Deficit)	0	0	204	146	350
Additional Growth request / Efficiencies / External grants	0	0	(204)	(146)	(350)
Net Funding / (Deficit)	0	0	0	0	0

4.2 A formal MTFs request for growth in 2021/22 (£254k) and 2022/23 (£146k) underpins the long term viability of the proposal.

4.3 A bid, and successful application, to the GLA Young Londoner's Fund, could divert investment on areas contained within this proposal into the grant funding, especially given the high profile nature of this initiative.

5 Human Resources implications and risks

5.1 There are some HR implications in relation to the review and/or re-alignment of the teams to enable better collaborative working arrangements across Children services and external partners which may result in restructuring proposals and if applicable be managed under the council's Organisational Change process. Training for all partner staff should be arranged to raise awareness of the Council's revised offer. If specialist skills are required, the service should consider offering this training to existing staff, including this in the restructuring proposals, recruit externally or resource via the partnership arrangement. The service will also need to consider how the hub will be managed in terms of staffing and working hours in the proposals.

6 Legal implications and risks

6.1 The Authority has a number of statutory duties to children and young people who are the intended recipients of the targeted intervention and support described in this Report.

6.2 These include :

- Section 17 Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need

- Sections 10-11 Children Act 2004 to ensure that its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to promote cooperation between the Authority and its relevant partners to ensure that children's well being is improved.
 - Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1989 to exercise its functions with due regard to the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and re-offending
 - Section 507B Education Act 1996 to secure sufficient educational and recreational leisure time activities for relevant children and young people.
- 6.3 The proposed actions are an overarching response to these duties predominantly to strengthen the early intervention and social care response and there are no apparent legal implications in increasing the funding for these activities. The changes proposed to the youth service in this report are relatively minor and therefore do not trigger a consultation duty.

7 Equalities implications and risks

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:
- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
 - (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

- 7.2 Exploitation of young people directly impacts on community cohesion and the general sense of wellbeing. Therefore, our work on adolescent safeguarding will be an integral component of our community cohesion agenda. An impact assessment has also been completed in relation to adolescent safeguarding and can be found at Appendix four.
- 7.3 The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

Appendices

- Appendix one: Integrated adolescent safeguarding model
Appendix two: Safeguarding Adolescent Safeguarding high level plan
2019-20
Appendix three: Existing programme and projects addressing serious youth
violence
Appendix four: Equalities impact assessment

