



Keeping young people safe from harm and abuse in the community



Easy read booklet

What this booklet is about



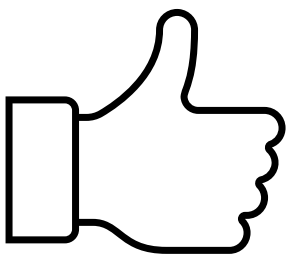
We wanted to find out why young people hurt other young people.



This review looks at the stories of 8 young people.

7 of the young people had been stabbed.

The review makes **recommendations**.



Recommendations are ways that people can do things better.

The review will be used by local teams who help children in

- Bristol
- South Gloucestershire
- North Somerset.

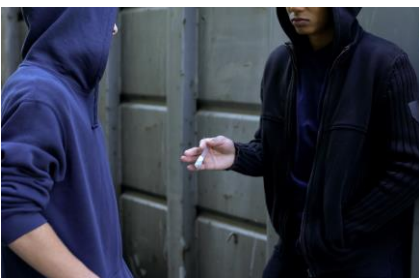


What the review looked at



The review wanted to find out

- Why young people attack and hurt each other
- Why young people get involved with knife crime
- What happens when young people get involved in gangs
- Why young people get involved in selling drugs.
- What happens when adults make young people commit crimes for them. This is called **Child Criminal Exploitation** or **CCE** for short.



We wanted to protect the young people whose stories we talk about in this review.



We made sure we did not use their names.

What questions did we ask



We asked lots of questions to find out more about the 8 young people in this review.



The young people were **either** harmed **or** committing serious harm against other young people.

We asked



1. What do young people and their families say is working well and what can we do better?

2. What do support agencies say is working well and how could they do better?

3. How can our Council work better with Councils from other areas?



What questions did we ask



4. The young people we looked at had lots of things in common like

- Bad things happen to them when they were a child
- Carrying knives
- Going missing
- Dealing drugs
- Being banned from school and needing an alternative place to learn.



How can agencies who support young people find ways to help them to cope with these things?



5. What happened when young people got additional support with living arrangements or education?

Did this help them or make things worse?

What questions did we ask



6. Did agencies understand how things in the community affected young people like criminal groups.

7. How well do we help these young people at the moment?

What things can help to reduce the risk of harm? These might be things like



- **Mentoring** – this is when you get time with someone who gives advice



- Specialist services

- Support that worked really well in the 3 councils and areas

- Support from friends, brothers and sisters and partners.



8. All the young people in this review had younger brothers or sisters. How can we make sure these young people stay safe?

We spoke to young people, parents and agencies.

More about the review



The Children Act 1989 says anyone under 18 is a child. All the young people in this review are children.

Serious Youth Violence or **SYV** is violence that happens outside the home between young people who are not related.



SYV can also put young people at risk of

- Bullying
- Being made to do bad things that are against the law
- Being asked to do things sexually that they don't want to
- Getting involved in terrorism
- Being in an argument with other groups of young people.
- Being involved in fights and violence
- Being forced to move drugs and money for criminals. This is known as **County Lines**.



What things we did to produce the review



To carry out the review we did lots of different things like

- Reading lots of information
- Reading reports from meetings known as **rapid reviews**
- Holding an event to find out how support agencies kept people safe
- Finding new ways to look at the information.



We talked to the young people and their families. We could not speak to everyone because of the

- Covid-19 Pandemic
- Risk of upsetting young people further
- Fear that the young person may be attacked if they spoke out.
- Some young people did not want to speak to us.



What we found out about serious youth violence



We looked at the rapid review meetings. We looked at 7 cases of violence.



In these cases, young people were stabbed and injured very badly. Sadly, one young person died.

The stabbings took place between 2018 and 2021.



- 5 took place in Bristol
- 1 took place in Bath and North East Somerset
- 1 took place in North Somerset



We looked at lots of different things to try and understand why violence happens to young people.

What the young people have in common



All of the young people were male. Many of the young people were similar in ways like

- Age
- Ethnicity – young people were sometimes treated differently because of their race. For example, they got in more trouble at school and with the Police
- Many had experience of being in care or looked after
- Many needed help with their education due to things like learning difficulties. This also made it hard to make friends
- Some experienced domestic or physical abuse. This meant that their home was not a safe place
- Some had family members involved in crime.



Health, mental health and wellbeing



Many of the young people sold drugs. They also took drugs themselves.



Young people were often aggressive. This happened at home towards their family, or they would harm themselves.

Young people found it difficult to get help for

- Mental health
- General health care
- Counselling after an attack
- Drug addiction
- Trauma
- Speech and language therapy.



Recommendation 1. Our review says that agencies should give more money to services that help with health and wellbeing.

Family life and living situation



Serious violence affected a young person's behaviour. They would do things like take drugs, go missing or get very worried.

This would upset their families and parents.



Some of the young people's homes did not have enough space for the young person to live comfortably.



Young people experienced violence in the home especially from their father or stepfather.

Some families were threatened by gangs or because the young person had committed a crime



Recommendation 2. Agencies should find ways to help boys who are victims of violence.

Young people and care



3 of the young people were in supported accommodation called **living in care**. For some young people this was not a good experience.



Young people who were in supported accommodation were often moved from place to place.

Young people in care went missing and this put them at risk. Being at risk means bad things are more likely to happen.



Young people who have links with their family and the community are less likely to be victims of CCE.

Recommendation 3. Find new ways to create better supported accommodation for young people.



Also make sure young people can keep in touch with their local area and the people there who support them.

School and Education



The review found that young people who were black were more likely to be banned from school. This is called **exclusion**.



Exclusion and moving schools made young people more likely to commit crime.



Young people with special educational needs need to be assessed better by professionals.

Recommendation 4. Find ways to stop children being excluded from school.



Provide support early for boys if they are violent or have emotional problems.

Provide better support if someone is excluded.

Young people and how they got on with other people the same age



Our review found out that violence was happening between different groups of young people who were the same age.

Some young people thought they had to carry a knife to protect themselves. But this put them at more risk.



Lots of young people had anxiety and were worried about a lot of things in their life.



Violent things could start from social media.

Parents said that violence can happen online. Young people didn't have to be on the streets for bad things to happen.



Young people told us about the police and how they didn't trust the way the police handled things.

Hearing what young people think



Young people talked about their mental health and how they were not getting the support they needed.



There was violence between young men but also between young women in gangs and groups.



Community groups worked together but there was still more to do.

Some young people felt pressured or bullied into doing something they didn't want to do.



Selling drugs was an easy way to make money. A lot of young people felt that this was their only way to make money.

Influences in young people's lives



Young people were influenced a lot by social media and online experiences.

Being at home and parents were not enough to keep them out of doing bad things.

Young people need strong support from different areas of life and the community.



Many young people had friends who lived in a different area to them. Young people should have support wherever they live.



Recommendation 5: Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset to work together to design ways to help professionals understand what is happening for a young person and how much danger they are in.



Recommendation 6: Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset to make sure they can support young people for as long as they need it without changing who they work with.

Victims and offenders



Young people were seen more as the people doing bad things. We call this being **offenders**. But lots of young people were the victims of crime.



Lots of young people can be pressured into doing bad things and breaking the law. This doesn't mean they are bad people.



The police could be trained to know more about this and how to work out what is really going on.

For example, young people with different conditions like ADHD might need support.



Recommendation 7: The police should make sure they are stopping adults who sell young people drugs and hurt them.

Working with young people at risk



Families of young people found it hard to get the support they need. We are working together to help families get the support they need.



Lots of young people have been at risk and had bad experiences. This affects how they behave and who they get involved with.



There is some good work happening to help young people feel safer. For example, if they have seen or been part of an abusive family life, they need support.



Recommendation 8: Agencies should fund mentors and support workers who are specialists working with young people. These should be people the young people can trust.

Making communities safer



We need to keep children and young people safer across a wider area.

This included working with young people and their friends together to make things better.



Working in the community with young people at risk was a good thing.

Keeping young people safe in outdoor spaces like parks and at school was a good thing.



Young people wanted somewhere in the community where they could go to get advice and feel safe.



Recommendation 9: Working together in the community to make safety better and give young people the chance to speak out.