



***Crime Diversion Programme:
A Conversation on Knife Crime (Youth Violence) Report:***

Date, Time and Venue:

13/12/2018

2pm – 5pm GOSAD: Resource Centre, Featherstone Terrace, Southall, UB2 5AL

Stakeholder Attendees:

PC Amin Haque (Ealing YOT); Supt Davinder Singh Kandohla (Ricky); Harry Edward Pierpoint and Datinder Lotay (Ealing Council); GOSAD Team;

1. Background Information

Golden Opportunity Skills and Development (GOSAD) was set up by disillusioned young people in 2003 to provide an outlet for other young people to express themselves but most importantly, a platform where they could be engaged in positive activities. GOSAD run its first anti-knife and anti-gang project in 2005 and no wonder what the organisation was warning about for over 10years, it is only recently with heightened and brazen knife crime incidents that the media, public, law enforcement agencies and the government are paying much attention to the phenomenon.

GOSAD is currently running an anti-knife crime (Youth Violence) project supported by the Home Office and the project offers the following interventions for those aged 10yrs to 20yrs;

1. Transition to High School: Anti-knife crime and anti-youth violence work with years 5, 6 and 7 pupils and their parents/guardians.
2. Anti-Knife Crime Advocates: Developing a group of young people and parents/guardians affected by knife crime (victims and perpetrators) to share their story and offer deterrent messages
3. Anti-Knife Outreach Street Campaign: On the streets anti-knife crime campaign
4. Employability and self-employment programme: Working age young people provided with employability and self-employment training embedded with personal development elements (conflict resolution, assertiveness skills, etc) and then supported to apply for and secure employment/self-employment opportunities.

5. Crime Diversion Programme: Monthly crime diversion workshops (heavy focus on Knife crime)
6. Weekly Sports Programme: Spikes Bridge football and coaching session for young people



2. Event Agenda: A Conversation on Knife Crime (Youth Violence)

GOSAD runs open sessions involving marginalised communities and statutory agencies (social services, job centres, etc) through its 'Taking the Fear Out of Community Engagement' approach. This event was attended by law enforcement agency representatives and other stakeholders from Ealing council and delivered in a very informal and non-threatening manner.

The session was supported by GOSAD's multi-lingual facilitators for ease of communication.

The agenda topics were as follows;

- a) Root Causes of Youth Violence and Knife Crime
- b) Parental Concerns and insights
- c) Trends and law enforcement take on Knife Crime and Youth Violence (Including support systems)
- d) Solutions, ideas and shared experiences of good practice
- e) Next steps and follow up

3. Group Discussions (Issues and Solutions)

GOSAD was expecting around 15 parents/guardians to attend the event, but over 40 parents/guardians attended. The following thematic areas were discussed, and opinions given by everyone.



❖ Solutions Provided/Discussed

- a) Lack of support for parents/guardians: Most parents especially those that English is not their first language, struggle to navigate complex systems such as the UK education system. Discussions also looked at the help parents/guardians would need to ensure that their young ones lead a crime-free life. Issues around the need for support in dealing with the penal system – for parents/guardians came up five times during the discussions. Parents/guardians also did not know who to talk to, when young ones start to rebel and engage in anti-social behaviour.
- b) Parental responsibility and Intergeneration challenges: The issue around dealing with children as they get older and become teenagers came up a lot during the discussions. Parents/guardians seem to struggle with how best to support their young ones once they start high school and become rebellious (i.e. getting sanctions in schools, petty anti-social behaviour, etc). Parents/guardians were worried about how to discipline their young ones for fear of recrimination or being targeted by Children Services and the schools. Intergeneration challenges is a growing issue between parents/guardians and their young ones. Parents/guardians continue to struggle with intergenerational

issues and in a fast-moving world, catching up to and coping with the challenges seem a never-ending problem.



- c) Crime and anti-social behaviour: Parents/guardians seemed very concerned about high propensity of young people being lured into a life of crime (i.e. knife crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour). School exclusions and sanctions in a few comments given by participants have been linked to offending by young people. Social media, the internet and dangerous computer games (Fortnite, etc) came up a lot of times during the discussion as pathways to corrupting young people and inducing them to misbehave and commit varied crimes including incitement to violence. A very interesting comment was made around how perpetrators of youth crime are getting younger by the year – and mainly because they are becoming more savvy about the law and getting more brazen.

- d) Socio-economic challenges: Parents/guardians discussed about lack of prospects be it employment or otherwise for the young people and themselves. Poverty as contributing factor to why young people indulge in drug dealings and crime generally was mentioned several times during the discussion. Parents/guardians also complained of lack of amenities and outlets to keep young people occupied and out of the reaches and lures of crime and substance misuse.



❖ Solutions Provided/Discussed

Group participants continued a lot of good ideas and without any order, the following solutions were provided/discussed;

- a) Establishing clinics/sessions with the Police in confidence
- b) Parents should be more involved with their young ones at every stage of their growth
- c) Better involvement of the different agencies in supporting parents/guardians and young people by prioritising youth crime.
- d) Schools should work closely with parents to avoid exclusions and other forms of sanctions
- e) Provision of amenities and activities for young people of all ages with special thought to provide activities for girls (i.e. Metrack, Cadets, Spikes Bridge, Fire Brigade, etc). End

to the government's austerity measures was mentioned and for opening of the public funds to support young people (return of libraries, Connexion services in schools, etc). Opportunities for young people to prepare for adulthood, such as getting internships, volunteering and finding employment

- f) Supporting parents/guardians access learning to improve their English and access employment opportunities.
- g) Sending strong messages that crime does not pay while at the same time supporting families understand and deal with the panel system (rehabilitation rather than punishment options).
- h) Listening to young people's opinions and respecting their views and aspirations. Encouraging role models and for young people to support each other.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

GOSAD would like to thank parents/guardians, law enforcement and Ealing council representatives for taking part in the invaluable discussions and for taking the time from their busy schedules to attend the event.

GOSAD will continue liaising with all stakeholders to work on community-based solutions. The event was very successful on many fronts but at GOSAD, we value the power of bringing residents and different agencies together to work on common issues. GOSAD will provide further updates on future community engagements.

