

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Follow Up report to the Full Council Themed Debate on Youth Safety	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Full Council	DATE 18 th September 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the Full Council themed debate on 17th July 2023</p> <p>The report summarises the key points made by the six speakers, and the subsequent debate at Full Council.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No document were used in the development of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officers: Beth Wagstaff, Portfolio Lead, Saima Downes, Senior Policy and Projects Officer</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Council is asked to note the report.</p>	



Signed:

Councillor Sabrina Francis, Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture

Date: 7 September 2023

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Camden's Youth Safety Taskforce was established in December 2017 in response to increased concerns around youth safety due to several serious incidences. Youth violence has devastating consequences for individuals, families, communities and society at large. At the heart of the Taskforce's work was to identify evidence about the root causes of youth violence such as childhood trauma, undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues, inadequate state provision, poverty and social inequality.
- 1.2 It is five years since the Taskforce's final report was published and a Full Council themed debate was held on 17th July 2023 to update on the progress made, and future priorities for keeping young people in Camden safe.
- 1.3 Following the launch of the report (2019), the Taskforce evolved into the Youth Safety Steering Group meeting five times a year providing the strategic direction in this space. The Steering group continues to be co-chaired by Sir Keir Starmer MP, in his role as constituency MP, and Abdul Hai OBE (former Cabinet Member for Young People, Equalities and Cohesion). Councillor Sabrina Francis represents the Council on the steering group in her role as Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture. The Steering Group members include partners from the police, public health, voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups, schools, and youth work professionals.
- 1.4 The Youth Safety Taskforce originally made 17 recommendations (Appendix A) to embed a public health approach to youth safety in Camden, under five workstreams:

Workstream Priority	Description	Workstream Lead
Prevent	Prevent youth violence by providing young people, parents and professionals with information which raises their awareness of the issues and helps them keep themselves safe, make positive choices about their behaviour and build their resilience	Kirsten Watters - Director of Public Health
Identify	Identify and refer those young people who need support because they are vulnerable to being affected by youth violence	Rashida Baig, Director of Children's Prevention, Family Help and Safeguarding
Support	Target those at risk of or affected by youth violence and provide them with the support they need, including enabling parents and professionals to support the young people with whom they are involved.	Tim Aldridge, Executive Director of Children and Learning
Disrupt	Disrupt the patterns of youth violence to make Camden a safe environment by interrupting the activities of perpetrators and inhibiting the grooming and targeting process.	Jamie Akinola, Director of Public Safety

Enforce	Use appropriate enforcement against perpetrators using information and intelligence gathered by partner agencies.	Jack Rowlands, Superintendent, Camden Metropolitan Police
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1.5 A report to accompany the Full Council themed debate was produced and outlined the progress made to address these 17 recommendations detailing the outcomes of the youth safety action plan 2018-2020. It highlighted the findings from the Youth Safety Taskforce evaluation (carried out by London Metropolitan University), referencing key achievements and future priorities up to 2025.

1.6 This report provides an overview of the Full Council debate on Youth Safety on 17th July 2023 and summarises the views of speakers and the subsequent debate. The report provides further details on the issues raised and sets out an update on some of the actions the Council is taking to respond to youth safety issues in Camden.

1.7 The Council was grateful to have six speakers join the debate, including three young people with lived experience of youth safety issues, a voluntary sector representative and the police, demonstrating the embedded public health approach working in partnership in our shared endeavour to keep young people in Camden safe. The speakers on the night were:

- Majid Abdul, Senior Youth Worker Camden Detached Youth Team, and Aya Elgool, Youth MP - Guardianship Project in Regents Park Estate
- Lucy Southern, Evolve Service Manager
- Mark Abolaji, Sports Development Co-ordinator at the Queens Crescent Community Centre,
- James Hadley, Executive Headteacher of Haverstock School, CRIB
- Kelvin Lotsu and Rosa Bramley, Camden Youth Justice Peer Advocates
- Jack Rowlands, Metropolitan Police Camden Borough Command Unit.

2. SUMMARY OF FULL COUNCIL DEBATE

2.1 The debate was introduced by Councillor Sabrina Francis, Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture. Councillor Francis opened the debate by reflecting on the tragic events of 14th July 2023 which led to death of a young person. Councillor Francis offered her condolences to the families and communities affected. This is therefore a timely debate and demonstrates the importance of ongoing activity and discussions to keep young people safe.

2.2 Key elements of the work of the Youth Safety Taskforce/Youth Safety Steering Group were highlighted including the ongoing approach that involves an outcomes framework with a delivery action plan (2022-2025) focusing on the overarching outcomes of:

- Reduction in violence involving Camden's young people
- An increase in young people feeling safe in Camden
- An increase in trust between young people and those in positions of authority.

- 2.3 Councillor Francis acknowledged that training and employability skills need to be a fundamental part of both our offer around youth safety, and young people universally. The Young Talent Guarantee is an example of such an initiative which aims to ensure all Camden young people are supported into the next stages of their lives after leaving school.
- 2.4 Councillor Francis also highlighted that the partnership approach to addressing youth safety continues via the strategic relationships built with organisations such as the Young Camden Foundation. The debate featured a range of inspiring speakers demonstrating this approach including Camden's Youth MP, youth peer advocates, and representatives from the voluntary and the Police.
- 2.5 First speakers Majid Abdul, Senior Youth Worker Camden Detached Youth Team and Aya Elgool, Youth MP spoke about the Guardianship Project on the Regents Park Estate. This is an ongoing community led initiative that aims to provide a safeguarding role for children and young people in the area. This is a partnership project between Camden's Detached Youth Team and voluntary sector organisation, Fitzrovia Youth in Action.
- 2.6 Majid Abdul set out the context of the project which includes training for the guardians, the establishment of the Community Kitchen and developing resources for the community on contextual safeguarding, including a conference held in May 2023.
- 2.7 Aya Elgool then went on to describe the resources. This includes three films on contextual safeguarding and youth safety produced by the Guardians. These films, designed and written by young guardians, will be used to train residents of the Regents Park Estate about contextual safeguarding, violence against young women and extra familial harm helping them to learn how to be an "active responder/bystander" to incidents in the area. Young Guardians will also provide focus group training to local businesses and other organisations to help them recognise the signs of a potential child safeguarding issue.
- 2.8 Lucy Southern, Evolve Service Manager, shared details of the first Camden Young Citizens' Assembly which was organised in response to concerns raised by young people (through various engagement activities) on the safety of young women and girls. The assembly was held on 26th June 2023 in the Council Chamber at the Crowndale Centre. Over 50 young women aged 13-25 attended and it featured external speakers who shared their lived experiences of sexism, misogyny and violence against women and girls. Workshops were held that allowed participants to share their experiences and explore what actions were needed to make Camden a safer space for young women. Information on the available support services and current initiatives that addressed violence against women and girls was also provided. Feedback from the participants reflected the value of holding the assembly with the young women feeling empowered and expressing the desire to become change makers. Lucy shared details of the second assembly which will be held later this year. This will be an opportunity to reflect on and share the findings from the first assembly with a larger group of young girls and young men.

- 2.9 Mark Abolaji, Sports Development Coordinator at Queens Crescent Community Centre, spoke about the value of sport in providing social, psychological and physical safety for young people, and the impact of sport on the development and growth of young people. The Dome youth club offers daily sports sessions and holds the Community Shield football tournament which brings together local organisations to build a sense of community. Sport enables young people to appreciate the importance of structure and nutrition, and Mark highlighted the impact of sport resulting in changes in the behaviour of young people to become positive role models. Mark referenced the Department of Culture, Media and Sport review (2015) that concluded there was a correlation between sport and a reduction in crime. Also highlighting a longitudinal study in the USA which indicated that young people involved in sport were less likely to attempt suicide. The sense of safety provided by local sports clubs allows young people to build their confidence, gain transferable skills and contribute positively to their future.
- 2.10 James Hadley, Headteacher of Haverstock School, highlighted that the investigation carried out by the Youth Safety Taskforce in 2017 had found a correlation between permanent exclusion and youth violence. He explained this presented a challenge to secondary headteachers and governing bodies to work towards better outcomes for the most vulnerable students. One response to this in Camden was the creation of the Camden Re-integration Base (CRIB) which was part funded by the Youth Safety Taskforce Fund and the Violence Reduction Unit. Set up at Haverstock School it provides a 12 week re-integration programme for pupils at risk of exclusion from school with students receiving three hours a day of teaching, plus a programme of individualised interventions designed to support them to return to their mainstream school. The CRIB is integrated with other services (Camden's Youth Early Help, Mary's Charity, Coram Fields) supporting young people, and all Camden secondary schools have signed up as referrers. Over the last four years, 150 young people have been referred to the CRIB and over 80% of these pupils had successfully re-integrated back into their mainstream school. The CRIB has been highlighted as a national example of best practice in the recent Youth Justice Service inspection.
- 2.11 Kelvin Lotsu and Rosa Bramley, Youth Justice Peer Advocates, gave an overview about their work setting out that all peer advocates are former service users, and the aim of the scheme was to bridge the gap between staff in the Youth Service and young people. Their work informs policy, practice and interventions, helping to provide a supportive service for children and young people. Since the scheme began they have been involved in work including promotional videos about the service, hosting shout out events, taking part in the stop and search monitoring group, creating intervention resources and supporting young people in work placements. The overall aim of the scheme is to reduce re-offending, creating positive change with advocates gaining valuable skills and experience to take into employment and other roles in the community. The priorities for the year ahead included continuing to build relationships with external networks, more joint working with community services, and more direct work with children. Topics of focus included mental health and young women's safety, as well as improving participation amongst young people.

2.12 Jack Rowlands of the Metropolitan Police spoke about their work on enforcement, engagement and diversion in the borough. The Police had worked collaboratively with the Council's Community Safety team to ensure a targeted approach to keeping young people safe. Operation Vigilant had just been launched in Camden, using covert and overt officers to go into areas where young women felt unsafe, and this had already had some success in preventing further offending and bringing people to justice. Stop and search continues to be used effectively and was a key police tactic resulting in the removal of weapons to prevent young people from losing their lives, disrupting criminal behaviour and keeping young people safe in the borough. The police youth engagement teams are working with organisations like boxing clubs whilst Safer Schools Officers and Ward Officers worked on the ground building relationships with community organisations, such as the Regents Park Guardians. He highlighted that the Police are keen to keep forging relationships in the community. Also highlighting the Divert app being piloted in Camden that has led to some positive outcomes for young people referred to diversionary activities.

2.13 Following the speakers, Council Members then made several comments and asked questions related to:

- Wider youth provision in the borough and annual spend on service provision
- Young offenders and the youth offending service
- Exploitation of children
- The Council working with neighbouring boroughs,
- The role of racism in youth safety,
- Further support for young people, ensuring their voices are heard
- Raising awareness of youth safety and the role of schools
- Increasing participation in sporting activities
- The contribution of investment in early years provision to youth safety
- Further information on the work of police with colleges and improving public trust in the police.
- Consideration for adopting a future aim for zero permanent exclusions and addressing fixed term exclusions off site.

2.14 In her closing remarks and in answer to questions, Councillor Francis explained that the Council currently spends £6.2m a year on youth services and although spending is not benchmarked, we believed it is at the higher end based on our outcomes. The Council has highlighted its approach to youth safety: the early investment in prevention and support can lead to better outcomes for young people and reduce future intervention. She also highlighted that in Camden there is a mix of volunteer run and Council run youth sector projects, which together offered a vast range of activities and facilities, with 3,500 people accessing youth projects in Camden in 2022

2.15 With regards to issues related to gangs and exploitation it was explained this is the focus of the Camden Gangs Partnership. This is a multi-agency partnership set up to address gang violence and safeguard against the exploitation of young people. Investment in local voluntary sector organisations was a key factor in

increasing participation in youth activities including sports. Investment can ensure staff are retained thereby youth workers are able to build long term relationships with the children and their families. Publicity and raising awareness of activities was important to enable young people to find out what is on offer.

- 2.16 Raising awareness of youth safety issues and supporting young people in school continues to be a priority of the youth safety steering group. We have run an annual “youth safety week/fortnight” with the aim of raising awareness, creating social action, and signposting support. Schools are heavily involved in youth safety week and the headteacher of Acland Burghley School sits on the Youth Safety Steering Group. Trauma informed training is being delivered in Camden schools to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to support vulnerable young people. As part of the national curriculum all schools deliver programmes to educate young people about risks to safety and measures to keep themselves safe. Schools have Pastoral Care provided by a designated lea and Safer Schools Police Teams work with schools closely to prevent issues escalating, to share knowledge and experience. James Hadley commented that more resources to support young people with youth safety issues would be helpful and tackling poor attendance was vital as this was a safeguarding issue. In terms of supporting young people in further education colleges, the Police have a university team, which primarily focusses on UCL but do also work with colleges, as did ward officers.
- 2.17 The issues of racism and trust in the police were discussed. Camden Police Borough Crime Unit has a dedicated hate crime unit to investigate racist crimes ensuring that evidence is seized, and witnesses are interviewed as quickly as possible. Misogyny in the police force is an issue, and the Police are committed to bringing perpetrators to justice. The police aim to build public confidence and trust to help keep Camden safe. The police have recently launched “A New Met for London Plan”, which sets out the intention to deliver better policing and transform the organisation to build confidence and trust. In Camden a community event will be held on 5th September at the Crowndale Centre at which police representatives will provide information on implementing this plan in Camden over the next two years.

3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 On Tuesday 1st August Councillor Francis, Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture, chaired a special Youth Safety Steering Group meeting with Sir Keir Starmer MP. This meeting was in response to the tragic news that on 14th July 2023 a young person from Camden had lost his life as a result of a stabbing in Brent. During this meeting, the Steering Group reviewed how we are responding to incidents including our immediate, partnership, community and police responses as well as any other intelligence. It also looked at the activities and support available for young people in Camden this summer, including those who do not normally get involved in more mainstream activities. This included plans for the summer university and the Avalon Project, as well as the support and activities at youth centres, through Connexions and provided by the voluntary and community sector.

- 3.2 Upcoming Youth Safety Steering Group meetings will focus on the Prevent Workstream and evaluating how the summer has gone in October. December's meeting will focus on a wider review of Camden's Youth Safety Outcomes Framework and progress in this space.
- 3.3 We will be hosting the second youth citizens' assembly offering later in 2023/early 2024 which will provide an opportunity to reflect on and share the findings from the first assembly with a larger group of young girls and young men. The group will examine how to enable young men to become allies. The Camden Detached Youth Team will continue to engage with the young women who took part in the first event, and they will be part of co-designing the next assembly.
- 3.4 As part of our ongoing commitment to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Camden, the Community Partners Fund has recently been launched. The fund will provide seven-year grants to not for profit VCS organisations who can demonstrate that they are deeply rooted in the neighbourhoods of Camden and the key role they play in addressing and responding to community needs. Grants of between £10,000 and £100,000 are available, depending on the size of the organisation and level of impact with expressions of interest due in by midday on 20th September 2023. The Community Partner Fund is the first of a series of new funding that will launch between now and summer 2024.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no expected legal implications

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no expected resource implications

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no expected environmental implications.

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 There are no appendices to the report.

REPORT ENDS