
**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report To: Citizenship and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 8
September 2010

Subject: Guns and Gangs

Report of: Pauline Newman – Director Children’s Services
Geoff Little – Deputy Chief Executive (Performance)

Summary:

To provide the committee with an update on the guns and gangs area of innovation and to look at preventative work.

To provide latest statistics regarding gun discharges. To provide the committee with an understanding of how young people get involved in guns and gangs and how this understanding has shaped the approach.

The committee will also be given information on the good practices that have seen Manchester being awarded a Green Flag in this area as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and detail the approach taken to deter young people being involved in gangs.

Recommendations:

That Overview and Scrutiny Committee members note the contents of this report and continue to support the work currently undertaken to intervene at an early stage in order to prevent and tackle gang activity in our communities.

Wards Affected:

City wide

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to four years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Manchester Safeguarding Children Board: Safeguarding Children and Young People at risk of Gang Firearms activity.
- DCSF: Gang Violence keeping children and young people safe.
- Greater Manchester Police Xcalibre Task Force statistics
- Department for Children, Schools and Families: Every Child Matters.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The issues of young people involved with guns and gangs are unfortunately not new concerns to Manchester. The issue of gun/gang violence has existed in the City for the past twenty or more years, with a growing trend of younger people becoming active gang members.

1.2 There is a large research evidence base pertaining to gang culture and violence. Each city where there is an identified gang problem appears to have its own unique issues and own methods of addressing this..

Whilst there is no doubt that the drivers for involvement in gang sub-culture are complex and multi-faceted, Manchester's partnership approach to prevention, early intervention, support and enforcement provides a strategic and operational environment in which services and interventions have been developed to deliver better outcomes for children and young people at risk of gang involvement.

1.3 Manchester has received national recognition for its innovative approach to tackling gun/gang violence, being awarded the Butler award in 2009 and a green flag through the Comprehensive Area Assessment for its partnership approach.

1.4 The results of this integrated approach are clear to see. Greater Manchester Police Force set the B division area of Manchester (Moss Side, Longsight, Rusholme, Hulme and Gorton) a target reduction of 30 firearm discharges for

the year (2010), with one third of the year gone there has been just one firearm discharge.

- Please see below for discharge figures month on month for the last three full years and the first four months of this year to give an accurate comparison. Manchester is split into three police divisions, South Manchester being the C division, North Manchester being the A division and Metropolitan being the B division.
- The tables feature the A, B and C division. The B division is primarily the division affected by gun and gang crime.

2007-08

	A	B	C
April	1	5	0
May	1	4	1
June	1	5	1
July	1	6	1
Aug	5	9	0
Sept	3	5	0
Oct	5	7	0
Nov	2	3	1
Dec	2	3	2
Jan	1	2	3
Feb	0	2	3
March	2	4	2
Total	24	55	14
Gang-related	1	28	2

2008-09

	A	B	C
April	0	2	1
May	0	0	1
June	0	2	1
July	0	2	3
Aug	0	1	1
Sept	1	0	2
Oct	1	0	0
Nov	3	2	0
Dec	2	1	0
Jan	0	3	1
Feb	1	3	0
March	3	1	0
Total	11	17	10
Gang-related	0	8	0

2009-10

	A	B	C
April	0	2	0
May	1	2	1
June	1	4	0
July	3	0	0
Aug	0	2	0
Sept	0	0	0
Oct	0	1	0
Nov	0	2	1
Dec	1	3	0
Jan	0	1	0
Feb	0	0	0
March	0	2	0
Total	6	19	2
Gang-related	0	11	0

2010-11

	A	B	C
April	2	0	2
May	1	1	2
June	0	0	0
July	1	0	1
Total	4	1	5
Gang-related	0	1	0

- 1.5 Work in schools through the 8 Till Late project is addressing issues related to living in family networks where gang culture is prevalent and by helping young girls and boys to develop the self confidence and resilience to resist pressure to become involved in gangs.
- 1.6 There is no room for complacency as gun and gang culture is extremely volatile, but it is true to say that Manchester has made great strides in tackling the serious violence associated with gang culture. The reduction in firearms incidents as outlined above has allowed us the space within which to develop a greater understanding of the wider gang culture and to plan multi-agency responses to key issues.
- 1.7 It is within this context that this report will focus on the global issues regarding gun and gang activity in Manchester and the positive steps being taken to counter it.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 When considering issues around any individual involved in guns and gangs, the following definitions are used by Manchester Multi Agency Gang Service (MMAGS) and Greater Manchester Police to establish the criteria of a gang member and associates. The definition has also been agreed by Manchester Safeguarding Children Board.
- 2.2 **A Gang** – Is a group of three or more people who have a distinct identity (e.g. a name or badge/emblem), which commits general criminal or anti-social behaviour as part of that identity and uses (or is reasonably suspected of using) firearms or the threat of firearms in the commission of offences.
- 2.3 **A Gang Member** – Is someone who has self-identified as being a member of a gang (as above), e.g. through verbal statements, tattoos, correspondence, graffiti and this is corroborated by police, partner agencies or community intelligence.

- 2.4 **A Gang Associate** – Is someone who offends with gang members (as above), or who is associated by police, partner agencies or community intelligence with gang members or who has displayed through conduct or behaviour, a specific desire or intent to become a gang member.
- 2.5 MMAGS have found that people join gangs through a variety of reasons and influences that include:
- The location of where they live, many of the Manchester gangs have been traditionally located within the B Division area of the city.
 - Peer pressure and a perceived status from others
 - Protection from perceived threats
 - Exploitation/vulnerability, there are individuals who refuse to admit that they are part of a gang but through for example seeking protection, storing weapons and associating they are unwitting gang members. Some gang members particularly are bullied into storing weapons and drugs.
 - To belong/ gain excitement: some individuals feel comfort belonging to an identified group, whilst others just see it as exciting - this is a particular viewpoint of younger gang members.
 - Revenge: some individuals join gangs due to a sense of injustice
 - Money; some gangs are classed as Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) due to them selling drugs or being involved in other illegal activity. The majority of Manchester gangs are not classed as OCGs.
 - 'Respect'; individuals feel they gain respect from others if they are a gang member.
 - Family/Friends; some families have a history of being involved in gangs, siblings of gang members continue to be at risk of being involved. Some gang members are just friends of recognised gang members so are classed as a member of a particular gang due to this.
 - Prison; MMAGs has found that prison can be a tribal environment with individuals being threatened and at risk due to where they come from; this may result in them seeking protection from a gang. Individuals are also recruited as they could be deemed as more vulnerable whilst in custody.
- 2.6 Manchester Safeguarding Children Board has recognised the safeguarding issues for young people involved in gangs and produced specific guidance, Safeguarding Children and Young people at risk of Gang Firearms Activity which has recently been updated in July 2010. The same document states that 'in Manchester children and young people on the periphery of becoming involved in gangs is seen as a safeguarding issue'.
- 2.7 The Safeguarding Children and Young People at risk of Gang Firearms activity document states that the protocol contained within will aim to.
- Ensure accountability detailing the specific role played by each agency in delivering a coordinated response to the cohort.

- Identify young people at risk of involvement in anti social behaviour, emergent criminality and associating with firearms gang activity as an early intervention approach.
- Increase safe choices for young people.

3. Manchester's Approach to Working with Young People At Risk or Involved in Gangs

- 3.1 Manchester benefits from a multi-stranded approach with several key elements which will be covered here. These include the overarching Manchester Safeguarding Children Board protocol and the YOS(Youth Offending Service) and MAPPA multi-agency processes. The individual roles of the MMAGS(Manchester multi-agency gang service), GMP Xcalibre, 8 til Late project, Safer Schools Partnership and Protect Team will also be explained. Not every young person exposed to or involved in gangs in the city will be identified through specialist systems, therefore we take a universal approach to ensuring that any young person who may be at risk of gang involvement is identified, assessed and referred through the appropriate system and into the appropriate service(s).
- 3.2 The CAF(Common Assessment Framework) is a standardised approach to conducting assessments of children's additional needs and deciding how these should be met. It can be used by practitioners across children's services in England.
- 3.3 The CAF promotes more effective, earlier identification of additional needs, particularly in universal services. It aims to provide a simple process for a holistic assessment of children's needs and strengths; taking account of the roles of parents, carers and environmental factors on their development. Practitioners are then better placed to agree with children and families about appropriate modes of support. The CAF also aims to improve integrated working by promoting coordinated service provisions.
- 3.4 The identified lead professional from the CAF meeting will draw together a multi agency meeting and as a result of this, interventions will be identified to support the family. Representatives from MMAGS/8 Til Late will be in attendance and if the risk of gang association is a possibility appropriate assessments will be undertaken.
- 3.5 As part of the risk management process for gang-involved young people, there are two elements which address risk to the individual and the community.
- 3.6 Case Planning Forums (CPF), are used by Manchester Youth Offending Service (YOS) to address risk for all young people they supervise who meet the agreed thresholds. In addition to this, the YOS hold gang- specific Case Planning Forums for individuals already identified as being involved in gun or gang activity and who are on statutory orders with the YOS. As with all the case planning forums they are multi agency with YOS, the police, Children's

Services and other agencies all present. The meeting is normally chaired by a YOS manager and collaboratively a risk management plan is drawn up that can include specific activities for an individual or enhanced supervision due to risk. Apart from guidance to practitioners what also works well at the Case Planning Forums is the management oversight of difficult cases and the information sharing by all parties present.

- 3.7 Alongside gang specific case planning forums for young people, Manchester has developed gang specific Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings. The aim of the Gang MAPPA is to ensure that a risk management plan is drawn up for the most serious gang members which benefits from pooling the information, skills and resources provided by the individual partner agencies.
- 3.8 Manchester's gang specific MAPPAS are chaired by either a senior police officer or a Probation Service manager and can be robust according to the level of identified risk, there are three levels of risk:
 - 3.9 Level One: involves normal agency management
 - Generally offenders managed at this level will be assessed as presenting a low or medium risk of serious harm to others. A majority of MAPPA cases are managed at this level.
 - 3.10 Level Two: often called local inter-risk agency management
 - Most offenders assessed as high or very high risk of harm.
 - 3.11 Level Three: known as Multi-Agency Public Protection Panels (or MAPPPs)
 - Appropriate for those offenders who pose the highest risk of causing serious harm or whose management is so problematic that multi-agency co-operation and oversight at a senior level is required with the authority to commit exceptional resources.
 - 3.12 Gang members on statutory orders who have recently found themselves meeting level two threshold have either been accommodated out of area or given strict conditions as part of their order. As with CPFs, MAPPA meetings are multi agency with all agencies encouraged to contribute. MAPPA meetings are not just about enforcement; for some gang members to return to a specific area after a custodial sentence may involve them being at risk of harm so to combat this an individual would be given an exclusion zone not permitting them into a highlighted area.
 - 3.13 The MAPPA process can also highlight work or individual support needs .This work will be undertaken by the Probation Officer in the MMAGS team. Cases are reviewed frequently and if an individual complies, their risk status will be reduced. If an individual fails to comply, enforcement action will be taken.

- 3.14 MMAGS is Manchester's specialist multi agency service that works closely in partnership with other agencies to address the issue of gun and gang activity in the city; alongside this are other agencies that provide preventative interventions to individuals and their families.
- 3.15 The MMAGS team consists of a dedicated team of multi agency practitioners drawn across partnership agencies that includes.
- A Probation officer
 - A Youth Offending Service Officer
 - A senior Social worker
 - One outreach worker
 - Two mentors
- 3.16 The service is engaged with around 80 gang members at any one time and it predominantly focuses on:
- Challenging behaviour associated with gang culture,
 - Engaging with a range of agencies to support gang members out of gang involvement.
 - Longer term interventions to help individuals change their lifestyle.
 - Working with the individual and with family members to develop strategies to exit gang culture
 - Working with agencies to undertake risk management plans, to protect both the community and the individual concerned.
 - Providing a knowledge and information base for other agencies.
- 3.17 MMAGS clients are not all voluntary, many of them are on statutory Orders with either The Probation Service or The Youth Offending Service; through these two agencies along with the Senior Social Worker a strong link to statutory services is ensured. If a MMAGS client is on a statutory order to YOS or Probation, MMAGS will address specific gun or gang issues as part of the supervision plan whilst other issues will be addressed by the YOS or Probation Officer who maintains responsibility for the case. If a client is referred on a voluntary basis, MMAGS will have responsibility for the entire case.
- 3.18 There are three strands for receiving interventions from MMAGS for individuals involved in gun or gang activity:
- For Children/young people aged under 18, the Safeguarding Board protocol highlighted above will apply. The criteria for this is any child or young person considered to be at risk from anti social behaviour, emergent criminality, or associating with firearm gang activity will prompt a referral to the contact centre using the multi agency referral form.
 - Upon receipt of this referral, if the young person is already known to Children's Services and has existing statutory involvement, the case holding social worker will make a referral to the Child in Need Coordinator who will then convene a case planning meeting to address

concerns. Present at this meeting will be all relevant parties including MMAGS and 8 till Late as mentioned above.

- If the case is not known to statutory agencies, the MMAGS Social Worker will undertake an initial assessment that may lead to a multi agency professionals meeting convened with core agencies. A lead professional for this case would also be identified, the case planning process would then be implemented.
- For children/young people aged 8 – 14 years a referral may be made to the '8 til Late' project. The project intensively mentors young people and their families and provides positive diversionary activities and support,
- For individuals aged 14 years onwards a referral to MMAGS can be made

3.19 The 8 til late project is an early intervention project for children aged between 8 and 14 years deemed 'at risk' of joining gangs/committing crime and using weapons.

The criteria for referral is that children have to fit any one of the below descriptions.

- Have siblings/family members/friends involved in gangs.
- Affected by gang violence.
- Showing an attraction to gangs/weapons.

3.20 Children are supervised by a team of mentors and engage intensively between 8 – 10 hours a week through individual sessions, group work, sporting activities and school support.

A family support worker is attached to the project to assist parents with parenting skills, referrals to external agencies, attendance at parenting courses and any other additional support needs.

The team also work in primary and secondary schools delivering preventative work to children around the consequences of joining gangs.

3.21 The Safer School Partnerships in Manchester are a structured way for schools and police to work together to tackle issues that may affect school performance, attendance and the wellbeing of pupils. A number of Manchester schools particularly on the B division where pupils may be involved in gangs have additional support from the Police and other agencies designed to:

- Help engage young people
- keep schools safe and reduce anti-social behaviour in the wider community
- Help to nurture a better relationship between young people and the police.
- Help improve behaviour of pupils on journeys to and from school and around the school site, thereby making everyone in the school community feel safe;
- Build positive relationships between pupils and the police;

- Receive input from MMAGS and Xcalibre, the GMP unit dedicated to reducing gun/gang crime
 - Improve community relations generally within the school and wider local community;
 - Support the school in preventing and tackling bullying, racism, violent extremism, weapons, illegal drugs and gang culture.
 - SSPs encourage greater confidence in the police by making them more visible and accessible and provide young people with a valuable role model.
- 3.22 Manchester has a dedicated post, funded and employed through GMP, committed to supporting children and young people affected by youth violence and or gun crime, this post holder also builds partnerships and projects with young people through local third sector groups and the above mentioned Safer Schools Partnerships.
- 3.23 In 2004, Greater Manchester Police established the Xcalibre Task Force which is a dedicated unit within GMP to tackle the criminal use of firearms, challenge gun culture and work towards making the streets across Greater Manchester gun-free.
- 3.24 Xcalibre has a focus on enforcement and works closely with all partners and contributes to all risk management plans. Xcalibre's work with partner agencies contributes to risk assessments and information on suspected gang members.
- 3.25 Xcalibre has a member of Manchester City Council's Anti Social Behaviour Team working alongside them in partnership. The primary function of this role is to provide Xcalibre with advice and support in the application of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and Conviction Anti Social Behaviour Orders (CRASBO). All the ASBOS AND CRASBOS issued by Xcalibre are to individuals identified as being gang members and individuals on the periphery of gang activity and can contain conditions such as:
- Not associating with a specified individual or group.
 - To not use abusive, insulting, intimidating or threatening language or behaviour likely to cause harassment or alarm.
 - Not to enter a specific area.
 - To not wear specific items that can be interpreted as gang associated
- 3.26 Individuals who breach the terms of their ASBOS are committing a criminal offence and are arrested and brought before the Court.
- 3.27 The PROTECT team was formed as a multi-agency project tackling the individuals who target vulnerable young people for the purposes of Child Sexual Exploitation, It seeks to:
- Safeguard children
 - Secure convictions against perpetrators

- Provide direct work to support victims
- 3.28 The PROTECT Team consists of staff from Barnardo's, The Children's Society, Greater Manchester Police and Manchester Children's Services, working from a dedicated location at Grey Mare Lane police station.
- 3.29 The Protect team has undertaken work with young girls affiliated to gangs where the risk of exploitation has been attributed to gang members. Protect, MMAGS and Xcalibre have come together under a formal strategy meeting to share all available information and formulate robust child protection plans on recent cases. This highlights the importance of intelligence gathering and sharing information by all agencies so that risks can be identified and effectively managed.
- 3.30 The nature and extent of females involved in gangs is only emerging but evidence from MMAGS and Xcalibre reveal that this is an increasing concern. It is through the work of MMAGS, Xcalibre and the Protect Team that the role of young women has come to prominence. Furthermore, the criminal investigation into gangs has also highlighted how young women are targeted and groomed by gangs through the use of technology including mobile phones and social networking sites.
- 3.31 An example of a current joint initiative is TYS (Targeted Youth Support) Police, MMAGS and 8 till Late currently running a project working with Somalia youths and their families. The project offers holistic family support co-ordinated by a multi agency approach. GMP identify a number of individuals who are on the periphery of gang activity, a meeting is formulated with key partner agencies and jointly a targeted piece of work is put together to address issues such as offending behaviour, gang involvement, living within a community, behaviour and consequences, well being and unemployment. In order to address some of these core issues, an eight-week personal, social and development programme specifically aimed at this cohort, has been designed and delivered utilising the multi agency approach. Though the main thrust of this work is to prevent anti social behaviour in a specific area, MMAGS addresses any gang issues that may arise and provides ongoing support on a voluntary basis to individuals.
- 3.32 The voluntary and community sector offer a wide range of youth work programmes across Manchester. These programmes include centre based, outreach and detached youth work.

4. Future Developments

- 4.1 Girls and women and gangs – Currently there are no known all female gangs or active gang members in Manchester, however, last year a female was convicted for carrying a firearm believed to be her boyfriend's who was a known gang member. The role of women and girls in gangs or on the periphery is thought to be a previously underestimated problem.

- 4.2 Children's Services, Xcalibre and MMAGS are working closely together which is critical in building up intelligence so that vulnerable girls can be identified and safeguarding services targeted.
- 4.3 Xcalibre and Children's Services have made effective use of Emergency Police Protection Orders (EPPOs), by removing children who refuse to remove themselves from an immediate threat of serious injury or death to a place of safety, which is often out of area.
- 4.4 Though there have been specific female focused interventions in the past, Xcalibre, MMAGS and third sector agencies are all in the process of putting work together to address this growing problem, in addition to this Councillor Ali chairs a group at the Hideaway Centre in Moss Side that looks at what services are available for girls involved in gangs. Third Sector agencies such as Women's Aid play a vital role in the identification of female gang victims over the age of 18. Partnership work between MMAGS and Women's Aid is in its formative stages but it is hoped that good positive practice can be established.
- 4.5 Gang Injunctions – Gang injunctions are a power created by the Policing and Crime Act 2009 which enables the police and Local Authorities to apply for an injunction against an individual aged 14 – 17 years (there is also an injunction for individuals aged 18 and above) to prevent gang related violence. It is believed that the injunctions will be in place before the end of 2010.
- 4.6 The objectives of the injunctions are to:
- Prevent Acts of serious violence occurring.
 - Break down gang culture and prevent young people's behavior escalating.
 - Provide an opportunity for local agencies to engage with at risk young people and develop strategies for them to exit the lifestyle.
- 4.7 When a young person receives or is considered for an injunction, a safeguarding referral should be made.

5.0 Conclusion

- As the report outlines, there is a significant amount of positive work currently being undertaken to tackle gun and gang activity in the city.
- There remains an absolute commitment to using a twin track approach incorporating enforcement and preventative measures.
- There is evidence through the reduction in shootings that the twin track approach is having a high success rate.
- Further work needs to be undertaken to improve perceptions and community confidence in the ability of the police and public services to work together to tackle issues that matter most to local communities.
- Further work is required regarding the displacement of offenders.

- The role of young women within gangs and their risk of sexual exploitation by their peers and older gang members are emerging as a significant safeguarding issue. This has been recognised nationally with the DCSF having published in March this year specific safeguarding guidance for children and young people affected by gang activity. Whilst there is much work that needs to be undertaken, Manchester can evidence strong and well-established agency partnerships working together to address this concerning safeguarding issue.