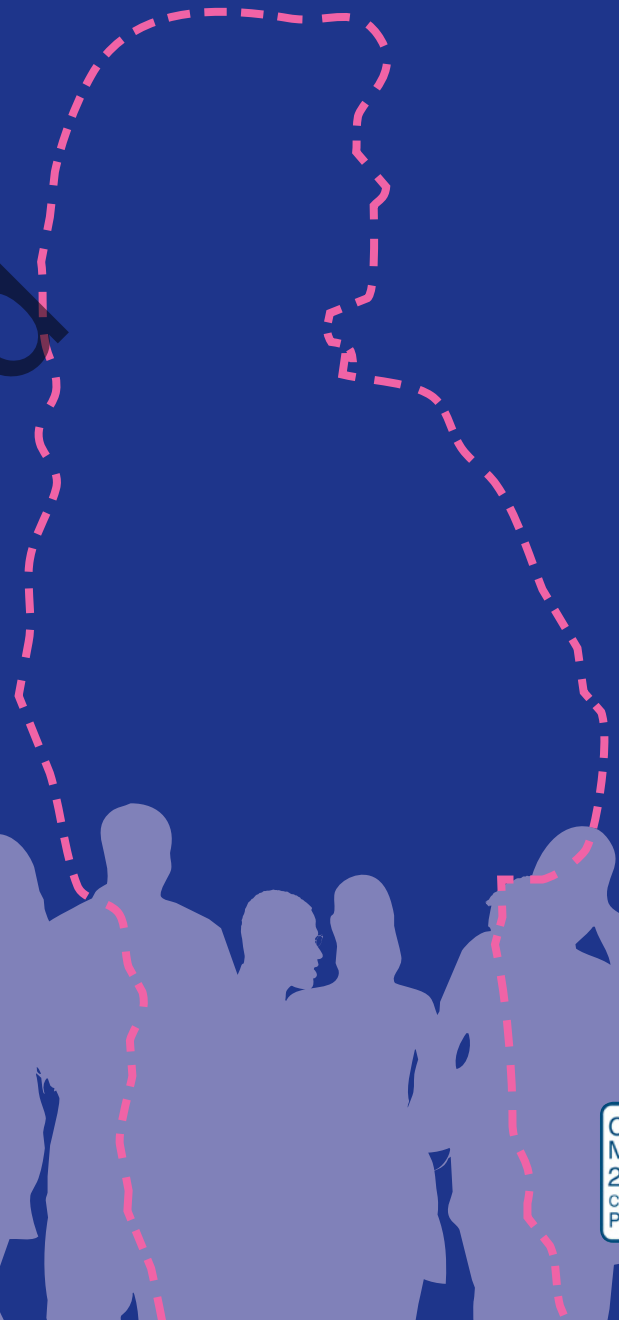


# Have you got what it takes?

**Tackling gangs and youth violence**

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# Have you got what it takes?

## Tackling gangs and youth violence

### Important facts

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence report, published in November 2011, contains a series of actions for central government and a set of principles to help local areas tackle the problem.

We are also providing funding and support for the 29 areas across the country identified as having the most significant gang problems. In 2012–13 we will have redirected £10 million of funding to support these areas.

We have also set up a team made up of specialists with experience of dealing with gangs and youth violence to provide practical advice to areas. The team can access support from advisers from a range of backgrounds, including community activists, local authority specialists, voluntary organisations and health and education professionals.

This new programme builds on work already under way, including the Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives programme. This programme has given funding of £3.75 million over 2011–12 and 2012–13 to the three police force areas where more than half the country's knife crime takes place: London, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands. It has also distributed £4 million in small grants, over the two years, to the voluntary and community sector.

### Background

#### Ending Gang and Youth Violence Programme

The 29 areas chosen to be part of the programme are shown below.

Barking and Dagenham	Waltham Forest
Brent	Wandsworth
Camden	Westminster
Croydon	Birmingham
Ealing	Sandwell
Enfield	Wolverhampton
Greenwich	Manchester
Hackney	Oldham
Haringey	Salford
Islington	Liverpool
Lambeth	Knowsley
Lewisham	Derby
Newham	Nottingham
Southwark	Sheffield
Tower Hamlets	

We used a range of information on serious youth violence, including statistics on hospital admissions and local intelligence on the severity of gang activity, to choose the 29 areas. These areas were chosen because they had:

- **high rates of serious violence;**
- **high rates of admissions to hospital for assault using sharp objects; and**
- **a significant local gang problem.**

We announced an initial 22 areas in December 2011, and a further seven in March 2012 (from a shortlist of 16 invited to express interest).

The frontline Ending Gang and Youth Violence team is headed by a Detective Chief Superintendent on secondment to the Home Office from the Metropolitan Police Service.

The team will be working with the 29 areas over the course of the year, offering, among other things, an intensive review to identify what they do well and where they need to improve in terms of a partnership approach to gang and youth violence.

### More information

This new programme builds on work already under way to tackle this problem; in particular, the Communities Against Guns, Gangs and Knives programme has given:

- **£3.75 million for 2011–12 and 2012–13 to Greater Manchester Police, West Midlands Police and the Metropolitan Police Service to tackle gang violence;**
- **£4 million over two years – 2011–12 and 2012–13 – in grants of up to £10,000 a year to voluntary and community sector organisations working to tackle gang and youth violence.**

In London, this funding is distributed through the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

## Girls and gangs

There is little information on the numbers of women and girls involved in gang violence. We know that many young women are suffering gang-related sexual exploitation or violence, but the extent of it is largely hidden.

We have set up a working group to look at the specific issues of women, girls and gang violence. This group involves government departments, local government, the voluntary and community sector, and the criminal justice sector, and will advise on policy to reduce the effect of gang violence on women and girls.

The Government is also supporting the ongoing inquiry by the Children's Commissioner into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups.

We have also made £1.2 million available over three years to improve access to services for young women at risk of, or victims of, sexual violence and exploitation, including by gangs. This money will fund 13 young people's advocates on sexual violence across the country.

## How do you define a gang?

The Government has adopted the definition set out in the Centre for Social Justice's 2009 report, *Dying to Belong*, as its definition of a street gang.

'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;

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3. lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but can include an illegal economy territory);
4. have some form of identifying structural feature; and
5. are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.'

## How does this fit in with the Troubled Families work?

There is likely to be a significant cross-over between identified gang members and the troubled families identified in the 29 areas that are being supported by the Ending Gang and Youth Violence (EGYV) Team. The EGYV Team will work closely with the Troubled Families co-ordinators in each of the 29 areas.

**Why is the Government doing all this work on gangs? The riots showed that our communities have a youth violence problem, not a gang problem.**

Evidence shows that gang membership increases the likelihood of serious violence. Almost 50% of shootings and 22% of incidents of serious violence in London are committed by known gang members. Gangs create a culture of violence and criminality which can stretch beyond the gang itself. We know that there are links between serious organised crime and street gangs. It is true that gangs played a relatively small part in the riots. However, there is evidence that gang members were involved in the most serious, life-threatening incidents. The Government is focusing resources and efforts on gangs because even though they are a small group, they can have a seriously damaging effect on whole communities.

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