

2024 - 2027

KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE FROM VIOLENCE: A WALTHAM FOREST PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE

Serious Violence Strategy

Building futures for our young people and communities that are free from violence.

**OUR
MISSION
WALTHAM
FOREST**

**TEAM WALTHAM FOREST
SAFE STREETS**


Waltham Forest



CONTENTS

1. Foreword
2. Introduction
3. How was our strategy developed?
4. What do we mean by serious violence?
5. What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest
6. Our vision and guiding principles
7. Our approach
 - Strengthen
 - Support
 - Treat
 - Curtail
8. Governance and monitoring

Foreword

In Waltham Forest, we want every resident to be able to live without the threat or fear of violence. Whoever you are, wherever you are, we want you to feel safe on our streets and be able to enjoy all that our borough has to offer. Through our mission for a more equal Waltham Forest, we're bringing communities together and responding to the voices of our residents, tackling the issues that are most important to them.



We know many residents are concerned about serious violence, particularly knife crime. This ongoing issue can impact on our health and wellbeing, whether we know someone who is experiencing or vulnerable to violence or exploitation, or we hear about it within our neighbourhood and are worried about its impact on the local area and our community.

Serious violence, and knife crime specifically affects certain members of our communities more acutely. At the heart of this strategy is a commitment to engaging with young people, their families and our diverse communities to understand how violence impacts them, and to work alongside them to design, develop and deliver solutions that meet their differing needs.

This strategy is the result of a collaborative and cross-cutting approach to tackling serious violence, developed by our strongly established community safety partnership, SafetyNet, which includes the council and local police, fire, health and probation services. This new approach to tackle serious violence has involved us listening closely to our residents, particularly our young people, and using key insight and data to understand local issues, so we can collectively build targeted, cross-cutting responses based on evidence.

It also sets out how we will continue to work in partnership with our valued voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners, who dedicate their time and resources, striving for a safer Waltham Forest. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated VCS for the work that they do, and our residents and communities for their critical contribution and commitment to building solutions to violence together.

We are setting out our joint commitment to prevent serious violence, through an increase of early help and interventions, providing the appropriate support when and where it's needed to those exposed to violence or at risk of it, and empowering our communities through placed-based services and support. We will also ensure that those who commit acts of violence are dealt with effectively, through proportionate enforcement action and rehabilitation, putting the needs of victims and communities at the centre of our response.

Please be reassured that through targeted, collective action, we as partners are united in our shared mission to create a safer Waltham Forest and will do all we can to make this a reality for you, your family, friends and communities.

SafetyNet: Waltham Forest's community safety partnership

Introduction

Waltham Forest is a vibrant and thriving borough where most residents live safely, free from the threat or impact of violence.

Yet when violence does occur, its effect can be devastating, impacting not only on the lives of the individuals directly involved, but also on their families, friends and the wider community.

As a borough, we are committed to taking joint action to reduce serious violence and build safer neighbourhoods for all our residents. This means understanding how and why people get drawn into violence and intervening at the earliest opportunity to prevent it from happening, or to stop risky behaviours from escalating. It also means being bold and consistent in our approach to diversion and enforcement and responding swiftly and fairly when violence occurs to mitigate the risks and prevent further harm.

Serious violence, particularly knife crime, is felt unequally by our communities, with young, black residents far more likely to experience its damaging effects. At the heart of our strategy is a commitment to engaging with young people, their families and our communities to understand how violence impacts them, and to work alongside them to design, develop and deliver solutions that meet their diverse needs. We are committed to learning from, and with our communities, building engagement, review and evaluation into everything we do, so that we can quickly respond and adapt to changing circumstances.

We know that achieving sustained reductions in serious violence will take time. This strategy signals our shared determination to work more collaboratively as partners, and with our residents and communities, to design and deliver robust, evidence-based interventions and services that have the greatest potential to effect lasting change. It is only through this united, community-led approach, that we will achieve our mission of creating safer, more inclusive neighbourhoods, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

How was our strategy developed?

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

Our strategy was developed in partnership. It demonstrates the shared commitment of our key services and organisations, including the council, police, probation, fire, health and the voluntary and community sector, to work together to build a future where our diverse communities can live safe and fulfilling lives, away from the threat or risk of violence.

Our residents and communities know our neighbourhoods best, and that is why their voices are at the heart of this strategy. Through extensive resident and community engagement, including citizens' panels, workshops, interviews and surveys, we have worked with them, and particularly with our children and young people, to co-produce a response that is focused on their needs and will drive the changes they want to see. And by developing and embedding new sustainable methods of community engagement, residents, including young people with lived experience of violence, will continue to work alongside us to shape our response, and hold us to account on behalf of their communities.

This strategy builds on our statutory response to the government's Serious Violence Duty, [published early in 2024](#). The Duty places requirements on relevant services to work together to share data and intelligence, to understand and address the local patterns and causes of serious violence. The key message from this analysis was clear, that while Waltham Forest has a relatively low rate of serious violence overall, knife crime among our younger residents is a particular concern, with clear inequalities in how it's experienced, requiring an urgent and targeted, partnership response.

Our serious violence strategy responds to this challenge. It describes some of the tangible work we are already doing to tackle knife crime across our borough, alongside our commitments to deliver new, far reaching, evidence-based initiatives that will drive sustained action to prevent and reduce violence. By implementing our bold ambitions set out in this strategy, we will increase the likelihood of all our residents, including those who are most effected by serious violence, to live safer and more fulfilling lives.



What do we mean by serious violence?

There is no single national definition of serious violence. The government's Serious Violence Duty advises that when defining serious violence, regions should “include a focus on public space youth violence including; homicide, violence against the person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing”.

In Waltham Forest, we have considered local patterns of violence and its impact on residents and communities to determine the key focus of our strategy. While we have a relatively low rate of serious violence overall when compared to other similar boroughs, knife crime is a particular problem in Waltham Forest, which disproportionately impacts our younger communities.

We have therefore made this the key focus of our strategy, to reduce serious violence or exploitation among young people under the age of 25, particularly offences involving knives or other weapons. This includes homicide, violence with or without injury, and behaviours or activities where serious violence, or its threat, is inherent, such as gang activity and weapon carrying.

Drug use and drug markets are critical drivers of serious violence. These are not the key focus here as we have a separate strategy setting out [our approach to tackling drug and alcohol harm](#) through our Combatting Drugs Partnership. Preventing and reducing violence against women and girls, including domestic abuse, is a key priority for our partnership and while the benefits of our strategy will also impact on women and girls, we have made tackling the drivers of gendered violence the specific focus of a separate, but related, [work programme](#).



of Waltham Forest
residents report the fear
of crime as one of their
top concerns
(Resident Insight Survey 2024)



What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

To ensure we target our resources on supporting those residents and communities who are most affected by serious violence, we are committed to taking a data-driven approach to clearly understand how serious violence is experienced locally.



We have fewer violent crimes reported among adults and young people compared to the rest of London.

However, rates of knife crime are higher locally than in London overall for young people under 25 years, and even more so for those under 18.



Over the last two years, between July 2022 and July 2024, the number of knife injury victims under 25 has increased by

30% from 40 to 52.

However this is significantly lower than the peak of 98 victims in 2018.

Over the same period, the number of knife injury victims under 18 has almost tripled from 11 to 30.

Year ending July 22

Year ending July 24

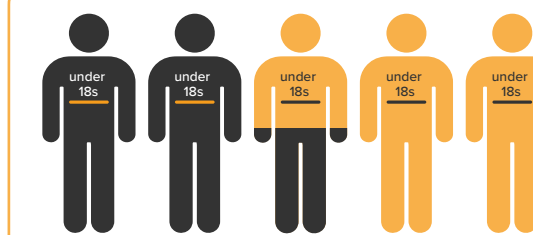


9/10 

knife injury victims are male.



Violence is clustered in known 'hot spots' across the borough which include locations within our town centres, and for young people, around and between schools.



Over the last year, more than half of knife injury victims aged under 18 years are of black ethnicity, despite only one in five under 18 residents being black.



Risk of violence increases at specific times and on particular days of the week, and for young people, is notably higher on school days and in the two-hour period after the school day finishes when footfall is high.

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring



We know from national data, that those who live in deprivation or experience childhood adversity such as abuse or neglect, are far more likely to become involved in violence, as victims or as perpetrators.

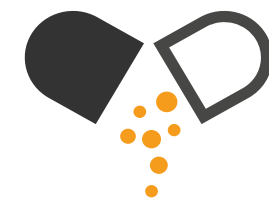


Confidence in the police in Waltham Forest is low, with rates of trust falling faster and further over the last three years than in other London boroughs.

69% of residents in London say police can be trusted

compared to only **57%** of residents in Waltham Forest

Source: Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (2024) Public Attitudes Survey



Research has also repeatedly shown that gangs and drugs are an important factor in driving the most serious violence. In Waltham Forest, local gangs are becoming more organised, drawing in and exploiting young people to transport and sell drugs outside of the borough in activity known as 'county lines'.

Crime and violence are consistently reported as a top concern by our residents, with knife crime the crime type residents are most worried about locally.

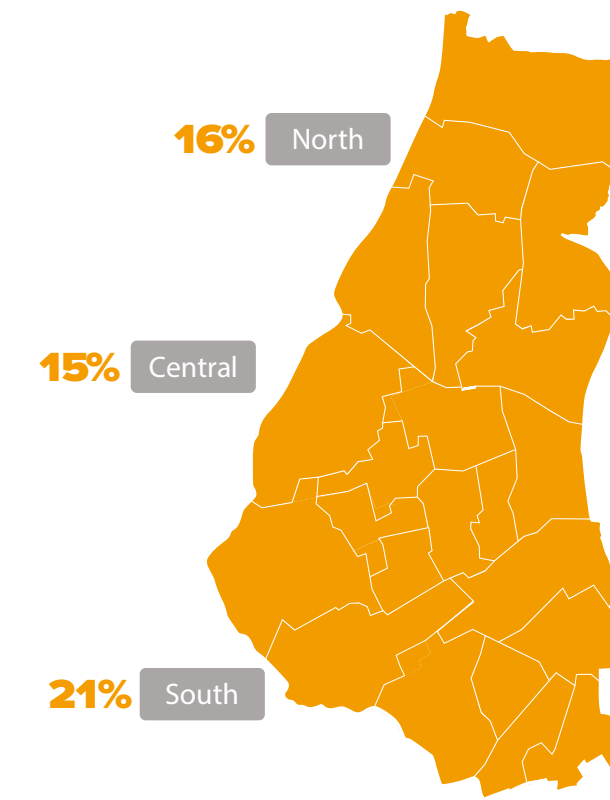
nearly **1** in **5**

feel the fear of crime strongly impacts on their lives.

Source: London Borough of Waltham Forest (Spring 2024) Resident Insight Survey

2 in **5**

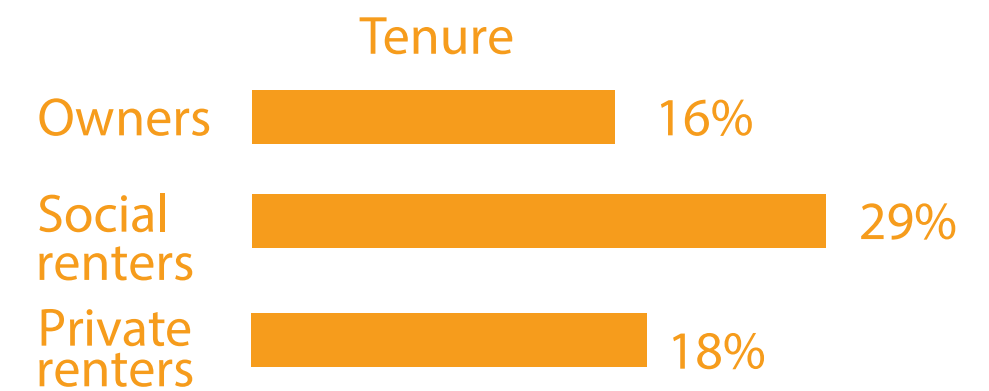
feel crime has increased in their local area over the last two years



Fear of crime is higher among certain groups including **parents with dependent children, social renters** and those in the **south of the borough.**

22% Parents **with** dependent children under 19

14% No dependent children



Source: London Borough of Waltham Forest (Spring 2024) Resident Insight Survey (% of residents who report fear of crime impacts their lives)

All residents, whoever they are or wherever they live, feel safe, and live without the threat or fear of violence

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

Put simply, our vision is to reduce serious violence and exploitation in Waltham Forest, protect our communities from harm, and create safe and secure homes and neighbourhoods where all our residents can thrive.

Serious violence is an enduring challenge in Waltham Forest, particularly knife crime among our young residents, and to this end, the specific focus of this strategy is to:

Reduce knife crime injuries among our children and young people

Our guiding principles:

To achieve this, our actions, decisions and approaches to preventing and reducing serious violence are guided by four core principles:



A public health approach

Intervening early to tackle the causes of violence, and prioritising prevention in our whole-system approach.



Working as one

Strengthening our collective, cross-cutting approach to preventing and tackling violence.



Data, insight and evidence-led

Using data to understand local risk and problem-solve solutions based on evidence.



A more equal future

Prioritising residents who are disproportionately affected by violence and its consequences.

All residents, whoever they are or wherever they live, feel safe, and live without the threat or fear of violence

“A comprehensive response to violence is one that not only protects and supports victims of violence, but also promotes non-violence, and changes the circumstances and conditions that give rise to violence in the first place”

WHO World Report on Violence 2002



A public health approach

It is far better to prevent violence from happening than to react to it after it has. By treating violence as a public health issue, rather than purely as a criminal justice one, we are taking a whole-system approach to violence reduction. This means acknowledging that to genuinely change behaviour we need to work across partners and with the community to act on the root causes of violence, such as adverse childhood experiences or household deprivation, and target our collective activities and resources on the individuals and communities who are subject to the greatest harm.



Data, insight and evidence led

Our public health approach is underpinned by the effective sharing and use of data and insight. Through analysis of our local data, and extensive engagement with residents, particularly our young people, we have a strong understanding of how serious violence is experienced by our residents, and critically, the structural inequalities in how its experienced.

By combining this rich insight with our knowledge of the best available ‘what works’ evidence, we are strengthening our collective efforts to design and deliver evidence-based, multi-agency interventions, that are focused on the people, places and times where serious violence is experienced most deeply, to address inequality and improve the lives of all our residents.



Our Vision

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

All residents, whoever they are or wherever they live, feel safe, and live without the threat or fear of violence



Working as one

Through our sustained commitment to our Community Safety and Violence Reduction Partnerships, we are working across services and with education, businesses and VCS organisations in a united effort to understand and respond to the specific needs of our local communities. Tackling serious violence is a strategic priority for our youth justice service and we are committed to using all our levers across our children's services and safeguarding provision to deliver a range of joint interventions to keep our young people safe

We recognise that preventing and reducing violence is our shared responsibility, it must never be seen as someone else's problem, and it is only by combining our skills, knowledge, influence and resources that we can reduce young people's exposure to violence and tackle the wide disparities in the way it's experienced.



A more equal future

We recognise the stark inequalities in how children and young people experience violence in our borough, influenced by factors like where they live, early childhood experiences, household income, and ethnic background.

That is why equality is central to our response to addressing violence. It informs the initiatives we seek to prioritise, and how and where we direct resources to ensure they reach individuals, families and communities who are most affected by it. By working with residents and partners, we ensure that our community-led approach builds skills, resilience, and capacity to address youth violence while ensuring diverse voices are heard and responded to.

Our approach

Our public health approach has four domains, and while our key focus is on early intervention and prevention, we also recognise that the use of proportionate enforcement is essential to stop the escalation of violence.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

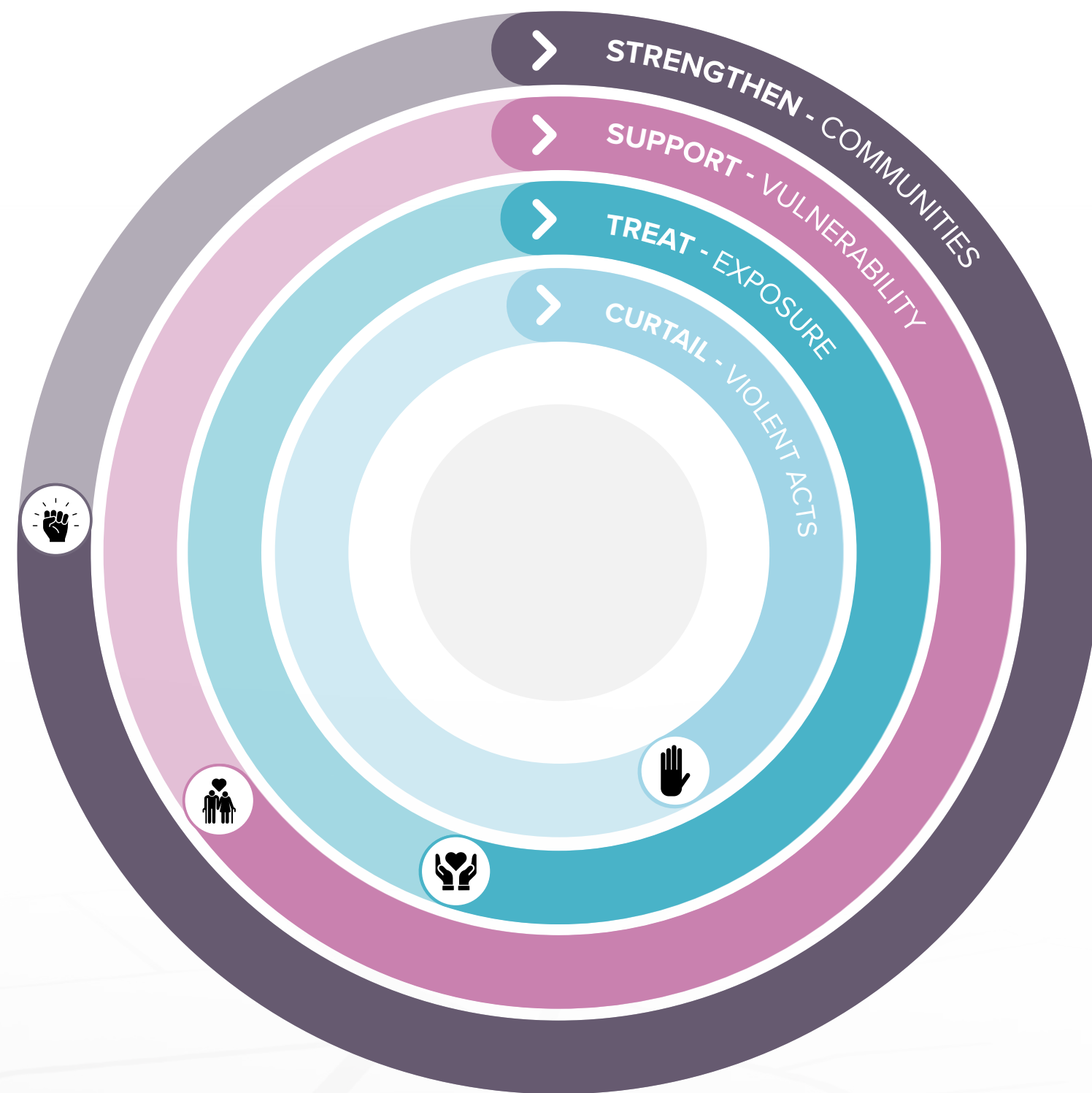
Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

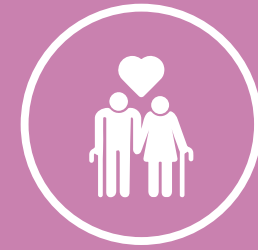


We will:



Strengthen:

Build the resilience of our communities and young people to prevent them from being drawn into violence or exploitation.



Support:

Provide early, targeted support to those most vulnerable to violence and exploitation to reduce the risks they face.



Treat:

Ensure those exposed to violence receive high quality, timely support to aid recovery and divert them from violence.



Curtail:

Predict, prevent, deter and disrupt acts of violence, responding swiftly when violence occurs to reduce its harmful consequences.

Through our comprehensive package of evidence-led initiatives, we have built a partnership response within each of these domains. Our priority is to intervene early to address the underlying risk factors that affect people's likelihood of being affected by violence, while also taking preventative action when a problem starts to emerge, and responding effectively to mitigate the damaging effects when violence occurs.



Strengthen

Building the resilience of our communities and young people to prevent them from being drawn into violence or exploitation.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach


Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring



“Prevention is the key to ending violence. By fostering education, empathy and support, we can create a world where peace prevails.”

**KOFI ANNAN,
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
WINNER, 2002**

Our ambition

To prevent serious violence before it occurs. By putting early intervention at the heart of our whole-system approach, our focus will be on addressing the root causes of violence as well as its consequences. Children and their families will have the practical, financial, emotional and behavioural support they need at every stage of their child’s development, building their resilience and addressing the risk factors for offending in later life.

Our commitments

We will prioritise early intervention and prevention in our holistic approach to driving positive outcomes for children and young people. We know that children who experience childhood adversity are more likely to become involved in violence, as victims or perpetrators. By intervening early to make sure that children and their families can access the support they need, when they need it, in ways that work best for them, we will tackle the underlying drivers of violence, reducing their likelihood of involvement in violence in the future. This in turn, will mean fewer victims and safer communities for all

Our residents told us that:

“Young people need more youth spaces that they can access and feel safe”.

YOUNG PERSON

“Youth provisions should be accessible, free and not exclude anyone”.

YOUNG PERSON

We will achieve this by:

Building stronger communities, where children and young people feel valued, included and connected to their neighbourhoods, as a vital foundation for a safe and secure future.

This includes:

- ✓ Strengthening the capacity of our VCS through a more joined-up and invigorated relationship with partners, supporting them to provide targeted interventions to engage children, young people and families in protective activities and support.

- ✓ Working with community organisations to build the confidence and social skills of children and young people by providing free, inclusive, fun activities and support within easy reach of where they live in our youth, family and welcome hubs.

- ✓ Giving young people and parents a voice in how services are designed and delivered through a range of forums and platforms including citizens’ panels and youth engagement workshops.

- ✓ Addressing low trust in policing by testing innovative approaches to strengthening community-police engagement, for example, through a new inclusive mentoring scheme where young people with lived experience of community safety issues mentor police officers at all levels.



Strengthen

Building the resilience of our communities and young people to prevent them from being drawn into violence or exploitation.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring



We will achieve this by:

Embedding universal provision of informative, nurturing and inclusive support in our educational and community settings, and providing timely access to specialist expert support and services if concerns begin to emerge.

This includes:

- ✓ Supporting parents and carers to access the support they need to build their emotional and financial resilience and promote the positive development of their children through our early years' services, parents and carers network and parenting support offers.
- ✓ Providing children with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make healthy choices and prevent risk-taking behaviours through our evidence-based Barnardo's Life Skills Programme in primary schools across the borough.
- ✓ Equipping practitioners, including the police, health visitors, social and community workers, with skills they need to build the resilience of children and young people and reduce the prevalence of risk-taking behaviour through our Resilience Training workshops.
- ✓ Intervening earlier to provide flexible, practical and emotional support for families, schools and other partners, including through our community mentoring programme, to improve school attendance and reduce school exclusions.
- ✓ Increasing the awareness of parents and professionals about the violence-related issues affecting young people such as county lines, exploitation and gangs through community and police led workshops and initiatives.
- ✓ Delivering a range of school and community mental health programmes that protect the mental wellbeing of our young people and help to keep them safe and secure.



Strengthen

Building the resilience of our communities and young people to prevent them from being drawn into violence or exploitation.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

Residents will know we have been successful when:



Fewer children and young people are involved in serious violence because they have received the support they need in their early years to safely progress through their childhood and adolescence.



Communities are empowered and equipped to support children and families to gain the knowledge, skills and guidance they need to build lives that are free from the harms of violence.



Parents and carers build strong, caring, consistent relationships with their children, supporting them to effectively manage their emotions and reduce the behavioural difficulties that are associated with later involvement in violence.



Practitioners have the knowledge and skills they need to build the resilience of children and young people to desist from risk-taking behaviour, and to appropriately and swiftly intervene if risky behaviours begin to emerge.



Young people from all our communities take part in inclusive and supportive enrichment activities close to their homes, and feel confident they have the knowledge and tools to access support if they need it, and to identify and resist behaviours and activities associated with violence.



Trust and confidence in local policing has increased, particularly among young people and those from minority ethnic groups where distrust is typically highest.





Strengthen

CASE STUDY: LifeSkills Resilience Training

“I liked that I know how to be a good friend. I learned how to identify feelings that a person is experiencing easier. I know how to listen better and how to communicate more”.

PUPIL FEEDBACK

“LifeSkills is a brilliant resource to support children’s understanding of vital life skills and supporting them in making important decisions. It is a great programme and should be made compulsory in primary schools”.

STAFF FEEDBACK



What? LifeSkills is a whole-class, programme delivered in schools in Waltham Forest that is proven to improve children’s emotional health and wellbeing by building their resilience.

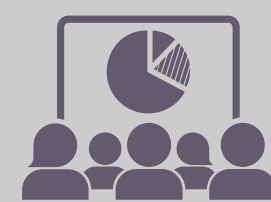
How? It develops critical skills that are key for healthy development and preventing risk-taking behaviours. These include self-esteem, emotional regulation, motivation, communication, social skills and ability to cope with stress.

29

primary schools

3

secondary schools



407
Staff Trained



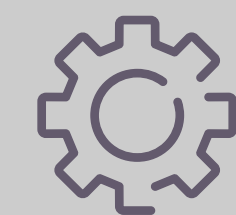
Resources provided for
26,600
children



77%
Average Knowledge Improvement



63%
Average Attitude Improvement



55%
Average Skills Improvement



Support

Provide early, targeted support to those most vulnerable to violence and exploitation to reduce the risks they face.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach


Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring



“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in”.

BISHOP DESMOND TUTU

Our residents told us that:

“Young people would feel safer with adults outside schools because a lot of stuff can happen on the way to school or after you finish”.

YOUNG PERSON

“There needs to be more sports and physical activity based interventions available for young people”.

WORKSHOP ATTENDEE

Our ambition

Communities and services work as one to provide high-quality, integrated, inclusive support to young people and families at greatest risk of violence and exploitation, that meets their specific needs and circumstances. Our voluntary and community sector has the influence and resources it needs to continue to do what it does best, reaching into our communities to provide early support and enriching opportunities to those at the greatest risk, preventing serious youth violence and creating safer neighbourhoods for all who live in them.

Our commitments

Young people and families most at risk from violence will benefit from targeted early support so they can get help when and where they need it, without having to wait until they are in crisis. In line with the statutory requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, we will continue to work with partners to provide specialist support and build trusted relationships with young people most at risk of violence. By adopting a child-first approach, we will ensure they can access the information and tools they need to successfully navigate daily challenges, helping them to reach their full potential and feel safe and protected from violence.

We will achieve this by:

Ensuring children feel safe and supported in their local neighbourhoods.

This includes:

- ✓ Piloting a new ‘Safer Routes’ programme which will place trained youth workers on routes to and from secondary school, present at times and in areas identified as having a heightened risk of violence, helping children to feel safer and mobilising the local community and businesses to provide support.

- ✓ Extending and promoting our network of ‘safe spaces’ to locations across the borough so young people have places they can go to if they feel worried or unsafe, with friendly, welcoming staff trained to provide support and signpost them into relevant services.

- ✓ Continuing to invest in our outreach, ambassador and ‘Streetbase’ peer to peer initiatives to reach young people in places that work for them, such as local parks, schools or youth spaces.



Support

Provide early, targeted support to those most vulnerable to violence and exploitation to reduce the risks they face.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

We will achieve this by:

Building on the strength of local services and communities to engage at-risk young people with targeted support.

This includes:

- ✓ Working with local leisure providers and VCS partners to provide community sports and physical activity initiatives as a method to engage and challenge at-risk young people, diverting them from involvement in future violence.

- ✓ Building on our existing Education Training and Employment (ETE) offer to target support at at-risk children and young people in youth-friendly settings, raising their aspirations and grow into well-adjusted adults.

- ✓ Working with education providers to ensure pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, who may be more vulnerable because of adverse early experiences, can access appropriate and targeted support.

- ✓ Embedding a child-first approach to help young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system access the sustained support they need to build their resilience and successfully navigate life challenges through, for example, our specialist violence reduction coordinators, Youth at Risk and out of hours emergency response Edge of Care teams.

Residents will know we have been successful when:



Children and young people feel safer in the public spaces they inhabit.



Fewer children and young people are drawn into violence because they have the skills, confidence and support they need to desist.



A greater number of young people at risk of involvement in violence benefit from sustained participation in education, employment or training.



Partners recognise the signs and risk factors associated with serious violence and work quickly, effectively and collaboratively to target resources at those in greatest need.



Young people at greatest risk of violence have access to fun, inspiring, inclusive activities and interventions, that raise their aspirations, connect them with their communities and support them to grow into well-adjusted adults.



Support

CASE STUDY: Streetbase

“The work we’re doing is actually making an impact, for example, young people don’t as frequently mention needing youth spaces because we have put those provisions into place. The job puts you in a position to talk and connect with people who you wouldn’t usually engage with. I really feel a part of the community.”

SHAY
Streetbase team member

“One reason I do Streetbase is that I enjoy working with young people in youth clubs such as Project Zero. I love to see young people grow in confidence once placed into a safe and supportive environment.”

ELIJAH
Streetbase team member



What? Streetbase is the flagship peer-to-peer engagement programme for young people in Waltham Forest.

Who? Members of the group aged 16 to 25 have been specially trained to deliver peer outreach.

How? They target young people in crime hotspot areas, share positive activities and opportunities with young people, and have two-way conversations about safety in the borough, ‘stop and search’ tactics, and what more they want to see in their area.

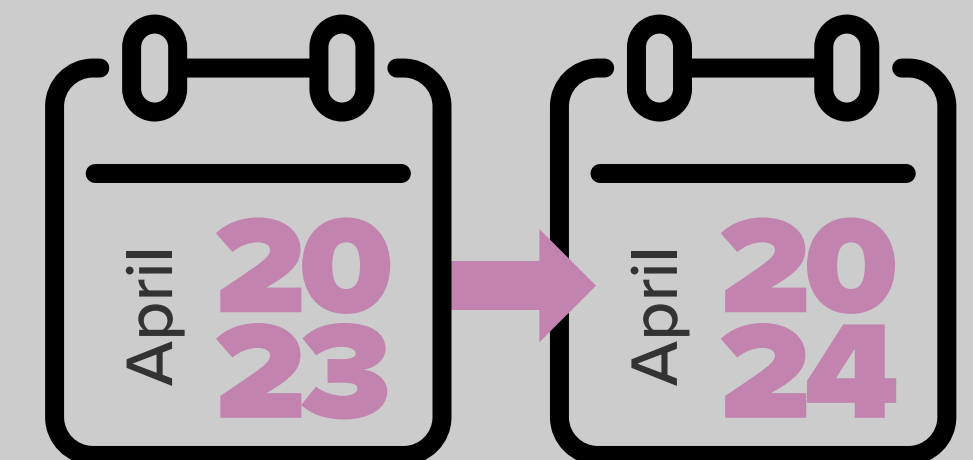
The Streetbase team have engaged with

2,935

young people



between





Ensure those exposed to violence receive high quality, timely support to aid recovery and divert them from violence.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

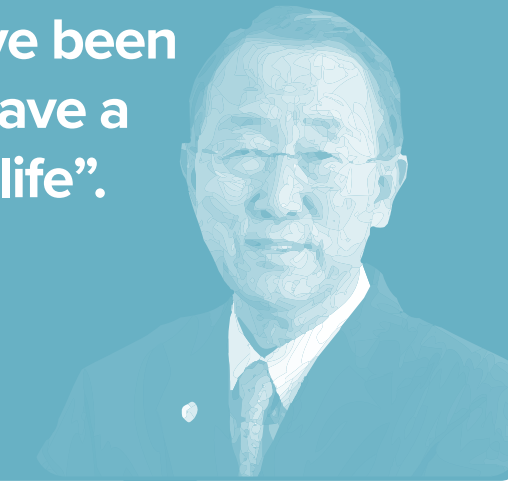
Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

“The best way to end violence is to provide help and support to those who have been exposed to it, ensuring they have a path to recovery and a better life”.

BAN KI-MOON, FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS



Our residents told us that:

“We need to ensure we are mentoring and engaging young people to divert them away from the criminal justice system”.

WORKSHOP ATTENDEE

“Some young people carry knives as a result of PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], they need greater access to mental health services”.

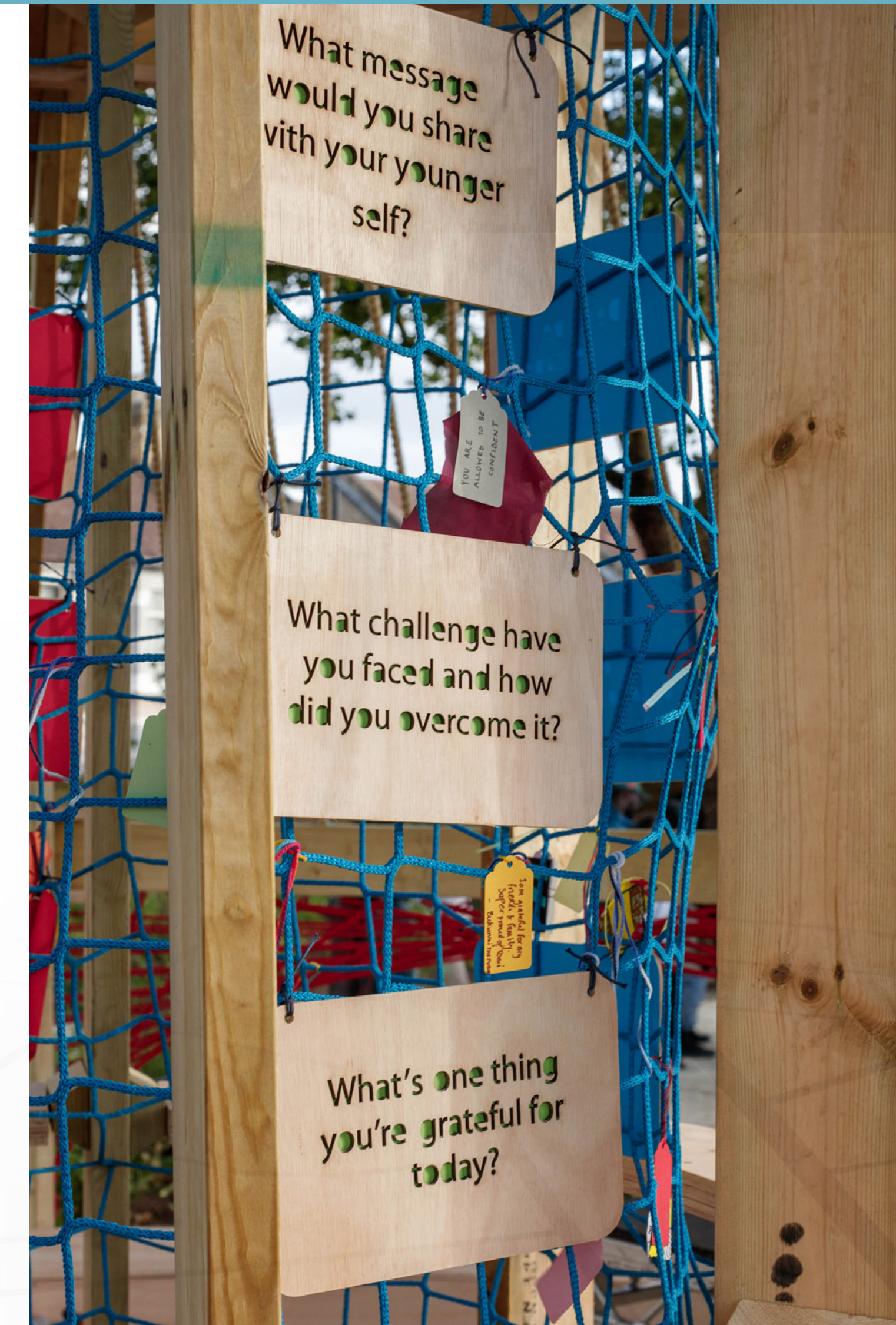
YOUNG PERSON

Our ambition

By intervening early and responding swiftly and effectively when violence occurs, the cycle of violence will be broken and individuals will benefit from sustained positive change. Partners will provide a network of integrated support that ensures those affected by violence - as perpetrators, victims or as families and peers - receive immediate trauma-informed assistance that provides them with the tools and support they need for long-term recovery and growth.

Our commitments

At the heart of our partnership lies the unwavering belief that every individual has the potential to move away from violence towards a safe and fulfilling future. For those exposed to violence, we will work across partners to provide tailored support to prevent an escalation into more serious violence, strengthening the resilience of young people by improving their emotional well-being and increasing access to protective factors such as good quality learning and training. This will support them to move away from further harm and towards a brighter future.





Ensure those exposed to violence receive high quality, timely support to aid recovery and divert them from violence.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

We will achieve this by:

Building community and family capacity and capability to effectively support and respond to young people affected by violence:

This includes:

- ✓ Equipping residents and professionals with potentially lifesaving skills and tools by delivering trauma and first aid training to young people in schools and community settings and installing Bleed Control Kits in accessible locations across the borough.

- ✓ Embed trained mentors in police custody to engage with young people arrested for violence-related offences and link them into supportive services.

- ✓ Continuing to invest in our Accident and Emergency navigator programme that places case workers in Whipps Cross Hospital to develop trusting relationships and provide ongoing support to children and young people with a violence-related injury.

- ✓ Providing intensive therapeutic support and training to families of children and young people affected by violence, to build confidence and family cohesion.

We will achieve this by:

Develop a workforce across our services that understands the impact of trauma on an individual's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, and provides relevant support.

This includes:

- ✓ Providing a timely and coordinated response across partners and agencies when violence occurs to ensure every young person is reached, and offered immediate and ongoing support through our Urgent Response Coordinator.

- ✓ Targeting violence reduction therapeutic interventions to young people in the youth justice system who do not typically access existing mental health provision, breaking the cycle of violence and harm.

Residents will know we have been successful when:

-  Harm to victims of violence is reduced because residents have the tools and skills they need to provide life-saving support.

-  Children and young people who have been exposed to violence have the skills, knowledge and support they need to negotiate risk and move away from further violence.

-  Repeat violence has reduced because children and young people receive the practical and therapeutic support they need to positively change their behaviour.

-  Partners working with those involved in violence adopt a trauma informed approach.



Treat

CASE STUDY: Accident & Emergency (A&E) Navigators

“The skills [my daughter] gained and the confidence she built while participating in your activities have been invaluable... I believe it has made a lasting difference in her journey”

SARAH'S* DAD

*Name changed to maintain confidentiality



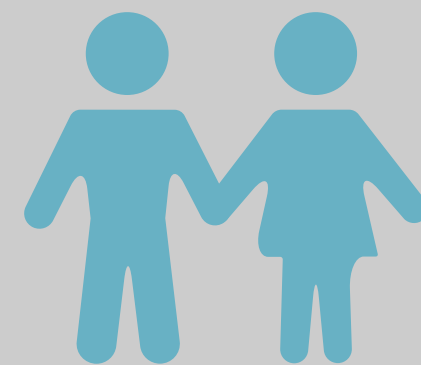
What? There are currently two A&E Navigators embedded within Whipps Cross hospital emergency department. This youth worker service aims to use reachable and teachable moments to offer support to young people (aged 10 to 25) who present as victims of serious youth violence at A&E – often because of a physical injury which needed medical help.

How? The A&E navigators engage on a consent basis and provide ongoing case work support for up to six months.

Whipps Cross staff refer young people to A&E navigators



Advocating for young people with other services



Linking to ongoing support

six months of support





Predict, prevent, deter and disrupt acts of violence, responding swiftly when violence occurs to reduce its harmful consequences.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

“Preventing crime and rehabilitating offenders is the surest path to a safer and more just society”.

NELSON MANDELA



Our residents told us that:

“We need more CCTV outside school to help young people feel safer”.

YOUNG PERSON

“We often see consequences for children... getting arrested for dealing drugs... but none for the adults who are grooming or exploiting them”.

WORKSHOP ATTENDEE

Our ambition

Our residents will feel safe in their communities because actions designed to predict and disrupt serious youth violence have been effective. Partners and communities will work together to deter young people from engaging in violence, reducing their opportunity to commit violent acts, and responding effectively when violence occurs to prevent further harm. Offenders who commit serious acts of violence will be held to account through swift, proportionate enforcement action, while knowing how they can access the support they need to change their behaviour and move away from crime.

Our commitments

We know that serious violence cannot be solved by enforcement alone. And across partners, we are taking coordinated action to prevent it from happening and mitigate the damage it causes on individuals and communities when it does. However, we are also clear, that if violence does occur, the consequences will be strict and certain. We will proactively manage those responsible for violence through an effective policing and partner response, ensuring the needs of victims are at the heart of our response and improving criminal justice outcomes for all.

We will achieve this by:

Effectively predicting where violence occurs through the effective use of shared data and intelligence to make more informed decisions on how we target our collective resources at the greatest harm.

This includes:

- ✓ Bringing police, council and partners together to share and use data and insight, including that captured from social media channels, to target resources on the specific places and times where we know risk of violence is greatest, working across agencies and with residents to problem-solve and implement effective solutions based on evidence.
- ✓ Investing in sophisticated mapping technology that enables partners to quickly understand established gangs and organised crime networks, pro-actively targeting resources at those responsible for the greatest harm.



Predict, prevent, deter and disrupt acts of violence, responding swiftly when violence occurs to reduce its harmful consequences.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

We will achieve this by:

Preventing and deterring acts of serious violence through smarter use of technology, planning and legislation to minimise opportunities for violence.

This includes:

- ✓ Designing out crime by hard wiring community safety considerations into our environmental and housing development and design. For example, by improving lighting, increasing natural surveillance and maintaining public spaces to increase the presence of responsible individuals and make them feel safer.

- ✓ Investing in, and stringently monitoring, CCTV. This includes around secondary schools, colleges and other educational settings where we know our young people experience higher levels of violence, and in mobile cameras that can quickly be deployed to high-harm areas, providing reassurance, deterrence and recorded evidence that will help to keep our residents safe.

- ✓ Identifying and pursuing irresponsible retailers who fail to comply with their legal responsibilities, for example, local and online shops that sell knives to children.

We will achieve this by:

Reducing reoffending by supporting offenders to move away from crime, working across partners to develop a more consistent approach to enforcement, with support in place to divert and rehabilitate the most persistent and violent offenders, enabling them to change their behaviours and protecting our communities from further harm.

This includes:

- ✓ Funding a new dedicated, multi-agency, expert team of specialist case workers to work alongside the police, probation, youth services and VCS partners to address the root causes of violence, and drive coordinated enforcement activity, curbing gang violence while simultaneously offering gang involved members a safe way out.

- ✓ Responding quickly and effectively to young people who have contact with the youth justice system by engaging them in evidence-based interventions such as Stay Safe, which provides trauma informed support for children involved in carrying weapons, and the Ether programme, which focuses on building confidence and self-esteem among children from ethnic minority groups.

- ✓ Reviewing and strengthening our approach to Integrated Offender Management (IOM), working collectively across services to ensure high-risk offenders receive bespoke interventions targeted at their individual needs, including education, training, employment and housing support to break the cycle of repeat offending.

- ✓ Increasing our use of acceptable behaviour contracts, and anti-social behaviour and gang injunctions to protect public spaces and prevent at-risk individuals from engaging in activity relating to violence, and to divert them into positive activities and support.

- ✓ Ensuring the police and partners use the full range of civil and criminal sanctions and legislation to address violence and related activity, including a dedicated team responsible for relentlessly disrupting drug markets and tackling the related harm caused within the community (more details on the actions we are taking to tackle drug crime can be found in our [Drug and Alcohol Strategy](#)).

- ✓ Proactively making sure that when sanctions on individuals are put in place, behaviour is systematically monitored, and any breaches are routinely and speedily identified and responded to.



Predict, prevent, deter and disrupt acts of violence, responding swiftly when violence occurs to reduce its harmful consequences.

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring



Residents will know we have been successful when:



Proactive, multi-agency enforcement activity routinely operates at known violence 'hot-spots', resulting in effective, evidence-based crime reduction solutions.



Police and partners use the full range of enforcement legislation available to them to address violence, with increased use of protective measures such as gang injunctions, that prevent and protect individuals from engaging in violence.



Enforcement is used justly and proportionally so that young people are clear that their actions will have consequences, while also not being unduly criminalised.



Those involved in, or at risk of, youth violence, are engaged in appropriate restorative services so they feel confident to change their behaviour and move away from risky lifestyles.



Local gang activity is disrupted and reduced due to all partners having a clear understanding of local gang networks and working collaboratively to interrupt the activities of perpetrators and inhibit the exploitation of other young people.



Violence around schools and colleges is reduced through the installation and monitoring of CCTV in areas of highest risk.



Young people are deterred and prevented from engaging in violence due to physical changes in the places where risk of violence is greatest.



Fear of crime reduces as residents see evidence of effective joint operations, and that those who participate in serious violence being pursued and brought to justice, through effective communications campaigns.



Curtail

**CASE STUDY:
Integrated Offender
Management**

“The IOM provides an enhanced level of support and monitoring to local residents, to help steer them away from future offending. By working across partners, we’re able to not only better support and rehabilitate individual service users, but also protect the wider community by reducing further crime. It’s a great example of the benefits of multiple agencies working together to prevent violence and reduce victimisation”.

ASHA*, VIOLENCE REDUCTION LEAD

*Name changed to maintain confidentiality



What? The Waltham Forest Integrated Offender Management (IOM) scheme brings a multiple-agency response to the crime and re-offending threats faced by residents in the borough.

Who? Agencies work together to identify and manage the most persistent violent offenders.

How? The Waltham Forest IOM reduces the negative impact of crime and the number of people who become victims of crime, helping to improve residents’ confidence in the overall criminal justice system.



Substance abuse support



Behavioural pattern intervention



Mental health support

Governance and monitoring

Foreword

Introduction

How was our strategy developed?

What do we mean by serious violence?

What we know about serious violence in Waltham Forest

Our vision and guiding principles

Our approach

Strengthen

Support

Treat

Curtail

Governance and monitoring

All our partners are committed to working together to deliver the actions and services set out in our strategy. In Waltham Forest, our strategic community safety partnership board, SafetyNet, which includes senior representatives from the council, police, probation, fire, health and the VCS, will provide critical governance and oversight of this work, helping us to ensure we are delivering as intended.

Our strategy is underpinned by a detailed action plan which will ensure progress can be routinely monitored and reported on. By conducting rapid reviews following serious violence incidents we will capture and act on learning, strengthening how we work more effectively across agencies to prevent future incidents from occurring.

We are committed to building review and evaluation across our programmes, enabling us to understand effectiveness and impact against clear outcome measures, redesigning or discontinuing programmes that are under-performing or not delivering value for money. This thorough monitoring and evaluation framework will allow us to track progress over time and ensure accountability for delivery against our longer-term ambitions: to reduce serious violence among our young people, tackle inherent inequalities in how violence is experienced and build a safer borough where all our residents can thrive.

