BREAKING BARRIERS

A report into gang affected females in Nottingham: An evaluation of coercion, consent and potential harm

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this project was to:

• Establish current local provisions existing in Nottingham for gang affected females and to also identify any gaps in services

• Develop a risk matrix and risk management strategies for gang affected girls and women

• Inform future funding initiatives by the Police Crime Commissioner

The project had three distinct phases which were as follows:

Phase One: Interviewing key agencies working with gang affected females. 15 interviews and 2 consultations took place over a two month period. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and key themes were identified from the data.

Phase Two: Two consultation events were organised with young women from Nottingham to ascertain their opinions about issues surrounding gang affected females.

Phase Three: Questionnaires were sent to 19 services likely to have regular contact with gang affected girls and women, but who may be unaware of the actual risks and needs of these females.

In parallel, we have undertaken 2 pilot case conferences/MARACs attended by Nottingham City MARAC representatives. An Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) was set up between Nottinghamshire Police and The Health Shop. Using this ISA, the names of 22 females were provided, each individual potentially at risk from one of the following gangs

within Nottingham: organised crime, super groups or urban street gangs. This information was discussed at the pilot case conference in order to ascertain current risks and safeguarding concerns. Actions were identified to manage these risks. The findings from this case conference have informed the risk identification chart and managing risks sections of this report.

The outcomes from the project fell into the following distinct areas:

• Difficulties with definitions and the impact definitions have on gang affected females

• Issues with contextualising consent within services and from the perspective of gang affected females

• The beginnings of a risk matrix

• The management of risks

• Referral pathways and gaps in provision

Key recommendations from the project include:

• Targeted training for all services to include: an overview of the issues faced by gang affected females; supporting services to address issues related to terminology; contextualising consent; identification of females at risk and ways of managing those risks

• Using the findings from within this report to continue to build on prevention and intervention based work within existing services

• Strategic changes are required to incorporate the identification, intervention and risk management of gang affected females

INTRODUCTION

This report was initiated by the Girls, Gangs, Women and Violence Steering Group and funded by the Nottinghamshire Ending Gang and Youth Violence Board. The Girls, Gangs, Women and Violence Steering Group developed an action plan looking at the needs of girls and women affected by gangs. This plan identified the need for a lead to establish existing local provisions and gaps, ways to identify gang affected girls and women, development of a risk matrix and risk management strategies. The recommendations from this report will inform Police Crime Commissioner funding to support gang affected females.

There had been a lack of UK based literature into gang affected girls and women. Much of the research available focused on gangs from a criminal perspective and the men associated with them. At the time of this project's inception, several key UK specific reports were being debated at government level including: the Children's Commissioner, "It's Wrong… But You Get Used To It", Carlene Firmin's, "This Is It. This Is My Life…" and "The Griffins Society's "Seeing Things Differently: Working With Girls Affected By Gangs". All of these reports and other national research acknowledge the unheard voices of the girls and women affected by gangs, the extreme levels of sexual, physical and emotional violence

and the power and control exerted by boys and men. The reports set out what is required nationally and suggest strategies needed to manage risk and safeguard vulnerable girls and women. Having evaluated the national research, this report has identified commonalities and differences between the Nottingham and national picture. Where relevant, we have integrated knowledge from the UK based research.

We acknowledge that the term 'gang' can evoke ideas relating to cultural stereotypes and when exploring the issues surrounding gang affected females, presumptions are often made about the demographics of the 'type' of girls and women affected.   This report recognises that a gang affected female transcends all demographics, sexualities, cultures, religions and race. However, it is important to understand how the context of a girl or women's culture may impact her ability to access help and support. Cultural identity will also affect how she is likely to be seen or unseen by services.

Our recommendations are based on a generic scoping method, therefore we have not addressed the specific needs and additional vulnerabilities of varying communities. For example, if a South Asian girl was sexually exploited within the context of a drug related gang, she may face additional barriers in accessing services. She may become re-victimised by being forced into a marriage, or made to

undergo hymen repair surgery prior to a forced marriage (Gohir: 2013). There needs to be future research within Nottingham to explore the differing and diverse range of cultural impacts on gang affected females.

It is acknowledged that risks and experiences highlighted within this report, including domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and externalised self-worth, are not specific to gang affected females, however, the hypermasculine environment that exists within gangs is a magnifying process that seeks to objectify and dehumanise girls and women and subsequently increases levels of risk and violence. We have noticed that both local and national data is heteronormative and does not include the voices of those not identifying as heterosexual. It is not clear if this is due to researcher bias and subjectivity, or if there is a fear from gang affected individuals of negative repercussions following disclosure of a varying non-heterosexuality.

This report was commissioned to focus on the needs of gang affected girls and women. However, national research and local consultation has established that boys and men also experience significant trauma, sexual abuse and coercion into criminal behaviour within gang cultures. For example, boys as young as 10 have been reported as being forced into carrying weapons, drugs and drug running for adults. Worryingly, rather than being seen as vulnerable victims

in need of safeguarding, these boys were criminalised. For this reason, it is essential that safeguarding work is undertaken as a matter of priority for young boys who are being exploited and harmed. It is likely that due to social constructions of masculinity and gender norms there will be additional barriers for boys accessing help for sexual abuse and trauma.

Some of the words we will be using throughout this report are deemed derogatory. We make reference to these terms in order to unpick meanings and highlight the way girls and women are being objectified by this language; a 'Baby-mother' is no longer a woman in her own right, but rather a means of childcare; a 'Link' is a disposable method of sexual gratification, rather than a girl who happens to have her own needs and worth.

We have gathered some anecdotal data on the potential numbers of gang affected females within Nottingham, however it is acknowledged that this is not likely to be an accurate representation due to both the lack of a robust data collection system and the under-reporting from girls and women who are affected.

This report makes reference to girls (females below the age of 18), women (females over 18) and females (used to describe girls and women interchangeably).

The term 'gang affected females'

includes issues of consent, coercion
and potential risk of harm experienced
by females who are connected to
criminal gangs.

METHODS

Advice was sought from the National Research Ethics Services (NRES) and it was established that as this project was not seeking to elicit new information, but rather to establish current provision, ethical approval was not required. This was confirmed by Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust's Research Governance Department which issued approval for the study. Approval was also given by the Operational Manager of Recovery in Nottingham.

In preparation for this work, staff read current national research and attended a variety of relevant conferences and meetings as follows:

Current national research:

- Beckett, H., Brodie, I., Factor, F., Melrose, M., Pearce, J., Pitts, J., Shuker, L and Warrington, C. (2013) *It's Wrong But You Get Used To It*: *A Qualitative Study of Gang-Associated Sexual Violence Towards, and Exploitation of, Young People in England*. Luton: University of Bedfordshire

- Berelowitz, S., Clifton, J., Firmin, C., Gulyurtlu, S., and Edwards, G. (2013) *If Only Someone Had Listened: Office of the Children's Commissioner's Enquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Girls - Final Report*. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry

- Firmin, C. (2010) *The Female Voice in Violence Project: A Study into the Impact of Serious Youth and Gang Violence on Women and Girls.* London: ROTA

- Firmin, C. (2011) *This is It: This is My Life: Female Voice in Violence Final Report: On the Impact of Serious Youth Violence and Criminal Gangs on Women and Girls Across the Country.* London: ROTA

- Gohir, S. (2013) *Unheard Voices: The Sexual Exploitation of Asian Girls and Young Women.* Birmingham: Muslim Women's Network UK

- Home Office (2011) *Ending Gang and Youth Violence: A Cross-Government Report.* London: HMSO

- Home Office (2013) *Ending Gang and Youth Violence: Annual Report.* London: HMSO

- Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (2013) *Strategic Framework for Responding to Gang-Associated Women and Girls.* London: MOPAC

- Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Boards (2011) *Safeguarding Children and Young People Who May Be Affected By Gang Activities: Practice Guidance.* Nottingham: Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Boards

- Southgate, J. (2011) *Seeing Things Differently: Working With Girls Affected By Gangs.* London: The Griffins Society.

- Walker, D., Day, S. (2012) *Nottingham City: Ending Gang and Youth Violence Strategy.* Nottingham: Nottingham City Council

- XLP (2013) *Girls and Gangs.* London: The Centre for Social Justice

Conferences:

- BASPCAN - Current Perspectives on the Sexual Abuse of Children & Young People

- Home Office - Working with girls affected by gangs

- Nottingham: Grooming of South Asian/Muslim Girls and Young Women

- Special Event: Bird - Nottingham Contemporary. 'Bird' is a monologue which focuses on sexual exploitation from the viewpoint of a 14 year old girl

Meetings:

- Nottingham Ending Gang and Youth Violence Network Meeting

- Teen Support Network

- Domestic Abuse Health Group - Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County

- Task and Finishing Meeting

- Two Girls, Gangs, Women and Violence Meeting

- MARAC Developmental Day with CAADA

This project included a combination of 1-2-1 interviews, consultation groups and structured questionnaires and was made up of three distinct phases:

1. Phase One: Participants were recruited from key agencies working with gang affected females, 15 semi-structured interviews were completed in total, with 2 further consultations (see appendix 1 for a list of agencies who took part), staff from The Health

Shop using a defined interview guide with questions based on current research (see appendix 3). A confidentiality statement (see appendix 2) was read at the start of each interview, outlining the safeguarding process if required. Questions were structured to try and identify known risks, to establish support currently offered and gaps missing in service provision. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and template analysis was used to code the data. The Health Shop team met to discuss the data and key themes were identified which will be discussed as part of this report.

2. Phase Two: Two consultation events were organised with young women who may have been historically affected by gangs or know other girls who have been affected in the past. The purpose of the consultation events was to elicit opinions from the girls on how they felt females might be affected by gangs, or might become involved within gangs. We also asked opinions on support they believed gang affected females might need and any services they felt were already available. A range of health promotion materials, information on support services and opportunities to discuss concerns on an individual basis were offered at the end of each consultation event.

3. Phase Three: A questionnaire (see appendix 5) was sent to services likely to have regular contact with

females (but who may be potentially unaware of their actual risks or needs). Questionnaires were sent to 19 agencies, with a return rate of 26%. See appendix 4 for the list of agencies the questionnaire was sent to.

In addition to the above, 2 pilot case conferences were held, running parallel to the three phases. These pilot case conferences were based on the MARAC meetings already operating in Nottingham. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) occur when representatives from various organisations including health, social care, police and social services meet to share information and discuss high risk domestic abuse cases with a view to developing a coordinated safety plan. The purpose of these pilot case conferences was to identify current risks and safeguarding concerns specifically relating to females associated with gang members, with the view that information would inform a risk matrix, identify good practice guidance for working with safeguarding concerns surrounding gang affected females and provide evidence to establish whether further case conferences of this type are needed.

An Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) was set up between Nottinghamshire Police and The Health Shop. The purpose of this Information Sharing Agreement was to facilitate the lawful exchange of data, in order to comply with the statutory duty of Chief Police Officers and relevant agencies to work together for the purpose of implementing strategies to reduce safeguarding risks.

The names of 22 girls and women associated with or potentially at risk from gangs or groups were identified by the Public Protection Unit and Vanguard Plus. Attendees were current MARAC representatives and staff from Vanguard Plus. All pilot case conference attendees signed the ISA, allowing organisations to cross reference the names of the females through their organisational databases. Information was collated specifically in relation to the following risks:

• Domestic violence
• Sexual violence and exploitation
• Drug use
• Holding drugs, money and/or weapons
• Mental health issues including self-harm and para-suicidal behaviours
• Criminality including duress
• Physical assault, including stabbing and strangulation
• Involvement with Children's Care and Adult Social Care

The pilot case conferences took place on the 19th of March 2014 and the 1st of May 2014. The outcome of these case conferences will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

CASE CONFERENCE

Two pilot case conferences took place on the 19th March 2014 and the 1st May 2014. The purpose of these pilot case conferences was to inform good practice guidance, help develop a risk matrix and provide evidence to establish whether further case conferences of this type are needed. In addition the case conferences identified and responded to current risks and safeguarding concerns specifically relating to females thought to be connected to criminal gangs.

An Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) was set up between Nottinghamshire Police and The Health Shop. The purpose of this Information Sharing Agreement was to facilitate the lawful exchange of data in order to comply with the statutory duty on Chief Police Officers and relevant agencies to work together for the purpose of implementing strategies to reduce safeguarding risks.

The case conference was attended by city MARAC representatives from social care, health, police, WAIS, victim support, probation, YOT, education, housing and staff from Vanguard Plus. The conference was conducted within a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) framework and chaired by the city MARAC chair. Nottingham Public Protection Unit and Vanguard Plus identified 22 girls and women who

were at potential risk of harm due to their association with gangs. All attendees to the pilot case conferences signed up to the ISA which allowed organisations to cross reference the names of the women through their organisational databases. Information was gathered specifically in relation to the following risks:

• Domestic violence
• Sexual violence and exploitation
• Drug use
• Holding drugs, money and/or weapons
• Mental health issues including self-harm, para-suicidal behaviours
• Criminality including duress
• Physical assault, e.g. stabbing, strangulation
• Involvement with Children's and Adult Social Care

During the first case conference it became apparent that girls who are being sexual exploited (CSE) are accessing and engaging with support across a number of services. However, gang affected young women over the age of 16 were either not picked up within services or were not engaging within services. This finding perhaps indicates a greater understanding of identifying and supporting girls under 18 experiencing CSE, as opposed to identification and support of gang affected females. Subsequently, a collective decision was made to focus the second case conference on girls and women at risk from and affected

by gangs and who were not being picked up by services or engaging with services. Unlike CSE, 'Gang Affected Females' was felt to be a new area of work for many MARAC representatives.

Summary findings following second case conference:

- All 12 women were in a relationship with known criminal gang members.

- There were approximately 4 females who were connected to criminal gangs via their immediate family and through their relationships.

- 8 out of 12 women had children with known gang members.

- 9 out of 12 women were known to have experienced significant domestic abuse from male gang members. 6 out of 12 had been offered support via MARAC, DART, WAIS and victim support. All women declined support and/or would not engage with services. Some women cited fear of repercussion as the main reason for not engaging.

- Types of DV experienced ranged from the following:

  Head injuries
  Facial injuries
  Chest injuries
  Broken ribs
  Strangulation
  Choking

Feeling controlled
Emotional abuse

- 4 women attended ED for treatment relating to injuries following domestic abuse.

- 4 cases documented concerns relating to fear of gang retaliation towards women and their families resulting from partner's or family member's criminal gang activity.

- In some cases women had been found taking drugs into prison and were found to have drugs within their home.

- None of the identified women or associated gang members were known to drugs or mental health services.

- 4 perpetrators of abuse were identified as both gang members and as serial perpetrators of domestic abuse.

- All identified gang members (partners and/or family members of the identified women) were known for handling/carrying and using weapons. Weapons include knifes, guns and other objects used to harm others (i.e. metal bars). All identified gang members were involved in serious violence and drug related offences. In addition, a few males had previous convictions of rape and offences relating to sexual violence towards females over and under the age of 16yrs and a few were involved in and/or convicted of murder.

- Gang members attending ED were in relation to the following type of injuries:

  Injuries after being attacked by multiple perpetrators
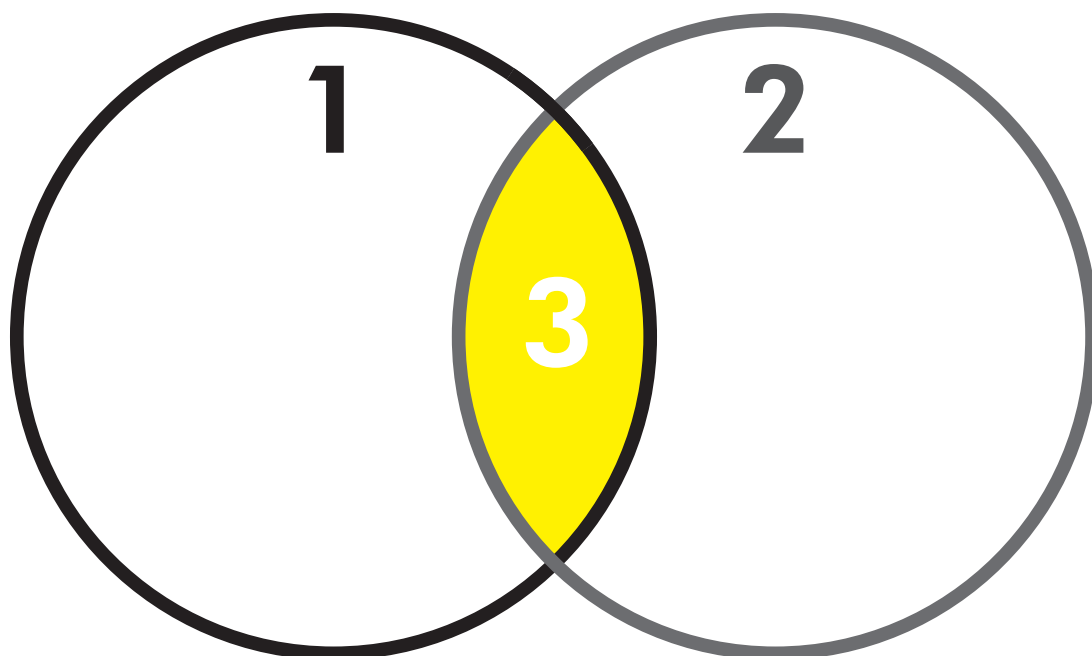 Injuries resulting from use of weapons (i.e. stab wounds, being shot)

Issues and concerns identified within the case conferences:

There were several cases where gang members had a series of 'no further action' in relation to serious violent crimes. This could be because they have not committed the crime or because evidence could not be substantiated (peers providing alibis, witness intimidation and so forth). Regardless of conviction, simply being connected to a series of violent crimes including murder creates a type of dangerous identity. Such an identity can be deliberately used by gang members as a method of control to induce fear in workers alongside family and partners and is likely to affect women when undertaking their own risk assessment as to whether they are safe to leave or to report abuse. If they believe 'why report, he never gets convicted' they may subsequently believe that they cannot be protected. This is true of other perpetrators of domestic violence, but women affected by association with gangs may be at greater risk, and will see themselves as at greater risk due to multiple perpetration.

Despite being aware of concerns relating to domestic abuse, health, social care and domestic abuse services were not aware of the potential for multiple perpetration from other gang members. Services working with the gang members were able to provide valuable information about ways in which gangs organise themselves and who they are connected to. However, these services did not previously have a full picture of the abuse and subsequent safeguarding issues affecting the families of gang members. The case conference gave the opportunity for the two halves of information to be brought together and for services to share information, resulting in a fuller understanding of the pattern of abuse, not just individual incidents. In addition, discussion surrounding ways of managing some of the presenting safeguarding concerns also took place.

It was not possible during this case conference to establish if the perpetrators of CSE were also involved in other criminal activity. Where gangs are involved in other criminal activity alongside sexual exploitation, girls may experience additional forms exploitation i.e. hiding drugs.

DEFINITIONS

When interviewing key agencies, there was considerable discussion surrounding definitions of 'gangs' and 'groups', and a degree of perceived separation between presenting vulnerabilities. These circles help to illustrate the overlap between child sexual exploitation, gang affected females and Links, an overlap which can lead to mistaken identification of vulnerability type.

1: Sexually Exploited Children.
These are victims of sexual exploitation where crimes have been committed by a gang or a group that have come together for the specific purpose of sexually exploiting a child (be it via internet, in person or otherwise).

2: Gang Affected Females.
Often with a familial link to gang members, these females may be subjected to isolated incidents of sexual violence as a form of retaliation, as opposed to repeated sexual exploitation. The common purpose of the group or gang is criminal activity, but not necessarily specific to child sexual exploitation.

3: Links.
Described in "It's Wrong… But You Get Used To It" as *"young women associated through 'casual' sex with one or more members of the gang. This was the group most at risk of*

sexual victimisation both within the gang and from rival gangs" (Beckett et al 2013: 7).

"They don't realise they're being exploited, our girls who are very, very vulnerable, they don't realise they're being exploited, they think he's giving them time, attention, love because they are very vulnerable and needy and it's really sad because they are replacing that…you know, somebody wants them" (A Nottingham Service).

This quote describes sexually exploited children, but would be equally applicable when defining 'Links'. 'Links' have much in common with sexually exploited children (grooming susceptibility, sexual vulnerability), they also carry the additional complexities of gang affiliation such as criminal activity, weapon holding, drug running, etc.

Similarly, gang affected females and 'Links' have much in common. Both are gang commodities, susceptible to exploitation, harm and criminal activity. However, without gang protection due to familial or community ties, 'Links' are easily disposable and most vulnerable to sexual exploitation. *"Sexual exploitation was also raised by participants in relation to girls being passed around as property by criminal gangs, sold between gangs to settle disputes, used as sexual currency to pay off drug debts and forced into*

formal and organised prostitution" (Firmin 2011: 46).

Fear induced separation also exists between the girls themselves. *"Young women spoke of their safety and reputation being dependent upon distancing themselves from 'Links'. They were fearful of being 'vulnerable by association', thus further isolating 'links' from female support"* (Beckett et al 2013: 7).

Although we note these separations here, girls *"may be in several different roles at any one time, or move between these over time" (Beckett et al 2013: 7),* and so for the most part, throughout this report 'gang affected females' will also incorporate 'Links'. Although we will make reference to sexually exploited children during the pathway recommendations, the focus of this report lies predominantly with gang affected females and 'Links'. Whilst child sexual exploitation is relatively well understood in Nottingham, due to problems with identification and engagement, services are struggling to understand the level of risk the gang affected females and 'Links' are under and in turn, how to respond to and manage those risks.

"A lot of the young women that would have traditionally identified in terms of sexual exploitation and vulnerability are quite often associated with children's homes, looked after children, children in care, because they're easy

pickings as far as the perpetrator's concerned. They're not necessarily the types of girls that we're talking about in this scenario who are probably vulnerable in a different way, but they're not vulnerable in that way" (A Nottingham Service).

HOW DO WE DEFINE GANGS?

» **THE NATIONAL PICTURE:**

Derived from the Home Office Ending Gang and Youth Violence definition and the Centre for Social Justice 'Dying to Belong' report, the current definition of a gang from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) states that:

A gang is *"a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:*

1. See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group;
2. Engage in criminal activity and violence; and may
3. Lay claim over territory (this is not necessary geographical territory but can include an illegal economy territory);
4. Have some form of identifying structural feature;

5. Be in conflict with other, similar gangs."

Additionally, the "Ending Gang and Youth Violence Strategy" report coins a separate definition for gangs associated with organised crime groups. In this case, a gang is:

"Typically a mutation of a peer group, falling mainly into one of two types: the territorial fighting unit and the entrepreneurial street gang. Rarely well organised and often volatile and short lived. Members may be affiliated with older criminals or OCGs who use them to 'run' drugs. Likely to be armed and the weapon used is most likely to be a knife" (Home Office 2011: 2).

» **THE NOTTINGHAM PICTURE:**

A lot of the Nottingham interviewees were frustrated at being asked to define 'gang'. Many felt strongly that labelling groups as gangs had a judgemental element, creating barriers and stereotypes. To a great extent, current gang descriptions are based on subjective judgements. We cannot know someone's reality directly, the descriptions are always viewed though the tainted lens of our own constructions.

The following are a range of quotes from services and gang affected females in Nottingham, all in answer to the same question - "How would you define a gang?":

"A collection of people that are doing things organised" (A Nottingham Service).

"A friendship group with criminal activity" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).
"Historically any gathering of young people can be called a gang… a modern understanding is young people who are gathering together, they've got a particular bond and are involved in risk behaviour, whether that's violence within the gang or externally with other gangs normally linked to drug dealing, antisocial behaviour or crime" (A Nottingham Service).

"In the past… it is very often linked to deprivation, it's linked to lack of access to other mainstream services for some reason, where males and females club together and become a sort of quasi family. It's where their needs are not being met elsewhere" (A Nottingham Service).

"People say it[a gang] is a group of young people hanging around together, but you don't necessarily see young people hanging around together in a group as 'a gang', so a gang might be where there is criminal or antisocial behaviour" (A Nottingham Service).

"A gang particularly is one which is a more formalised structure, has a common purpose" (A Nottingham Service).

"Still trying to find out what a gang is… is it a group, more than one, a posse?" (A Nottingham Service)

"What we tend to do now is use the word 'gang' in a criminal sense and so it is perceived to be usually when they use the word gang they mean a black gang" (A Nottingham Service).

"But you can have groups, as we know, within the cybersphere if you like, so people who are grouped together within CSE, would be people perhaps who haven't met, but converse with each other on chat rooms and stuff about organising sexual offenses against children and young people, so you might term them as a group, because they've got a loose common aim, but they're affiliated by their ability to converse on computer and a connection" (A Nottingham Service).

It seems clear from the Nottingham services quotes evidenced above, that everyone is currently working to a different definition, despite the government's attempt to create a unified description of gangs. Indeed, even the national description itself has become fractured and segregated into street gangs, organised

crime gangs and super-groups. Perhaps some of the frustrations surrounding gang definitions stem from an inaccessibility of language in the national descriptions, the dehumanising terminology and the complications from 3 different types of gangs. Services are busy; definitions need to be clear, concise and quick to digest. Services vary from government commissioned schemes, right through to voluntary organisations. In order for each service to use the same definitions, the language must be accessible to everyone and above all, easy to understand.

On the other side of the coin, definitions are important when identifying gangs and the females they affect, not to stereotype, but in order to understand who is affected, what risks they face and how best to empower services to help these individuals.

"The women and girls that we interviewed made reference to 'gangs' on repeated occasions; it is not their responsibility to discern whether the group they are fearful of is an organised criminal group, criminal gang or peer group. Instead, it is the responsibility of the professionals that they disclose to so that they can ascertain the level of risk presented" (Firmin 2011: 22-23).

However, it is important that definitions are established via behaviours, criminal acts and shared experience, rather than the physical attributes of a

group. You cannot tell someone is a gang member just by looking at them. In terms of identification, emphasis needs to be taken away from subjectivity, and based on evidence and behaviour alone. Definitions also need to be all encompassing, the term gang could be as simple as 'multiple perpetrators', it shouldn't matter the type of gang, but rather the victims affected.

Training across services would help to share a unified definition of gangs and give a clearer, united description and understanding of gang behaviours and their impact on the females affected by them. If we equip professionals working with potential gang members and gang affected females to understand, they will be more informed to make better judgements about what they are seeing.

HOW DO WE DEFINE GANG AFFECTED FEMALES?

» **THE NATIONAL PICTURE:**

Although no official national definition has yet been agreed, The Home Office, partners and gang affected girls have worked together on a description later piloted by Greater Manchester Police and the

ACPO:

" 'a woman or girl who is a family member of or in an intimate relationship with a gang nominal'. We recognise that this definition does not capture all women and girls who may be affected by gangs, however, it is a useful starting point" (MOPAC 2013: 6). Further to this, five different roles have been outlined in the report "It's Wrong... But You Get Used To It":
"'Gangster girls': young women who adopt male personas, and as a result, are generally protected from sexual victimisation;
Female family members: seemingly protected within the gang but at risk from rival gangs because of their relationship with a gang-involved male;
'Wifeys' (girlfriends): often protected within the gang so long as the relationship lasted, but frequently exposed to domestic violence and at high risk of sexual victimisation should a relationship end. Also at risk from rival gangs;
'Baby-mothers' (young women who have children with gang-involved males): similar risks to 'wifey's and 'links' depending on their original status;
'Links' (young women associated through 'casual' sex with one or more members of the gang). This was the group most at risk of sexual victimisation both within the gang and from rival gangs" (Beckett et al 2013: 7).

» **THE NOTTINGHAM PICTURE:**

Many interviewees defined the gang affected females by perceived risks. Others, as in the national descriptions, by their gang role or relationship as mother, sister, baby mother, 'Link', etc. Some people struggled to answer the question at all.

"… if they're [a gang affected female] involved in offending behaviour, then that could potentially end up in custodial sentences or other difficulties, like not being able to access employment" (A Nottingham Service).

"It could be the mother, sister, girlfriend, ex-girlfriend, anyone with that type of loose or strong connection. Any female brings that potential risk of either being drawn into that activity or harmed by the activity. Being a victim of another person in another gang as an easy target" (A Nottingham Service).

"Certain guys know the benefits of having a really loyal girl who would do anything for you. They hold onto that. Guys can pick out girls who are easily moulded. Girls think they can change the boy, that's why they stick around, but they're just another instrument in his orchestra" (Girl Consultation, Nottingham).

"I've got no definition of [a gang affected female]… it's a female with a need" (A Nottingham Service).

Defined only by relationship to gang members or through gang affiliation, the girls and women are denied existence and recognition in their own right. They once again become objectified as gang property, rather than females with their own experiences. When using the word gang or gang affected female, we are using a shorthand language. This shorthand language is like landmarking a map, theory and language providing a starting point for the possible cause of a person's distress and the way in which we may best respond. The map is our construction and therefore it cannot be used in isolation. We need to hear the individual stories of distress within the context of the social and political landscape we inhabit.

Many girls and women do not identify as gang members or associates of gangs, as such they are less likely to attend relative services. Those that do identify as gang affiliated felt attending a specific service would cause further typecasting and labelling through association. Many have family, are members of the local community or hold down regular jobs. Each have life roles aside of being gang affected, and do not wish to be stereotyped or judged by the negativity surrounding gang association.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Training

Through training, definitions can be made clearer and more understood, leading to a more universal understanding across Nottingham. We can also use this space to discuss the implications of definitions.

Impact On Targeted Interventions

Targeting campaigns via behaviours and/or shared experiences rather than blanket labelling that can lead to stereotyping or judgement.

Understanding Context

In order to understand the risks for girls and women, services need a clear understanding of how gangs organise themselves via definitions of behaviour. Without this descriptive picture, identification may be missed, as services don't know the full extent of the issues.

Appropriate Communication And Language With Gang Affected Females

Across services, appropriate language and enquiries should be used during assessment to encourage disclosure in a way that the girls and women feel appropriately supported.

BEING DRAWN INTO GANGS

Primarily, research has shown that girls and women become drawn into gangs through a need for relationship. This could be friendship, a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship or a familial connection.

It is both the fear of losing the relationship and a loyalty to the bond that can keep each girl or woman attached and participant within the gang.

"Women and girls engaged in offending behaviours alongside male peers or partners for two distinct reasons: love and fear" (Firmin 2011: 36).

"To intervene with a woman or girl who is offending 'out of love' one would need to consider that their fears are based on the loss of a relationship rather than the loss of personal safety…" (Firmin 2011: 38).

"Loyalty is the highest virtue taught by abusers and used as a control tool" (Tollefson 2013).

» **THE NOTTINGHAM PICTURE:**

Within our local scoping exercise it was clear that the primary reasons why females become drawn into gangs within Nottingham very much echoes that of the national picture. The following subheadings offer deeper exploration.

Relationships

As discussed in the national picture, many females are drawn in through preexisting relationships.

"A lot of young people are known to the police because of who they're connected to…your family member, your partner, you live on the same street, so you get drawn into things, you get a label whether you're part of it or not, so a lot of young people think 'well if I'm going to be accused of it what the heck , I might as well '" (A Nottingham Service).

A number of services identified that the connection could also be based on a longer chain of relationship; cell mates, meeting a sister on visitation; a sister drawing a sibling into her group of friends.

The boyfriend/girlfriend relationship is also a strong catalyst for gang connection; a girl may believe she is entering a loving relationship with a boy who happens to be a gang member, whilst the boy may place other assumptions on this relationship.

The girl may have been targeted by a gang member specifically based on her need to be in relationship.

"How does a girl make a choice? She still has feelings for the boy, but there is a risk. Does she sacrifice herself? Wanting to be loved by someone is especially important when you're young. If you get that affection you want to stay, no matter what is happening" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

Sense Of Belonging

Where girls have difficulties with or are estranged from their family of origin, gang relationship can offer a surrogate family and a new sense of belonging.

"It's about exclusion from one area of life forcing you, the hardness of life on the street, forcing you to look for an alternative family or asserting your influence in other ways" (A Nottingham Service).

Kudos And Lifestyle

"A guy who is involved in a gang may have a certain cachet to a girl and if he's interested in her and he's what they call a 'known person', then she feels almost gratified that she's got that attention" (A Nottingham Service).

Many females struggle to recognise their individual self-worth. They base their sense of value on the attentions they receive from a known gang member and the kudos that his status may also bring to her via association.

Some professionals believe that the females are making a lifestyle choice to become gang affiliated. Whilst this may be true, it is important to look at why that choice has been made, and how it may vary from the alternative.

"They're from very deprived areas… they'll have vulnerabilities… they're looking for an outlet so if they have the chance or perceive they can improve their life… get out of an area, earn some money… they'll snatch it" (A Nottingham Service).

Presented as an exciting, fun and exclusive friendship group, gang lifestyle could be seen as an escape from everyday struggles or stressful family life. The girls may not realise the full extent of the dangers that surround this new lifestyle, or how involved they are becoming.

Low/Externalised Self-Worth

Many of the professionals we interviewed agreed that gang affected females they had worked with suffered from low self-esteem and low-confidence and were found to have limited life aspirations.

Some females measured their self-worth via the attentions and 'generosity' afforded them by gang members, and believed love was more about monetary value than an

emotional connection.

"'Here's a tenner, it's all right you have that'. And then the next time: 'take that £50'. And so they buy them emotionally you know …'ooh he loves me, he gives me money'" (A Nottingham Service).

Coercion And Grooming

Coercion may be in the form of a threat to end relationship, or a more subtle grooming, perhaps interlinking with familial loyalties i.e. getting mum to collude in the hiding of a weapon because he creates the idea that it is in the best interests of her son.

"They don't always see themselves as victims… when they're in this type of boyfriend culture… getting support… getting gifts, being taken out… they don't see it and quite often a lot of these young girls are in care… vulnerable to start off with because of their circumstances, and therefore they're susceptible, because they're getting that love and attention they're not getting elsewhere, they don't recognise that, and it's not until they then get introduced to other males or other members of families and are exploited by other people that they may realise, but then it might be too late for them" (A Nottingham Service).

Cultural Expectations

Many services described the process of how abuse and oppressive gender

defined roles become normalised within a hyper masculine 'gang' culture. We recognise that this issue is by far not limited to gangs.

"It becomes the norm and one of those things is the fact that you never know where that boy is, you don't know what he's doing, you're not expected to ask what he's doing, you're not expected to know and when he's ready he will call you and text you and you come from where you are to where he is…I call it the 'come and see me' culture" (A Nottingham Service).

Many services felt that females didn't recognise these inequalities, because they have been normalised by peers and families, perhaps even the local community as a whole.

"It's what you know and you can't escape what you know" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

"We have a kind of cultural expectation of how some of these young men are behaving. It's seen as, when we're young and we are identifying with the behaviour of other young people it becomes the norm, it's seen very often as cool" (A Nottingham Service).

Culture Of Money, Respect And Power

Perhaps through the influence of current popular culture, music and film, a modern culture has emerged

that places greater importance on externalised worth. The belief is that money buys respect and power. This a widespread issue that far exceeds the scope of this report, but many of the Nottingham services we interviewed felt it was important to recognise its influence over 'gang' culture. Seemingly more prevalent in areas of poverty, this issue can transcend classes and races. The same issue of externalised self worth can be seen within affluent communities, with emphasis placed on school grades, status, job role and earnings.

Perceived Protection

Many females enticed into gangs have limited networks of support, friendships or family. They find in the gang, a sense of protection and safety, and a way to make life easier to bear.

"People are looking after you so to speak. You've got no home, no money, no network, it's given them some sort of security" (A Nottingham Service).

Sexual Exploitation

Females can be drawn into gangs through a meticulous process of grooming:

*"It's not obvious when you are being recruited into a gang…
I think it's a sort of grooming process…" (A Nottingham Service).*

This grooming could take the form of peer group introduction or

"other girls introducing them to some nice boys that they've met. Certainly within this group we talked to, they were introduced by a male of their same age, a 15 year old boy from the same school who then introduced them to his relatives who were adults, which was disturbing, because obviously he befriended them as a peer, a male peer" (A Nottingham Service).

Once drawn into the gangs, girls and women are at the beck and call of the gang members.

"Girls who are involved with gangs will be used in any way that suits the needs of the gang, including having to recruit girls for gang members…it might be for sex, passed around for group sex… it might be for holding weapons or drugs or use of an alibi" (A Nottingham Service).

Previous Vulnerabilities

For some females there may be preexisting vulnerabilities. Perhaps their family of origin were unable to provide parental nurturing or their emotional needs were not met. These needs may then be sought elsewhere.

"They're quite clever aren't they, some of the gangs. They can prey on what people think they need and that's what I think they do" (A Nottingham Service).

"It's like codependency. Both broken, both drawn to each other for various reasons" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

On the surface, a girl may appear successful in her studies and function well in society, her unmet emotional needs may not be apparent. But this only increases her risk, as her needs are hidden, she becomes a target for those gang members who actively seek vulnerability.

"There's been issues within the family that have affected them, so they make closer links with the group members that they can sort of associate with certain feeling and find empathy from…I would say it's more of a shared feeling. They can empathise because they've had that emotion" (A Nottingham Service).

Once a gang member has established himself as a form of support, a girl or woman's loyalty and fear of losing the relationship may transcend the risks of remaining within the relationship.

Lower Inhibitions

Some gang members may use drink and drugs to entice girls or women, using them to lower the female's inhibitions and in turn, encourage more daring or promiscuous behaviours. Some gang affected females are later made to feel ashamed of these behaviours and yet may be enticed again, this time due

to threats from the gang to reveal her actions to social media sites, friends, family or the police.

"It's a modern way of exploiting people, Facebook as a place to air personal stuff. Pictures get used as blackmail. That way they have something over you" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prevention

Education in this area would take the form of previous experiences, signs and recognition of grooming and coercion and an understanding of why people enter gangs.

Building Internalised Self-Worth

Relevant to all those with gang connections, it is important to build up self-worth so the girls and women can feel empowered in their own right and enabled to make their own decisions, rather than decisions based on fear of loss.

Challenging Normalised Abuse

Campaigning work is needed across all sectors - victims, male gang members and professionals alike, to challenge the current concepts and beliefs surrounding abuse. There needs to be a wide scale campaign to counteract normalisation that has occurred through community and family association and attitude (the idea that 'everyone is doing it, so it must be ok').

CONTEXTUALISING CONSENT

The context of consent goes much deeper than a simple yes or no situation. A girl or woman may not wish to consent to a situation, may not full understand what she is consenting to, may not be fully aware of the outcomes of her decisions, or be too fearful of the consequences of saying no.

THE NATIONAL PICTURE:

UK research highlighted that many gang members do not perceive rape of a girl or woman to be rape. They believe that the females allow the boys to take advantage of them, that sex is a right of passage and the right to say 'no' is automatically surrendered when a female becomes engaged in gang life.

"For the majority of the groups, rape was thought to be the girl's fault. This was because they assumed she was aware of the risk of rape once she became involved with gangs" (Firmin 2011: 67).

Gang members have also down played or denied responsibility for the girls' exploitation, believing that each girl has voluntarily placed themselves in the situation and likewise, each has the choice to leave or say no.

"…it's by her choice because they're not physically forcing her. It's more of a mental attack... If she wanted to say 'no' and she put up a stink and 'if you touch me I'm going to call the police'; if that was the road that she'd gone down, she wouldn't have ended up in the situation, so it's obviously by her own consent that she ends up having sex with these people... (Participant U2, 20 year old young man)" (Beckett et al 2013: 23).

"Girls are sexually exploited within gangs, they can be passed around, they can be asked for or demanded for sexual favours and that. They often mostly do that against their will and are often forced into that" (A Nottingham Service).

This fear could also extend to concerns of losing a relationship with a gang or gang member that the female may feel dependent on for perceived support, protection or even money and housing.

In not looking at the full picture, some services are typecasting victims as either deserving or undeserving, in turn creating a double victimisation for gang affected females.

"During site visits we continued to hear references to children 'putting themselves at risk' rather than perpetrators being the risk to children" (Berelowitz et al 2013: 23).

"This was particularly true of young women who were sexually active with more than one person. They were viewed as having less right to withhold consent, and seen to bring harm upon themselves because of their presentation or previous sexual experiences" (Beckett et al 2013: 7).

"Worryingly, we also heard of professionals who dismiss what a child is telling them about what they are suffering because it doesn't fit in with their preconceived notion of what constitutes child sexual exploitation" (Berelowitz et al 2013: 27).

» THE NOTTINGHAM PICTURE:

Whilst the issue of consent has been a long standing concern, here it needs to be translated into the dynamics of gang affected females in Nottingham, in the present day.
When looking at consent, be it regarding sexual exploitation of a female, or participation in criminal activity by a female, it must be put into its surrounding context. It is not a simple question of 'yes' or 'no', we need to understand the complexities of the situation. Some of these complexities are further explored below.

A girl may agree to criminal activity or certain sexual acts because she is afraid of the consequences if she does not comply.

"It's better to get caught hiding weapons, or to do theft than to say no and get a beating" *(Girl Consultation, Nottingham).*

This is consent under duress, not a free and willing choice; the decision is made by weighing up the consequences of action. As in the above quote, the females may decide a criminal record is not quite as bad as getting physically abused and so would rather participate in the criminal activity. Likewise if a female has no family and has found solace, a sense of belonging or protection in the form of a gang or gang member, she may be too afraid of losing this to say 'no'.

"Fear was a key driver for offending. Participants claimed to be fearful of kidnap, torture, sexual violence, threats to life, threats to the home, isolation, and punitive responses by authorities to their offending" *(Firmin 2011: 38).*

Services described how girls and

women themselves think they have given consent, often not recognising the process of duress and/or cohesion. Because they're actively involved in criminal behaviours or sexual activity at the behest of the gang, they feel they are not saying 'no', misidentifying this as consent.

"I don't think they [the girls] recognise that they have been or are being exploited. In the main they believe that it's consensual and therefore they don't report it and they don't disclose it" (A Nottingham Service).

Consent also extends to the use of social media. Perhaps a female has been groomed online or become involved in what she perceives as an intimate relationship through sexting, sharing pictures and messages with sexual connotations. This does not mean she gives consent for the image to be shared around to other gang members, used as blackmail material or to publicly shame and humiliate. Adding insult to injury, third party receivers of such material may also make judgement on the female, perceiving her as promiscuous or deserving of further exploitation.

Where the gang context has a familial connection, mothers, sisters, grandmothers, aunties, cousins and so forth may be unaware of (and therefore unable to contextualise) the true circumstances. They could be colluding in criminal activity based on the lies they are told. On the

other side of the coin, they could be completely aware, but as with the example above, too scared, either of losing the relationship or of being physically abused, to object.

"It's just better to stay with it and just do it and cope with it than to sort of speak up and say 'this is happening and I don't want it to'" (A Nottingham Service).

"You don't want to see your man go to jail, so you protect him. Likewise, you don't want to breakdown your family, so certain times you just have to go and do it... even with 2 kids around, you might allow the guys to come in and cut up drugs in the house" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

It could be that the criminal activity has become normalised within the family environment, there may be a history of sexual abuse or domestic violence that has desensitised the females to the exploitation. It's not possible to consent when you don't understand the boundaries of what constitutes abusive and non-abusive behaviours. Equally, if the girls or women have been brought up in a culture that by example teaches them that women should be subservient to men, they may not feel they have a right to say 'no', take a stand or influence a relationship.

"Stop telling us to get boys to wear condoms, you can't ask a boy to put a condom on" (Girls

Consultation, Nottingham).
Some services are not challenging these normalisations which in turn, further accentuates the notion of acceptability.

"Whilst we accept that abuse becomes normalised within families, groups and across cultures, it does not mean that this is right and we as professionals do not challenge it. What is culturally acceptable in a community in one group may not be in another" (A Nottingham Service).

"Sometimes family criticise you for trying to strive away for something, like getting a good education" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

Some services are also misunderstanding or disregarding the notion of context when dealing with consent. Perhaps a girl looks to have a good education, good prospects. It may appear she has made a choice to become gang affiliated.

"I think in those situations [sexual exploitation] it is less about choice maybe. While in the gang situation, they perhaps choose to be within that, but then once within that there is no escape, then you have to accept what happens" (A Nottingham Service).

It's important to unpick the reasons why that choice has been made and also to identify what the alternative options were. Perhaps emphasis at

home was placed on being 'tough', rather than nurturing emotional stability. May be that emotional support was found within a gang environment, but valued at the price of consent.

In some cases, drugs or alcohol may be used to lower the female's inhibitions, making it easier for the gang to persuade her into some form of sexual exploitation she would not otherwise partake in. Unfortunately, research has shown that this is not always viewed by services as a form of mitigation when it comes to issues of consent.

"Disclosures. CPS, understanding the offences, understanding what trafficking actually means. Trafficking can be just a telephone call to a brother to say I'm bringing a girl up tonight to the house to a party. They don't necessarily have to be put in the back of a car and bundled off somewhere. It's making that arrangement to be trafficked and I think CPS locally are struggling with that. Other parts of the country have got that more clearly with their CPS, so we've been trying to re-educate CPS about the thresholds for charges. We've had some people getting off and charges not being brought. Charges not being brought because the girls are 15, they've had a drink, they've been under the influence of alcohol there, for consent issues. And you're just thinking that it's just not

right" (A Nottingham Service).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Training

Ensuring all parties, gang affected females, gang members and professionals alike, have an adequate understanding of consent in the specific context of gang culture.

Campaigns

Campaigning for an understanding of contextualised consent in the wider community.

Systemic Strategies

Changes need to be made in terms of existing systems in order to acknowledge the complexities of consent. Simplifying consent into 'yes' or 'no' boxes can prevent prosecution of perpetrators and recognition of victims.

RISK IDENTIFICATION CHART

Category	Description
Sexual Health	Pregnancy. Repeated emergency hormone contraception. Forced terminations. Repeated sexually transmitted infections. Issues with condom use.
Holding	Holding weapons, money, drugs either with or without knowledge. No control over what is kept in the house. Risk to children living in the house. Social care involvement.
Financial	Dependant on others for money. Money being given. Money given as a grooming method. Buying gifts or clothes as method of grooming. Withholding money. Loaning money with conditions attached.
Physical Abuse	Domestic violence from multiple perpetrators. Property damage - (tyres get slashed or a house is set on fire). Violence from the wider community and gang members if seen to 'betray loyalty' or be a 'grass/snitch'. Violence towards girls or women as retribution from one gang to get back at another gang.
Emotional Abuse	Calling girls 'slags' or 'trash'. Using images as blackmail. Threats to leave them with nothing if they do not comply. Using girls or women as objects. Using humiliation and shaming girls to keep control.
Sexual Violence	Rape as retribution. Being 'passed around' (repeatedly raped orally, vaginally and anally by multiple perpetrators). Using sexual images of girls and women.
Acts of Criminality	Drug use. Holding weapons, drugs or money. Violence to others.
Marginalisation/ Isolation	Not able to tell others what is happening due to lack of trust in services or being perceived as a 'grass' or a 'snitch'. Normalised abuse and loyalty to community means having less access to other realities.
Mental Health	Post traumatic stress. Disassociation, splitting or denial. Depression and anxiety. Flash backs. Childhood trauma. Personality disorders.
Education	Missing out on education or education not being seen as important. Being made to feel that you are stepping above your station if you want a good education. Risks at school if peers are also abusers. An over emphasis on education that doesn't allow for support in other areas.
Drug Use	Using drugs to feel part of a social group. Using drugs as a method of escaping what is happening. Being coerced into using drugs as a method of control.
Going Missing	Going missing from care homes, foster families or from home.
Social Media	Using social media as a way to humiliate and abuse girls. Using social media and the internet as a tool to track a girl down if she tries to leave.

MANAGING RISKS

» NATIONAL PICTURE

The national picture is echoed within the local research, as such, a brief overview is included here, but expanded on within the Nottingham picture:

- Gang related violence is a child protection and safeguarding issue

- Services need the confidence and ability to support females in exiting gangs

- Females with a familial connection were the least likely to report or disclose

- Simply raising the girl's and women's awareness of risk will not support them to make less risky choices

- Lack of refuge places for under 16 year olds

- Lack of confidence in services to respond appropriately to risk of multiple perpetrators

- Professionals need a clear idea of how to assess risk and vulnerability with clear exit pathways that are gender and age appropriate

- Girls and women osculate between being victims and perpetrators, this is problematic for silo services

- Difficult behaviour should be understood as an indicator of vulnerability and possible abuse

- Services are currently responding to immediate behaviours rather than underlying issues

- The process of grooming and coercion affects a young female's ability to understand and make sense of her experiences of abuse

- Lack of understanding surrounding the management of social media

» NOTTINGHAM PICTURE

Anecdotal evidence suggests that for every male gang member, approximately 5 females are gang affected. In the context of Nottingham, it is estimated that 150-160 young men are connected to gangs, giving an approximate figure of 750-800 gang affected females.

"...that is an underestimate… if you look at girlfriends, partners, mothers and babies."
(A Nottingham Service)

REPORTING

Although important to increase reporting and disclosure of risks, individual workers and services need to know how to effectively respond and manage those risks. There

are difficulties with reporting and disclosures. These include:

A Fear Around The Consequences Of Disclosure

"Once you have named that or you have voiced that you know, you can't unsay it… as you know, it's kind of like opening a can of worms" (A Nottingham Service).

"They're extremely reluctant to make any disclosures about it. A lot of them, because they know other girls are involved, and they don't want to lift the lid on something which is bigger" (A Nottingham Service).

A Fear Of Police Involvement

Many of the girls fear police involvement. It is important for the girls to be given the opportunity to talk to someone and build a trusting relationship and that they are given an equal say in what happens after disclosure. Many feel powerless in their abusive relationships and do not want this disempowerment furthered by enforced police involvement through services.

"There need to be places for them if they need to go and talk…where they're not necessarily forced to write a statement or go to the police. 'I won't go to the health centre to get checked out because they might ask me a question" (A Nottingham Service).

A Fear Of Not Being Believed

Both Nottingham Services and the gang affected females identified that one of the barriers to reporting is the fear of not be believed or that concerns will not be taken seriously. As discussed in the previous section on 'consent', there are also concerns that the females will not be seen as victims if they have been coerced into criminal activity.

"She's scared to death of not being believed" (A Nottingham Service).

Lack Of Trust

Many of the girls and women lack confidence that services will be able to adequately protect them. Others believe that they will not be given a fair hearing or be treated equally, basing these beliefs on previous experiences of institutionalised racism.

"Lack of trust. Particularly within the black community, a lack of trust" (A Nottingham Service).

Females Not Identifying As Victims

Many girls and women do not consider themselves to be affected by gangs or as vulnerable and at risk. As such, they do not see the need to report, disclose or seek help from services.

"The biggest vulnerability is that they don't always see themselves as victims… because they're getting the love and attention they're

*not getting elsewhere. They don't
recognise that, and it's not until
they then get introduced to other
males or other members of families
and are exploited by other people
that they may realise, but then it
might be too late for them"*
(A Nottingham Service).

Identification

It is important that services,
particularly those of a universal
nature (E.D., Sexual Health, Drugs
and Alcohol, GP's etc.) ask the
right trigger questions to encourage
disclosure from those affected. In
some instances this may require
a readjustment to the wording of
questions. Current questions targeting
domestic abuse include "Have you
ever felt afraid of a partner?". Used in
a gang context, this phrasing would
alienate those females that are not
'partners', but instead have familial
connections such as sister or mother.
Likewise, this question may estrange
those who feel uneasy rather than
'afraid'.

One of the requirements of this project
was to identify the females affected
by gangs in Nottingham. It was
suggested that this might be possible
through a mapping process. During
the case conference we were able to
map 20 girls and women affected by
Nottingham gang members, however
it became apparent that the issue
was not around identification per se
but rather an issue of engagement.
Unless we can increase confidence

in the disclosure process and our
ability as services to manage risks
after disclosure, many females will not
engage.

If the girls and women themselves do
not identify as gang affected because
the abuse has been normalised
intergenerationally and/or through
peer groups, they are less likely to
present to services. This will have an
impact on the identification process
and disclosure figures.

*"You can be aware that there are
services there, without seeing that
they're for you" (A Nottingham
Service).*

Gang Related Violence Is A Child Protection And Safeguarding Issue

Many of the issues we have found
locally relating to gang affected
females are both child protection and
safeguarding concerns. This became
evident through responses to two
questions asked during our interviews
"What do you feel are the risks to girls
affected by gangs?" and "What do
you think are the reasons for girls not
leaving the gangs?". Answers to these
questions brought up the following
points of concern:

• Fears of harm to self or loved ones

• Self-esteem eroded through
relationship with gang members

• Fear of being criminalised

• Feeling shamed and judged for
becoming trapped in gang life

• Fear of breaking loyalties with abuser

Although some of the agencies that we spoke to felt that 'gang affected females' as an issue should be located more within the sphere of 'criminality' than domestic abuse, the concerns outlined in the interview responses firmly place the issues covered in this report as safeguarding issues and need to be managed as such across all services. Safeguarding is everybody's business.

"We've got to treat it from the victim focused perspective rather than a criminal perspective"
(A Nottingham Service).

Multiple Perpetrators

Current risk management strategies for domestic abuse deal predominantly with single perpetrators, these need restructuring to account for the more complex situation of multiple perpetration, perhaps a situation more in line with so called 'honour' based violence. These complexities include the risk of harm from other gang members, should only one perpetrator be arrested:

• The female may be viewed as a 'grass' by the gang and local community.
• Other females in the gang may be given the task of locating the absconding female.

• Gangs may be linked to other perpetrators in other areas, relocation of affected girls becomes complex.

"There's others who can't leave... 'there's nowhere for me to go because he's so notorious, where am I gonna go? Unless I completely disappear'" (A Nottingham Service speaking about a gang affected female's experience).

"Nottingham is very small. There is always some sort of connection, even if he's oked to let you go [to leave the relationship], his friends might not. And if you've got friends in the gang, they might not be happy either, so you're trapped everywhere, even more so if it's your family" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

"If you report, there's no guarantee that he's gonna stay locked up... You can't grass to the police, coz then you're at risk from all the other people in that group, you'll be cast out for a lack of loyalty" (Girls Consultation, Nottingham).

Services that are not aware of a multiple perpetrator situation risk placing the gang affected females in much greater dangers, as appropriate safety planning will not have been undertaken. It is essential that services understand and manage the risk effectively.

Social Media

Within the area of domestic abuse, social media is seen as an emerging trend, a way to locate, coerce or exploit the girls and women. Services have begun to learn how to grapple with the issue of social media but it is likely that gang members of a younger generation far better understand the ways in which vulnerable females can be exploited and located by technology. Multiple perpetrators further complicate this area in terms of risk management.

It is also important for the females affected by gangs to understand their vulnerabilities when using social media, and ensure safety measures are in place where possible. An 'innocent' posting could have the potential to place a female in a dangerous or vulnerable situation.

How To Assess Risk And Vulnerability For Gang Affected Girls

It is important that assessment becomes a two part process in order to determine risks of both physical harm and loss. It is important not to underestimate the amount of loss a girl may be facing if they choose to leave a gang and be made safe.

"They feel like they belong somewhere, someone loves them, somebody cares for them and they are actually part of something…it's like a family unit" (A Nottingham Service).

The risk assessment should include the following vital questions:

- Who is likely to be harmed?
- What are the presenting risks?
- What are the severity of the risks?
- Which person(s) are perpetrating that risk?
- In what ways do the gang organise themselves?

The loss assessment accounts for fears the gang affected female may be facing surrounding the possibilities of losing her community and relationships if the risk management goes ahead.

For this reason it is important she is included in the risk assessment process. During this assessment, it is important that support structures are put into place. Without the vision of how life may be repaired and the hope of rebuilding a life independent of the gang, it is unlikely a female will consider leaving as

"the risk of being part of something is better than being part of nothing" (A Nottingham Service).

For many of the girls and women, this risk assessing process is likely to be traumatic. If a female has normalised the abuse or used defence or denial to block it out, coming to terms with the realities of her situation could be very distressing and so this needs to be accounted for.

The assessment process should be ongoing. If trust can be built up, a worker is more likely to gain an in-depth understanding of not only the initial risks of harm and loss of relationship, but also of the woman's other needs, including mental and sexual health, drug and alcohol use etc.

Safety Planning

Risk needs to be managed within context. If a girl or woman is staying within the gang, safety planning needs to take place with this is mind. Safety planning may need to take a multi-agency approach, it is unlikely that one service alone is able to meet all the needs of a gang affected female. After completing a comprehensive risk assessment, harm reduction strategies should be planned out, keeping in mind multiple perpetrations.

It would be useful, where possible, for the female to provide a gang related genogram.

If a girl wishes to exit a gang and is under 18, there are currently no refuges able to accommodate someone of such a young age.

Mapping

The purpose of mapping is to locate women and girls likely to be experiencing harm, but not presenting to services. When gangs are mapped, it is important that the associated females are also routinely identified.

Information sharing between agencies is important. One of the current difficulties surrounding mapping is that no central database exists into which all services can feed details to inform a mapping process – be that mapping of gang members or the females associated with them. For further information and demonstration, please see the case conferencing section of this report.

Exiting Gangs

Many girls and women become trapped in the gang environment and feel that they have nowhere to go to. This point is particularly true when the gang members also have familial links to the females.

"It's difficult to move the whole family, so they almost become trapped and don't feel that they've got any choices, you know, you're told that your family is gonna be murdered or your house is gonna be burnt down and you're young… how the hell do you get out of it?" (A Nottingham Service).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Case Conferencing

A multi-agency approach is needed in order to manage the risks. One way of achieving this is via case conferencing. Adequate time should be given for each case to account for the complexities of multiple perpetrators and the mapping process this requires. The case conference would need to be made up of relevant agencies including Vanguard, Vanguard Plus, PPU, WAIS/YIDVA, NGY, YOT, Protect and Respect, Social Care and Health and the Pink Project, with the possibility of a few key voluntary workers. Questions surrounding rigorous governance can make it difficult to include voluntary services, however, with the right support and input these services could still be viable inclusions. An information sharing agreement and terms of confidentiality would need to be created.

After undertaking a pilot case conference, MARAC representatives felt they had the relevant experience and familiarity with information sharing protocols, however they did not feel they had the resources to undertake an additional case conference. Alongside full time jobs they are already spending both a day attending MARAC meetings and almost a further full day undertaking the relevant MARAC research. In addition to this, many MARAC representatives did not feel they had

the expertise regarding gangs or gang affected females.

Flag Systems

Relevant services need the ability to create a flag system on their own databases. Should a female attend a service such as the QMC, if a flag was in place on the database, it could notify workers of her gang vulnerabilities and the relevant support and protections could then be put in place. The difficulty with flag systems is the responsibility of flag removal, once a female is no longer deemed 'at risk'.

Safeguarding Strategies

Safeguarding strategies should be created for both the girls and women who are affected by gangs and for their children.

Staff Training

"I don't know if there are any procedures for girls exiting gangs, so if I don't know as a professional how do young women know this?" (A Nottingham Service).

Staff should be able to identify, ask the right questions and manage risks presented by gang affected females. It is also important that professionals are aware of service provisions and pathways.

Relocation Strategies

Similar to 'honour' based violence strategies, we need to offer girls and women an opportunity to leave

Nottingham and seek refuge in another part of the country, without the fear of further gang entrapment. If required, they should also be given a new identity and be provided with witness protection, if possible with or without pressing charges.

Building Therapeutic Relationships

Many of the gang affected females find the process of trust and disclosure extremely difficult. Both females and services highlighted the need for consistent, dependable, trusting, therapeutic relationships. Due to short lived services and lack of funding, it is often difficult to build these relationships. Girls and women had difficulties disclosing to statutory services due to fears of breaches in confidentiality.

There are some outstanding examples of individual voluntary workers within the community who are providing dependable, consistent relationships, increasing the girl's and women's sense of worth and understanding of her own risks and including her in the managing of those risks. It is important to recognise the intensity of this work, however we cannot expect these valuable agencies and workers to continue to do such demanding work without adequate funding and support.

Responding To Needs

We have to recognise the missing needs of the gang affected females.

Whether it is a lack of love, protection or money, we have to find ways of identifying and acknowledging that need and find alternative ways of meeting that deficit. While recognising behaviours are important, these behaviours are unlikely to change unless we are able to grapple with core issues. By asking the right questions and listening to answers, we can learn what is happening to an individual and why they are behaving in a particular way, rather than simply lecturing about risks or consequences of the behaviour and not getting a true context of the situation.

Early Intervention

The earlier we intervene, the less opportunity there is for females to become entrapped and entrenched into a gang.

"They need a lot more support, not when it's happening, but you know, when they start going missing and they start committing offenses, and get exploited that way" (A Nottingham Service).

Many schools would be best placed for early intervention, or to identify young people at risk, however, many Nottingham services have experienced a reluctance from schools to get involved.

Lessen Familial Impact

Where family members are affected, safeguarding strategies need to be developed to reduce the impact of

the gang members on their lives. Where it is not possible to relocate, we need to find a way of creating safety and boundaries so the gangs cannot wholly affect the lives of these individuals.

Reducing Risk Offending Behaviours

We need to continue to address the criminal behaviours of the gang members themselves. Additionally we need to continue to challenge and educate young boys and men on their views of females and how these impact on the individual girls and women.

PATHWAYS AND PROVISIONS

Many girls and women do not identify as gang affected, and would be unlikely to visit a service specific to this client group. Other females believed that in visiting a specific service, they could become further stigmatised by association. As such, we believe a holistic approach across existing services is needed in order to create a more sustainable and beneficial solution. In addition, due to monetary restrictions and funding difficulties across services, we don't believe a singular service approach would answer all the needs identified throughout this report.

During consultation with services the following gaps within service provision were identified:

• Services need additional support and training to work with gang affected females. This needs to be across all universal services with strategic support from management for staff members. This could be incorporated within the domestic abuse strategy, expanding to include multiple perpetrators.

• Services appear to be unclear about referral pathways and what other services exist.

• Rather than a lack of services, there appears to be a lack of a co-ordinated Nottingham based strategy that transcends both statutory and non-statutory bodies.

• There appears to be some difficulties between statutory and non-statutory bodies in relation to communication, job roles and inter-agency relationships.

• Key services required for managing risks need to be adequately resourced and supported.

• Nottingham has two workers who have successfully trained as 'Young People Independent Domestic Violence Advocates'. It is felt that the role of the YP-IDVA will be crucial in supporting gang affected females and as such further development into this area is required to fully support these roles. Training is required for services who work with young people to undertake the new young people's DASH RIC when they identify potential domestic and/or gang related abuse.

• This report has started to collate a service and provision directory. This can be found in appendix 6. This will need further input and development from other agencies.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Due in part to monetary restrictions and funding difficulties across services, we don't believe a singular service approach would answer all the needs identified throughout this report. In addition, many girls and women do not identify as gang affected, and would be unlikely to visit a service specific to this client group. Other females believed that in visiting a specific service, they could become further stigmatised by association. As such, we believe a holistic approach across existing services is needed in order to create a more sustainable and beneficial solution.

Understanding Definitions

Through training, definitions can be made clearer and more understood, leading to a more universal understanding across Nottingham.

Understanding Context

In order to understand the risks for girls and women, services need a clear understanding of how gangs organise themselves via analysis of their behaviours. Without this descriptive picture, identification may be missed as services don't know the full extent of the issues.

Appropriate Communication And Language With Gang Affected Females

Across services, appropriate language and enquiry should be used during assessment to encourage disclosure in a way that the girls feel appropriately supported.

Recognising Risk Factors

This report has identified clear risk identifiers which now need to be understood and embedded within training across services. There are also further risk identifiers for child sexual exploitation which can be seen in appendix 7.

Prior to training being delivered we need to have developed clear Nottingham based strategies of how to manage risks for gang affected females.

Challenging Normalised Abuse And Contextualising Consent

We need to challenge the current concepts and beliefs surrounding abuse. There is a need for services to counterbalance normalisation of abuse that has occurred through community and family association and attitude, the idea that 'everyone is doing it, so it must be ok'.

Ensuring that services have an adequate understanding of consent issues in the specific context of gang culture and that they are actively working with clients to increase their awareness of consent.

Case Identification And Management Of Risk

Staff should be able to identify, ask the right questions, and know how to manage risks presented by gang

affected females. It is also important that professionals are aware of service provisions and pathways.

Recognising The Need For Building Therapeutic Relationships And Responding To Individual Needs Holistically

Many of the gang affected females find the process of trust and disclosure extremely difficult. Both females and services highlighted the need for consistent, dependable, trusting, therapeutic relationships. Due to short lived services and lack of funding, it is often difficult to build these relationships. Girls and women had difficulties disclosing to statutory services due to fears of breaches in confidentiality.

We have to recognise the missing needs of the gang affected females. Whether it is a lack of love, protection or money, we have to find ways of identifying and acknowledging that need and find alternative ways of meeting that deficit. While recognising behaviours are important, these behaviours are unlikely to change unless we are able to grapple with core issues. By asking the right questions and listening to answers, we can learn what is happening to an individual and why they are behaving in a particular way, rather than simply lecturing about risks or consequences of the behaviour and not getting a true context of the situation.

Impact On Targeted Interventions

Targeting campaigns via behaviours and/or shared experiences rather than blanket labelling that can lead to stereotyping and/or judgement.

Appropriate Communication And Language Throughout Campaigns

Campaigns need to use appropriate language that is meaningful to the girls and women.

Building Internalised Self-Worth

Campaigns should address the subjects of self-worth and externalised self-worth and ways in which support can be accessed so that girls and women can feel empowered in their own right and enabled to make their own decisions, rather than make decisions based on fear.

Education

Building upon educational programmes that continue to work in schools, highlighting previous experiences, signs and recognition of grooming and coercion and an understanding of why people enter gangs.

Being Drawn Into Gangs

Targeted prevention work for the young females needs to take place within settings such as schools (year 7 and above), youth clubs, community venues, colleges etc.

Familial Gang Connection

Prevention work for those born into

familial gangs need to take place prebirth to ensure the next generation of youth do not become trapped within gang culture.

Early Intervention

The earlier we intervene, the less opportunity there is for girls to become entrapped and entrenched into a gang.

Diversionary Activities

Those immersed into 'gang culture' would benefit from diversionary activities offering a different way of being in the world and could allow a girl or woman the opportunity to build her sense of self separately from the 'gang'.

Case Conferencing Hub

A multi-agency approach is needed in order to manage the risks of the females as one service is unlikely to be able to meet all the needs and complexities of the gang affected females. One way of achieving this is via case conferencing. Adequate time should be given for each case to account for the complexities of multiple perpetrators and the mapping process this requires. The case conference would need to be made up of relevant agencies including Vanguard, Vanguard Plus, PPU, WAIS/YIDVA, NGY, YOT, Protect and Respect, Social Care and Health and the Pink Project, with the possibility of a few key voluntary workers. Questions surrounding rigorous governance can make it difficult to

include the voluntary sector, however, with the right support and input these services could still be viable inclusions. An information sharing agreement and terms of confidentiality would need to be created.

After undertaking the pilot case conference, MARAC representatives felt they had the relevant experience and familiarity with information sharing protocols, however they did not feel they had the resources to undertake an additional case conference. Alongside full time jobs they are already spending both a day attending MARAC meetings and almost a further full day undertaking the relevant MARAC research. In addition to this, many MARAC representatives did not feel they had the expertise regarding gangs or gang affected females. We need to identify non MARAC representatives within each of the services who could attend the case conferences. They need to have experience and some knowledge with sexual and domestic abuse, gang complexities and trauma. It is possible if they don't meet all the criteria expected in understanding gang complexities, that this could be provided with additional training and shadowing of the Vanguard team.

Services concerned about gang affected females could potentially refer to the case conference hub and a support package could be identified as appropriate.

The case conference hub would keep

a central map of gang activity and gang associated girls and women, with reference to types of relationships, behaviours and exploitations.

Flag Systems

Relevant services need the ability to create a flag system on their own databases. If a girl was to attend a service such as the QMC, if a flag was in place on the database, it could notify workers of her gang vulnerabilities and relevant support and protections could then be put in place whist in QMC. The difficulty with flag systems is the responsibility of flag removal, once a female is no longer deemed 'at risk'.

Managing Risks Within Services

Each service will need to consider how they will manage risks that are prevalent for gang affected females. Before undertaking any actions, services will need to identify the likely consequences of taking action or making interventions. At this point it is most important that services listen to and take seriously the risks the girls and women identify as likely to happen. Universal services need to understand their position as a potential 'window of opportunity' to engage with gang affected females.

Relocation Strategies

Similar to 'honour' based violence strategies, we need to offer girls and women an opportunity to leave Nottingham and seek refuge in another part of the country, without

the fear of further gang entrapment. If required, they should also be given a new identity and be provided with witness protection, if possible with or without pressing charges.

Mentoring/Advocacy

Consultation with both gang affected females and services identified the importance of monitoring and advocacy. Feeling that they would listen to other peers and/or individual who had a in-depth understanding of their situation and had managed to exit.

Working With Trauma

Trauma has been identified as a prevalent experience for gang associated females, by both the women themselves and associated agencies. It is therefore recommended that services employ skilled therapists to provide psychological support to girls and women where appropriate.

In addition, workers themselves are potentially vulnerable to experiencing vicarious trauma. As such, it is recommended that workers are able to access adequate and relevant supervision, and if required occupational therapy.

Lessen Familial Impact

Where family members are affected, safeguarding strategies need to be developed to reduce the impact of the gang members on their lives. Where it is not possible to relocate, we need to find a way of creating

safety and boundaries so the gangs cannot wholly affect the lives of these individuals.

Reducing Risk Offending Behaviours

We need to continue to address the criminal behaviours of the gang members themselves. Additionally we need to continue to challenge and educate young boys and men on their views of females and how these impact on individual girls and women. This could happen within schools, YOT, community champions and other children and adult services.

Systemic Strategies

Strategic changes need to be made in terms of existing systems in order to acknowledge the complexities of gang affected females.

Crown Prosecution Service

We need to recognise the context in which consent appears to be given. Simplifying consent into 'yes' or 'no' boxes can prevent prosecution of perpetrators and the recognition of victims.

Police

We need to recognise that criminal behaviour undertaken by girls and women may be carried out under duress. Therefore a fuller understanding of the context of the crime is needed. Consideration needs to be given to the 'stop and search' procedures. Research has identified

that gang members are asking females to carry weapons/drugs as the gang members perceive that they are less likely to be stopped and searched. It is imperative that police do not simply criminalise young women who are found to be carrying weapons/ drugs without first establishing the potential cohesion and threat of violence towards women if they do not agree to undertake these tasks.

Safeguarding Strategies

Safeguarding strategies should be created for both the girls and women who are affected by gangs and for their children. We propose that a specific gang affected females safeguarding working group is established to devise relevant safeguarding strategies. The final strategy would need to be embedded within existing LSCB strategy and operational plans, domestic and sexual violence, child protection and so forth.

Before we encourage gang affected females to disclose, it is essential that we have created a strategic plan of how Nottingham will manage risks and effectively safeguard girls and women post disclosure.

We need to offer girls and women an opportunity to leave Nottingham and seek refuge in another part of the country, without the fear of further gang entrapment. If required, they should also be given a new identity and be provided with witness protection, if possible with or without

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pressing charges. Relocation would need to be included within the safeguarding strategy.

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Educational Strategy

This need to include all educational establishments: private, state and faith schools. It is recommended that interventions in schools needs to begin in at least Year 7 of secondary education, as this is the age at which both boys and girls are more likely to be groomed into gangs. Children who are born into gang affected families need the school to be a place where teachers understand the complexities of their home life, provide emotional support, increase their aspirations and provide a gateway to another alternate life.

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Good Practice Guidance

To set up a working group to develop good practice guidance, a risk matrix and pathways for females experiencing abuse from multiple perpetrators.

2. Interagency Working

To strengthen interagency communication and risk management in relation to safeguarding gang affected girls and women. Considering information sharing protocols across statutory and non-statutory services.

3. Training for Services

To build upon existing awareness training and develop skills based training, enabling services to identify and manage the risks that impact gang affected females.

4. Programmes for Young People

To build upon and establish a coordinated response for existing prevention and intervention programmes for young people within schools and other settings.

5. Capacity Building

To continue to build capacity within existing mentoring and advocacy programmes, community based projects, charities and voluntary services to enable girls and women to rebuild their lives and have their needs met independently.

6. Therapeutic Interventions

To provide therapeutic interventions for girls and women who have experienced significant trauma. To increase understanding of trauma and vicarious trauma across professionals and community members.

7. Boys and Young Men

To increase therapeutic interventions for boys and young men experiencing trauma. To increase safeguarding for boys under 18 who are involved in criminal activity (i.e. 10 year old boys drug dealing at night).

8. Communication Strategies & Campaigns

To initiate campaigns to raise awareness of issues relating to consent, externalised self-worth and multiple perpetrators. Communication and marketing teams of statutory services need to consult with relevant services to ensure they best communicate the above messages.

9. Service Directory

Continue development of a service directory for gang affected females

and identify relevant organisation to host and up-date the directory.

10. Stop and Search

Police to review policies of 'stop and search' in relation to possible coercion placed on girls and women to carry drugs and weapons.

11. Crown Prosecution Service Review

CPS to review criminalisation of females who are coerced into criminal activity.

12. Development of Policies

Safeguarding policies across services to incorporate the needs of individuals experiencing abuse and/or at risk of abuse from multiple perpetrators.

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APPENDIX 1 - A LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT SERVICES

Participants were recruited from the following key agencies working with gang affected females to take part in semi-structured interviews:

- Public Protection Unit
- Vanguard
- Vanguard Plus
- Pink Project
- Chayah Group
- Equation
- WAIS
- Base 51
- Ground Works
- Children in Care Police Officer
- London Road
- Safeguard and Quality Assurance Lead
- Beckhampton School
- Health Promotion Specialist in Sexual Health
- POW

Additionally, Topaz (SARC) and Take One were asked to participate in the interviews, but unfortunately did not respond to contact requests.

Consultations took place with staff members from:

- Grassroots
- NSPCC - Protect and Respect

APPENDIX 2 - CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The following statement was used before commencing each of the semi-structured interviews with services:

"This interview involves asking questions about potential risks of harm to children and women. For the purpose of this interview we do not require individual case details of women. However, if you do talk about something that suggests that a child and or women is currently at significant risk of harm and is not receiving support in order to be made safe then I may need to break the confidentiality of this interview and implement safeguarding procedures. Should this arise, I will try and discuss any breach of confidentiality with you".

APPENDIX 3 - SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What is your definition of a gang or group?
- What is your definition of a girl or woman affected by a gang or group?
- What do you perceive are the risks to girls or women affected by gangs or group?
- In your experience and understanding, how do most girls and women become drawn into gangs?
- What are the life experiences of the girls or women you and your team work with?
- What do you think are the reasons for girls and women not leaving gangs?
- What are the barriers to accessing help and support for these girls and women?
- What does your service provide for girls and women affected by gangs or groups?
- How do you think your work is viewed by other services?
- How do you link with other services?
- What support do you get either internally or externally?
- What kind of outcomes do you see?
- What work are you aware of happening in Nottingham in relation to gang or group affected females?
- Are you aware of any gender specific work? Work for boys as well as girls? Or single-sex spaces?
- What are the main challenges and barriers to delivering the work that you and your team provide?
- What are the gaps in practice, services and interventions?
- What do services need for these gaps in provision to be filled?

APPENDIX 4 - RECEIVERS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires (see appendix 5) were sent to 19 services likely to have regular contact with females (but who may be potentially unaware of their actual risks or needs).

1. Neighbourhood Development Officers
2. Emergency Department
3. Priority Families
4. Compass Young Persons
5. GUM
6. NEMS
7. Nottingham Women's Centre
8. Housing Aid
9. Nottingham City Homes
10. Family Support Workers
11. Social Workers
12. Safeguarding Education link
13. Specialist midwifes
14. School Nurses/Health Visitors
15. Secondary Education Partnership
16. CASH
17. CAMHS
18. Explore Family
19. CJIT

We had a return rate of 26% on these questionnaires.

APPENDIX 5 - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SERVICES

Questionnaire

The Health Shop has been commissioned to carry out a project to identify current risks to girls and women affected by 'gangs' within Nottingham. The aim of this project is to create a final report with recommendations for Nottingham based commissioners, outlining the types of services and interventions required to ensure that the risks faced by girls and women are significantly reduced. We also aim to develop best practice guidance for services on managing such risks.

The Health Shop was approached to undertake this project as a neutral service with no conflicting interest. The Health Shop has provided sexual health and harm reduction services to marginalised groups for over twenty years.

The project has highlighted issues with the terms 'gang' and 'group' and we ask that you use the term which makes most sense to you.

1. How would you identify a girl/woman as being affected by a 'gang' or 'group'?

2. What type of questions would you ask?

3. What concerns might you have specifically relating to 'gang' or 'group' association?

4. Which services would you refer to for additional support specifically relating to the risks the girls/women face in relation to 'gangs' and 'groups'?

5. Do you have any trigger questions on your assessment tools to identify a girl or woman at risk of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse (including control and coercion) from more than one person?

6. Do you know of girls/women within your service who are being affected by 'gang' or 'group'?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 6 - INDICATORS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The following indicators are taken from the Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation Home Office 2009 report and have also been used in the NSPCC Protect and Respect service information for external agencies:

Indicators of possible sexual exploitation linked with Assessment Framework

Domain: Child or Young Person's Developmental Needs

HEALTH:

- Physical Symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault)
- Chronic fatigue
- Recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- Sexually risky behaviour

EDUCATION:

- Truancy/disengagement with education or considerable change in performance at school
- Emotional and Behavioural Development:
- Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language
- Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing
- Secretive behaviour
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults

IDENTITY:

- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity

FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- Hostility in relationship with parents/carers and other family members
- Physical aggression towards parents, siblings, pets, teachers or peers
- Placement breakdown
- Reports from reliable sources (e.g. parents/carers, friends or other professionals in

contact with the child or young person) suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation
- Detachment from age-appropriate activities
- Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited
- Young person known to be sexually active
- Sexual relationship with a significantly older person
- Unexplained relationships with older adults
- Possible inappropriate use of the Internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the Internet
- Phone calls, text messages or letters from unknown adults
- Adults or older youths loitering outside the child's usual place of residence
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base
- Missing for long periods, with no known home base
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links

SOCIAL PRESENTATION:

- Change in appearance
- Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people)

Domain: Parental Capacity

ENSURING SAFETY
-
- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or neglect

Domain: Family and Environmental Factors

FAMILY HISTORY AND FUNCTIONING

- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties

HOUSING

- Pattern of street homelessness
- Having keys to premises other than those known about

INCOME

- Possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation
- Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding

FAMILY'S SOCIAL INTEGRATION

- Reports that the child have been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation

Indicators of possible sexual exploitation for boys and young men linked with Assessment Framework

Domain: Child Development Needs

HEALTH

- Physical symptoms - sexually transmitted infections, bruising or other marks on the body suggestive of physical or sexual abuse
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Self-harming or eating disorders

EDUCATION

- Truanting from school, deterioration of schoolwork or part-time timetable

EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Secretive
- Young offender behaviour or anti-social behaviour
- Secretive about Internet use or using adult networking sites
- Sexualising language
- Aggressive and violent
- Sexually offending behaviour

FAMILY AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Associating with other children at risk of sexual exploitation
- Missing from home or staying out late

- Getting into cars of unknown people
- Contact with unknown adults outside of normal social group via face to face meetings, Internet, text messaging or phone calls

IDENTITY

- Low self-esteem, poor self-image or lack of confidence

SOCIAL PRESENTATION

- Wearing an unusual amount of clothing

Domain: Family and Environmental Factors

INCOME

- Social activities with no explanation of how funded
- Possession of abnormal amounts of money, gifts, new mobile phones, credit on mobile phones, number of SIM cards

FAMILY'S SOCIAL INTEGRATION

- Frequenting known high-risk areas or going to addresses of concern
- Seen at public toilets known for cottaging or adult venues (pubs and clubs)