

Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence Strategy

2017 – 2020



Safer
Bristol
Crime, Drugs and Alcohol
Partnership

“Violence can be prevented. Governments, communities and individuals can make a difference”
Nelson Mandela 2002

Foreword

Street conflict and involvement in gang activity can affect any young person, from any family, in any neighbourhood. However, we must not be blind to the fact that some young people are disproportionately affected by these issues.

Many children growing up in the inner city areas of Bristol are at daily risk of experiencing street conflict and issues relating to gangs. For too long these young people have felt helpless and not listened to.

The diversionary, positive activities they have needed to steer a safe course in life, away from street conflict may not have been accessible to them.

Through the activity outlined within this strategy, we are pledging to end young people’s involvement in gangs and street conflict. We will empower them to fulfil their true potential, in safe and vibrant communities that are free from crime.



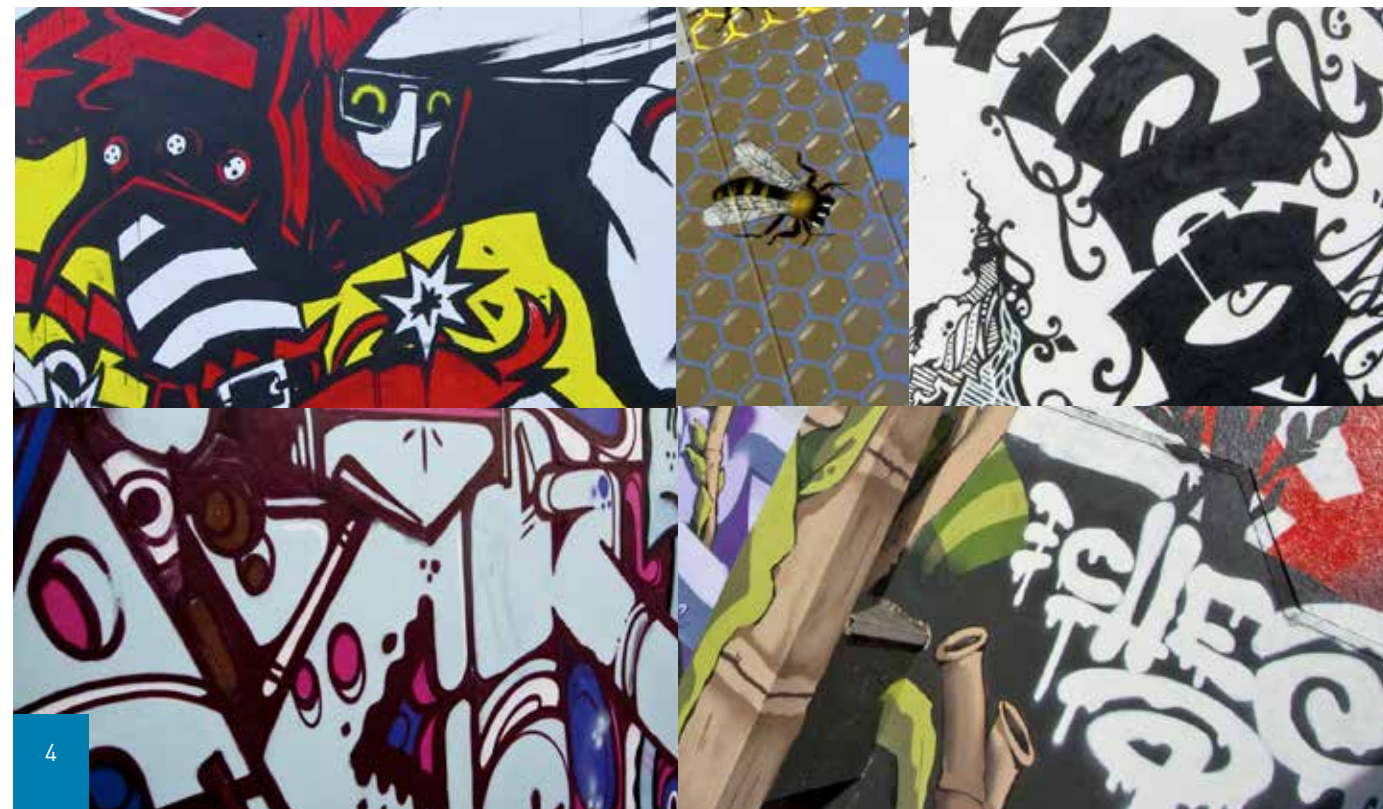
Cllr. Asher Craig,
Cabinet Member

Introduction

Gang violence has afflicted some neighbourhoods and communities in Bristol over many years. In 2001, armed police officers were placed on the streets of central Bristol in response to a sharp rise in gang related violence in St Pauls. The dynamics of who is involved has changed and continues to change. A constant, however, is that gang-related violence in Bristol is inextricably linked to illicit drug supply. Gangs are increasingly exploiting vulnerable young people in Bristol to sustain their criminal activity. There are many factors that draw young people into gangs: poverty, inequality, parental separation and/or other negative childhood experiences such as domestic violence and abuse, mental illness, alcohol and substance misuse. Also, perceptions of safety and exposure to crime. We all have a part to play in tackling these risks and building on the strengths and resilience of young people and their families to divert them away from gangs and street conflict.

Nationally, the government's 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence: Community Engagement' 2014 report, highlighted key principles for successful community engagement as part of the solution to combating gang and youth violence. It also reinforced the principle that ending youth violence requires an end-to-end approach, from prevention to rehabilitation, from a range of statutory and non-statutory partners including the local community, public agencies and businesses.

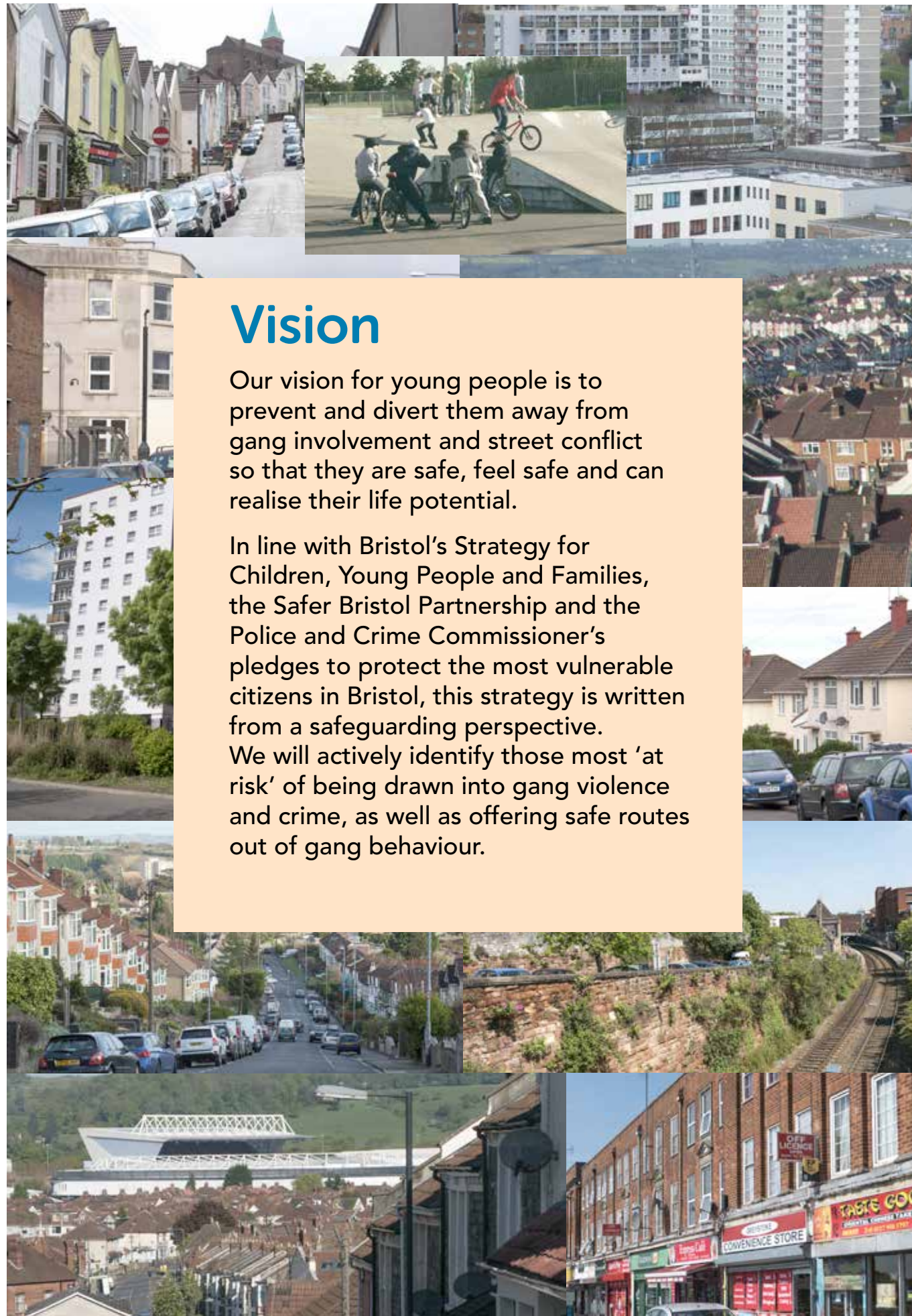
Locally, Bristol's 'Strategy for Children, Young People and Families, 2016-2020' explicitly prioritises the prevention of young people becoming involved in street conflict and anti-social behaviour.



Building on the recommendations and aspirations of these documents, it is the intention of this 'Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence' strategy to structure our local response to gangs and street conflict, around the following themes:

- **Engagement and Support**
Prevention, early intervention and diversion
- **Empowerment**
Delivering solutions, options and tools for young people and the communities affected by street conflict
- **Enforcement and Disruption**
Diverting young people away from harm and safeguarding individuals and communities





Vision

Our vision for young people is to prevent and divert them away from gang involvement and street conflict so that they are safe, feel safe and can realise their life potential.

In line with Bristol's Strategy for Children, Young People and Families, the Safer Bristol Partnership and the Police and Crime Commissioner's pledges to protect the most vulnerable citizens in Bristol, this strategy is written from a safeguarding perspective. We will actively identify those most 'at risk' of being drawn into gang violence and crime, as well as offering safe routes out of gang behaviour.

Underlying principles of our approach:



Linked strategies and areas of work:

- Substance Misuse Strategy
- Youth Offending Team
- Learning City Project
- Children & Families Partnership
- Targeted Youth Support
- Bristol Resilience Strategy
- Policing Operations
- Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

Bristol Stats:



1 in 3 offences from Young People in Bristol were crimes of Violence against the person (2016/17)



5,400-16 year olds have emotional health likely to require support



There are around **700** children in care in Bristol and **420** care leavers (2016)

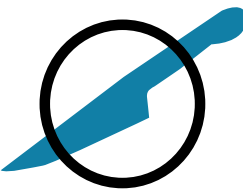
1 in 5 people in Bristol are under 16



There are **45** religions, **187** countries of birth represented and **91** languages spoken in Bristol



8,800 children and young people have special educational needs **15%** of all pupils (2016)



42 Knife related offences committed by **34** young people in 2016/17



In 2015, **22%** of Bristol's children live in **10%** most deprived areas of England
In 2010, this was 19% of children



19% of children have English as an additional language (2015) **64%** of children in Lawrence Hill
4% of children in Hartcliffe & Withywood

Facing the challenges-our approach

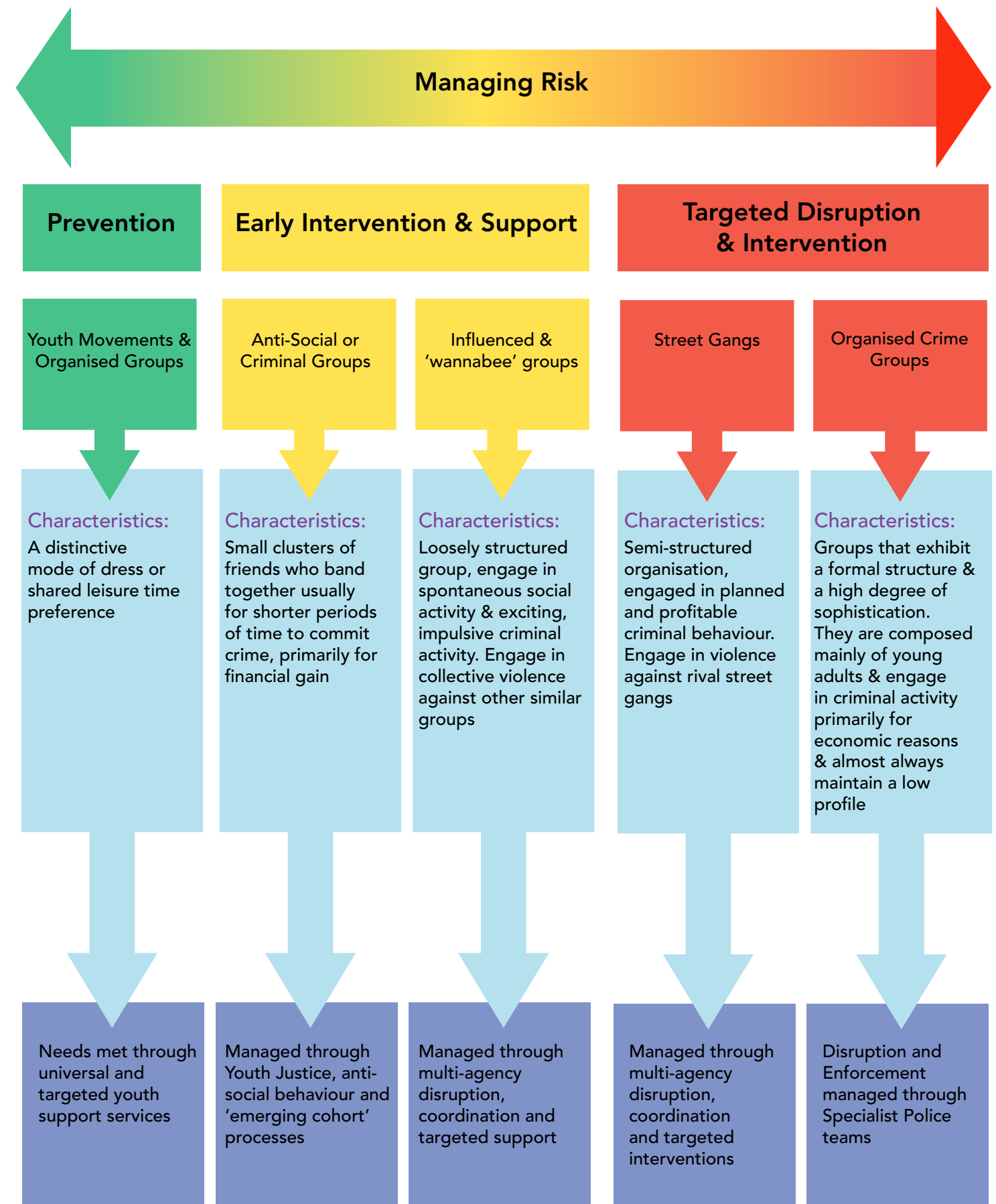


Age range of young people on which this strategy is focussed:

This is primarily intended as a young people’s strategy, focussing on 10-18 year-olds. However the principles and practice outlined within this approach may also benefit older people (18-25 year-olds) at risk of involvement in gangs and street conflict. The strategy takes into account the need to work with families and wider communities to safeguard vulnerable young people.






Gangs, the risks they pose and our approach to managing those risks



Action Plan:

Priority	Action	Desired Outcome	Strategic Themes		
			Engagement & Support	Empowerment	Enforcement & Disruption
Reinforce established partnership links to ensure pan-Bristol activity is joined up and expertise is utilised for all young people in need.	<p>Continue to build on the partnership action plan with clear, timely and accountable activities.</p> <p>Establish operational partnership groups that have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common risk assessment tools and methodologies Shared Case Management function in which criminal justice, youth work and/or social welfare professionals work with the young person and their families. To support them via an agreed plan which will encourage, and facilitate, alternative life choices and sustainable desistance from gangs and street conflict. A joined up referral pathway process to develop clear prevention/ exit strategies ensuring that vulnerability and risk are prioritised. 	<p>Targeted and seamless support plans will be offered to young people across Bristol. The service will evolve to make sure relevant and effective service are offered.</p> <p>Services will become increasingly effective, relevant and targeted.</p>	✓	✓	
Identify, target and prioritise the most vulnerable and 'at risk' individuals by effective agency data-sharing and the use of new predictive methods of analysis.	<p>Produce a six-monthly report utilising shared partnership information, to identify emerging gangs and young people who are potentially at risk of becoming gang members.</p> <p>Use predictive risk management techniques to effectively target 'at risk' individuals with targeted interventions.</p>	<p>Targeted early intervention actions will divert young people, preventing them from becoming involved in gangs and street conflict.</p> <p>Identified gang members will be offered services that offer alternatives to gang involvement.</p>	✓		✓

Priority	Action	Desired Outcome	Strategic Themes		
			Engagement & Support	Empowerment	Enforcement & Disruption
Be fully informed of all services, interventions and activities which are on offer in Bristol. Ensure clear referral pathways are in place and gaps identified and addressed e.g. young people transitioning into adult interventions; young people who are at risk but haven't yet become involved in gang activity.	<p>Identify and map the different agencies that can offer interventions.</p> <p>Support intensive one-to-one or group work programmes that will encourage alternative life choices, sustainable desistance and build resilience in young people, via: training, apprenticeships and employment; substance misuse treatments; mental health, wellness and risk behaviour coaching; financial assistance and advice; sporting activities; housing.</p>	<p>Clearly stating what services are available, when and where, will improve accessibility. In turn this will increase the likelihood of a successful outcome for a young person at risk.</p> <p>Improving the knowledge of service providers, will enable them to offer comprehensive and targeted interventions.</p> <p>A decrease in numbers involved in gang and street conflict activity.</p> <p>Will support young people to make better life decisions and offer alternatives to gang membership.</p>	✓	✓	
Ensure that services are made accessible to young people at appropriate venues and times.	Consult young people to establish their preferred times, places and methods of accessing services.	Will improve the uptake rate of services.	✓	✓	
Improve access to mental health and wellbeing services.	Ensure all agencies are aware of the services which can help young people with unresolved mental health and wellbeing issues, that affect their behaviour and negative life choices.	Will offer fundamental help to identify the root causes of anti-social behaviour.	✓		✓

Priority	Action	Desired Outcome	Strategic Themes		
Mobilise local community members (champions) to assist and mentor the younger members of their communities who are 'at risk'.	<p>Produce a community engagement plan to attract community volunteers to become Community Champions.</p> <p>Establish an ongoing training offer, to ensure the Community Champions receive the required mentoring skills.</p> <p>Make sure that feedback from local communities, faith groups, voluntary and community sector and youth groups is included in the decision-making process.</p>	<p>Will build resilience within Bristol communities.</p> <p>Will help identify and support local young people to make better decisions and be diverted from gang membership.</p>	 Engagement & Support	 Empowerment	 Enforcement & Disruption

We acknowledge that prevention and diversion intervention are long-term solutions to gang and street conflict. Enforcement has a key role to play but this is limited, as effective enforcement methods provide only short-term solutions.

These include reducing the risk to and from a particular individual, acting as a deterrent or mitigating the immediate effects of serious youth violence within local communities.

Measures of success

We will measure the success of this strategy in the following ways:

- A reduction in the number of street conflict offences being committed in Bristol
- A reduction of knife crime offences involving young people being committed in Bristol
- Improvement in the following categories of the annual Bristol City Council, 'Quality of Life' survey, for the areas known to be affected by gangs and street conflict:
 - % respondents who agree locally, anti-social behaviour is a problem
 - % respondents who agree police and local public services are successfully dealing with issues of crime and anti-social behaviour
 - % respondents whose day-to-day life is affected by fear of crime.

Young people's responses



What can we do about it?

“Encourage them to take part in school/out of school activities. Get them into a sport or join a gym. Feed them positive, mental attitude. Help them build their self esteem and confidence. Encourage them to attend courses anything that will keep them busy and their mind off the bad stuff”

Why do you think young people get involved in street conflict or gangs?

Money, protection & improved life style came out top for the reason

Whats the public attitude towards street gangs?

There is a perception that gangs and street conflict affects certain communities in the city and is not a general issue

If you or someone you know felt pressured to join a gang, who would you talk to about it?

Young People generally trust their family and friends for their main source of help. Some feel a mistrust of salaried officials but some may speak to their school or the police. But some may not talk to anyone at all about it.

Reference: excerpts taken from Consultation with young people

Our strategic partners

Bristol City Council	www.bristol.gov.uk
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Official-site.aspx
Avon & Somerset Police	www.avonandsomerset.police.uk
Youth Offending Team	www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/bristol-youth-offending-team
Catch 22	www.catch-22.org.uk/offers/youth-justice/
Bristol Youth Links	www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/delivering-bristol-youth-links
VOSCUR	www.voscur.org



The Safer Bristol Partnership will oversee the delivery of this strategy. This partnership represents the Mayor of Bristol, the Police and Crime Commissioner and other stakeholders and strategic governance groups within the city. Performance will be shared with these wider groups on an on-going basis.