

A black and white photograph of a person wearing a dark hoodie, sitting on a brick wall. Their hands are pressed against their face, suggesting distress or despair. The background is a blurred, light-colored wall.

SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE - BREAKING THE CYCLE



BIRMINGHAM
**Safeguarding
Children**
PARTNERSHIP

Webinar Programme

- 14:00 Welcome & Introduction – Jane Armstrong and Graham Tilby, Co-Chairs BSCP Serious Case Sub-Group
- 14:15 Case Overview and Key Learning – Dr Russell Wate, Lead Reviewer
- 14:35 Quick Comfort Break
- 14:40 EmpowerU Hub: Serious Youth Violence
- 15:10 Question Time Panel – Chaired by Jane Armstrong and Graham Tilby
- 15:40 Closing Remarks
- 16:00 Finish

Case Overview and Key Learning

Dr Russell Wate

Case Overview

Mohamed (not his real name) died after being stabbed by three people. One of which is called Hassan in the CSPR report. He has been sentenced to nine years imprisonment for manslaughter.

Both boys were 16 years old at the time of the fatal stabbing.

This is a case of Serious Youth Violence and urban street gangs in Birmingham.

The review report was developed following three distinct parts to the review:



1

The lives of Mohamed & Hassan as known through agency reports, through practitioners that knew and worked with them and a conversation with Mohamed's mother.

2

An analysis of the effectiveness of implementation of learning from a previous CSPR published by the BSCP in 2021. This CSPR was based on the learning from the National Panel's report, 'It was hard to escape.'

3

An analysis of the cases of the two boys but also eight other boys involved in serious youth violence in Birmingham some of whom were fatally stabbed and some of whom are offenders. This helped provide an in- depth focus of what is happening in the lives of boys involved in SYV in Birmingham.

Mohamed

- Mohamed was Black African ethnicity. He came to the UK because he was a very talented footballer with opportunities here for him. He applied for settled status, but this was never granted due to his convictions and pending prosecutions.
- He very quickly on reaching Birmingham became associated with gang members from 11 years old and was carrying knives.
- Many of the boys in this group were known to carry offensive weapons and were associates of other young males who had been murdered because of knife crime and gang affiliation.

- Mohamed first became known to Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT) at 12 years old, when a referral was received from his school regarding a deterioration in his behaviour at home and school.
- Soon after this he was arrested for possession of an offensive weapon (knife). There were also incidents of him going missing from home and concerns that he was associating with other males in urban street gangs.
- He had been excluded from school and was in an Alternative Provision.
- In December 2020, he was suspected of stabbing another child in a gang related incident. No further action.

- In January 2021, a friend of Mohamed's was killed. There was a notable change in Mohamed's behaviour following his friend's death.
| **For example**, he would attend school wearing five pairs of tracksuit bottoms and stated that they were to protect him from a knife attack.
- In May 2021, he was present when another child was fatally stabbed. This was his second friend killed through gang-related violence.
- Later he was admitted to hospital having been stabbed in his abdomen following a violent disorder that involved weapons.

- In December 2021, Mohamed was involved in an incident in Birmingham City Centre where he sustained several stab wounds.
- In May 2022, he attacked another student at school. A knife was found in his coat pocket by a teacher. He was arrested and held in custody.
- He was killed in Summer 2022, having been stabbed to death.

Hassan

- Hassan, a 16-year-old of Black African ethnicity with Sudanese heritage, had been living in the UK since December 2019 under the EU Settlement Scheme.
- In April 2020, he first became known to BCT after he was arrested for possessing a firearm.
- In September 2020, concerns about gang affiliation were raised.
- In December 2020, he was suspected of disposing of a knife and was involved in a video causing tension between rival gangs.
- In January 2021, Hassan was arrested on suspicion of being involved in a murder (the first of Mohamed's friends murdered).
- In May 2021, he was sent home from school for smelling of cannabis.

- In May 2021, it was decided that Hassan would no longer attend Aston Manor Academy due to safety concerns.
- He was placed on a Child Protection Plan for escalating violence, gang involvement, substance misuse, unstable education, and his mother's limited understanding of the risks he faced.
- Between August 2021 - October 2021 Hassan and his family visited Sudan. It was viewed as a positive step and an opportunity to sever links with gang members.
- After this period, he was considered to be of low risk.
- In Summer 2022, Mohamed was murdered. Hassan was arrested, charged, and subsequently convicted of his homicide.

Cross cutting themes from the four rapid reviews

- The majority of the ten boys highlighted in the reviews suffered significant childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Both Mohamed and Hassan were arrivals into the UK and initially were identified as victims of crimes, however, they quickly went on to become entrenched in gangs and criminal activity.
- There was an absence of positive paternal role models within these boys' lives and in some of the cases, those that were present were a negative influence encouraging or condoning violence.
- Many of the boys were known to carry offensive weapons and were associates of other young males who had been murdered because of knife crime and gang affiliation, and subject of BSCP Rapid Reviews.

Cross cutting themes from the four rapid reviews



- Significant disruption and breakdown in the boys' education, with recurring patterns of the extensive use of fixed-term and permanent exclusions from school, with one of the boys excluded on ten occasions and another being taken off school roll and being home educated for two years. The mother of Mohamed told me that she felt that the school were great with him and did all they could.
- Mental and emotional wellbeing: several of the boys had SEND or difficulties with their emotional wellbeing.
- Several of the boys including Mohamed and Hassan were actively engaging with mentoring programmes and found this a positive and rewarding experience.

Cross cutting themes from the four rapid reviews

- Partnership intervention for almost all of them focused on an attempt to break the cycle and divert them from gang affiliation.
- There were some missed opportunities to engage more effectively with the boys when they were at crisis point; these 'reachable moments' were when they had been stabbed or arrested and when return home interviews were carried out following periods when they were missing from home.
- They were subject of intensive work coordinated through multi-agency Disruption Planning Meetings.
- Whilst it was acknowledged as good practice, the system targets intervention based on risk, and it was felt that further assurance was needed of the effectiveness and impact of these arrangements.

Learning Themes developed during the review

- A more comprehensive knowledge of what pathways and resources are in place, is required by all professionals involved in safeguarding children from SYV (Serious Youth Violence).
- Professionals who work with tackling SYV must know and understand the Serious Youth Violence strategy.
- Professionals need to understand what 'Place' means to a child and how that influences their lives.
- Trusted adult-mentoring-reachable moments

Learning Themes developed during the review

- Ensure that all partners and practitioners are fully aware of the range of community-based support within neighbourhoods and availability of mentoring services across the city, and their effectiveness in supporting children at risk of serious youth violence.
- Educating children as to the dangers of knives and being involved in gangs and serious youth violence can be beneficial to prevent future exploitation. If necessary, this awareness raising to take place in the last years of primary school as well as secondary schools.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The effective implementation of the Reducing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2034, particularly assessing the impact of multi-agency intervention to tackle serious youth violence

(ii) BSCP should seek assurance that all relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations at both strategic and operational levels are committed and actively involved in the long-term implementation of the Reducing Serious Violence Strategy.

Recommendation 2

There is a need for individual children that may be at risk of serious youth violence (either as a victim or perpetrator, or both) to be identified at the earliest opportunity.

The Contextual Safeguarding Board reviews the current screening tool so that they ensure that they pick out serious youth violence where it is a separate risk to CCE.

For all cases, whether statutory intervention or not, there is a lead professional in place to coordinate multi-agency activity for children who are at risk of serious youth violence. This should include families who are receiving support in via the early help offer within the city.

Recommendation 3

The BSCP should help and support education efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of knife crime in secondary, primary schools and in those settings providing alternative school provision. (The Ben Kinsella knife crime campaigns and learning resources for practitioners are seen nationally as good practice that can assist with this awareness raising.)

Recommendation 4

The BSCP and the Birmingham Contextual Safeguarding Board should ensure that all partners and practitioners are fully aware of the range of community-based support within neighbourhoods and availability of mentoring services across the city and their effectiveness in supporting children at risk of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.

“What I don't think any of us here (at the practitioner event) has an answer to, is the draw and the pull into becoming part of a gang. When we talked to children and children tell us that they have to act a certain way because of where they live, behave a certain way, talk a certain way, walk a certain way, dress a certain way just to feel safe. So it's OK for us to sit here and think about how we get children to not become a member of a gang but we are not walking and navigating the harm and risk and the uncertainty, the anxiety and the fear within the Community that our children are today and I just wanted to say that so that we think about everything that we want to do, plan to do, hope to do but not take our mind off what it is like to be empathetic and walk in those children shoes.”

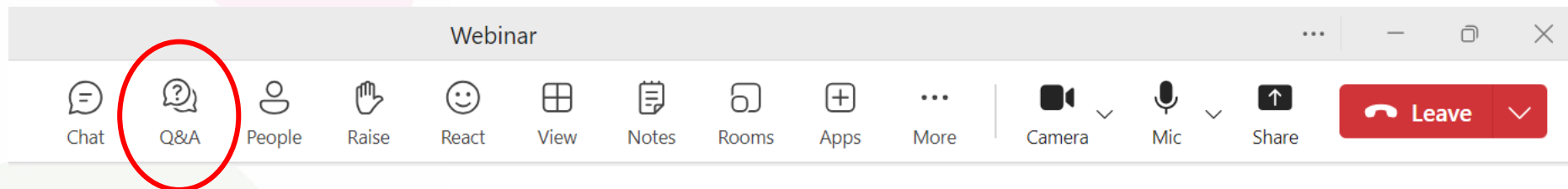
Comfort Break - Back in 5 minutes!



If you have a question for the Q&A session

You can submit a question by clicking on the Q&A button on the top toolbar and typing your question.

We will then answer your question during the Q&A session after the second presentation.



EMPOWER U Birmingham Contextual Safeguarding Hub

**Birmingham
Children's Trust**

**Annabel Goddard
Team Manager**



EMPOWERU Team

M	Management
DM	Dionne McAndrew AD PVVP
CG	Clair Graham HOS CS
IR	Insp. Sharron Revitt West Midlands Police
TM	Team Managers
AG	Annabel Goddard Team Manager
IS	Imran Suddle Team Manager
DM	Denise McMorrow Team Manager
SL	Sgt. James Lander West Midlands Police
SG	Sgt. Nick Giess Manager
PO	Principal Officers
OT	Ophelia Turkson Manager
V	Vacancy Principal Officer

DP	Data & Performance
NS	Nathan Sysum Data & Performance Manager
EC	Exploitation Coordinators
LR	Lynette Reid East Coordinator
PC	Patricia Clarke East Coordinator
MJ	Michaela Jones East Coordinator
PA	Paul Anderson NWC Coordinator
SJ	Stephanie Johnson NWC Coordinator
LW	Louise Wood NWC Coordinator
KI	Kaya Isaac South Coordinator
BW	Beverley Wilson South Coordinator
RH	Rachel Hopkinson South Coordinator
AC	Angela Cresser Prevent Lead

MT	Missing Team
DB	Derron Bowen Missing Support Worker
BM	Brittiney Mitchell Missing Support Worker
CM	Chloe-Louise Mullholand Missing Support Worker
SP	Sahera Parveen Missing Support Worker
EA	Eleni Adamou Missing Support Worker
MH	Majid Hussain Missing Support Worker
HM	Hannah Moseley Missing Support Worker
RJ	Renee Johnson Missing Support Worker
CB	Coldrey Blake Missing Support Worker
N	Name Vacancy
N	Name Vacancy

BS	Business Support
MJ	Melissa Jhonson Team Leader
GH	Gail Hollis BS Officer
AZ	Afad Zaman BS Assistant
KM	Kenya Michell BS Assistant
MO	Mary OShagbemi BS Assistant
NB	Nicola Bromwich BS Assistant
TH	Tewelde Hippolyte BS Assistant

P	Partners
E	Education
H	Housing
YS	Youth Service
B	Barnardos
CS	Children's Society
L	Licensing
BF	Border Force
FS	Fire Service
CC	Community instest companies
V	VRP
R	RSVP
CS	Community safety
P	Probation
HP	HM Prisons
P	Police
S	SOCEX
LP	Locate Police
E	Exploitation
G	Gangs
N	Neighbourhoods

What do we do on a page?



Screening and triage of missing episodes and Exploitation referrals- initial safeguarding & aligning threshold for around 90 children every day



Provide Specialist advice and support & Training



Chairing Daily Multi agency intelligence meetings so we can respond to critical incidents across city over prev 24 hours. Chairing disruption planning meetings/strategy meetings reducing risks & harms



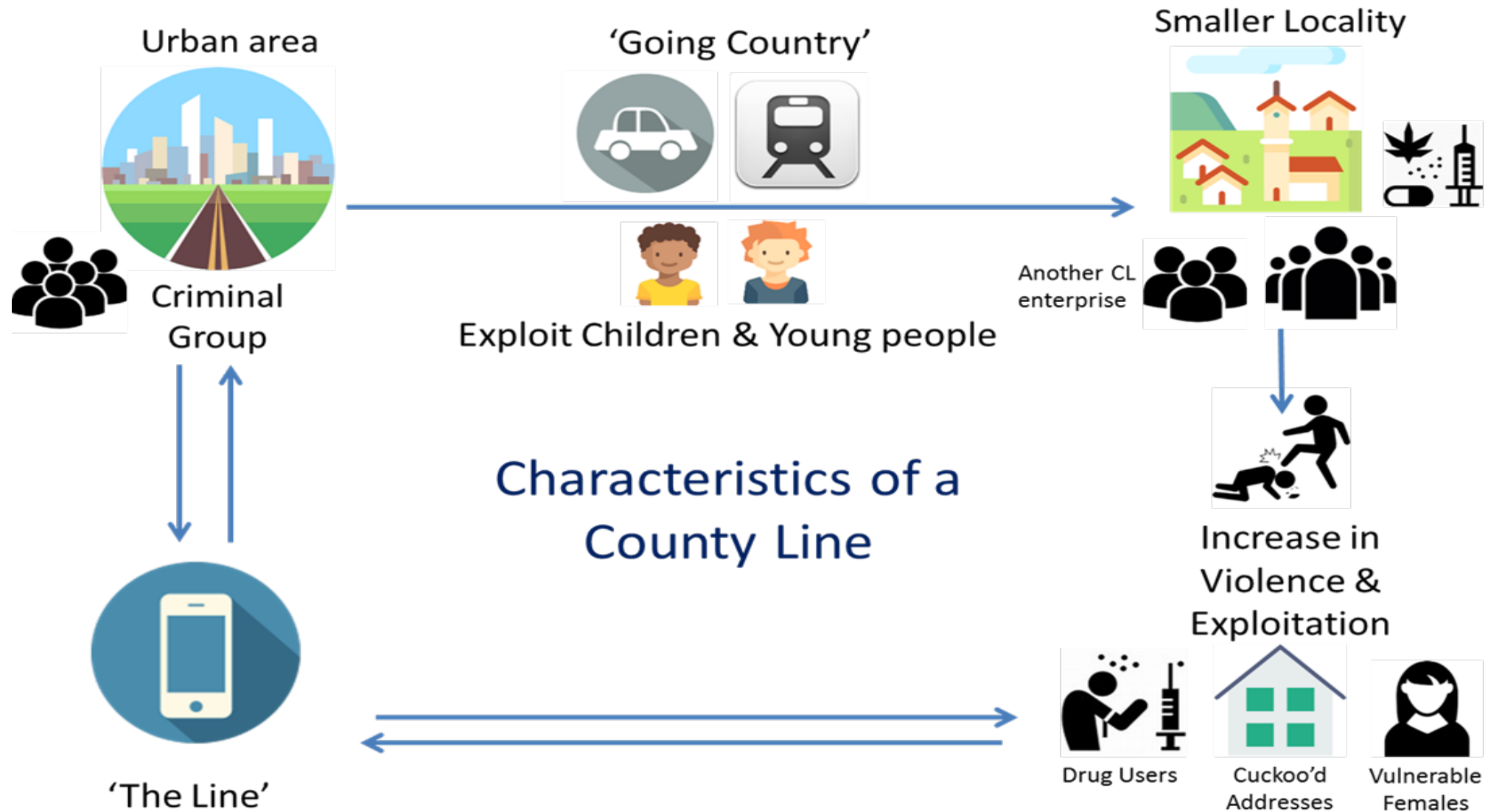
Attend other meetings where exploitation is a concern-in schools/com munities



Identify and connect relevant /appropriate support agencies & support place-based approaches



Mapping of locations and peers, events themes to create an informed picture



Disruption Opportunities



Should focus on perpetrator or drug line specialist Police



DPMs specialist meeting



Intelligence is key



Covert Tactics and limitations



Safety Planning- discharge plans/frank conversations



Disruption Toolkit- legal order



Secure accommodation/Tier 1 moves



trusted adult relationships/meaningful alternatives/Zero tolerance in Communities

Completing a Screening Tool

- **Does not require additional consent**
- **Must accompany a CASS referral**
- **FIB information in addition**
- **Send to EmpowerU BSS**
empowerubss@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
- **Case consultations or support available via:**
EMPOWERU@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

P

those who may be a risk to them, any peers the child talks about, any social media accounts, any usernames, adults of concern, nicknames etc...also people

O

Anything new or unaccounted for – any train tickets, any hotel or car keys, weapons, drugs, burner phones, gang motifs

L

Parks, Shopping precincts, Cuckoo addresses, Hotels, Virgils, Funerals, block parties, balloon releases, visits from social influencers, music events

E

Missing episodes and incidents within these episodes for example arrests, tic for tactic reprisal attacks, trigger incidents at home, school, community,- chronology helps us anticipate and intervene

Section 2

Serious Youth Violence- some learnings
from Empower U

Serious Youth Violence is defined as incidents whereby children/youths either under 19 or under 25 years old and are involved in any offences (such as manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm, assault/injury that is lifechanging and involves weapons such as knives or firearms).

Serious Violence Duty



Serious Violence Duty, Preventing and reducing serious violence Statutory Guidance for responsible authorities



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>



We must comply with the duty



Duty discusses building on existing partnership arrangements we do not need to start from scratch rather review what is already in place and look at any gaps

Easy to define SYV harder to understand what is really driving it/what the core issues are ?

- In NWC Birmingham we know we have embedded gangs that come from a legacy of gangs and rivalry from 1980s
- “Othering of families/gangs/areas” Evil Nazi Goebbels ‘Principle’ “ repeat a lie often enough and people will believe it”
- “Drill videos- what are they telling us? Young people want to be rich, wear designer clothes, have sex, drive fancy cars, take drugs,
- Their willingness to offend to achieve these goals also by defending territory they consider theirs and eliminating potential rivals (real and perceived)
- Under or over socialised? Does UK have a Culture of violence? And is subcultural SYV results in deaths, near misses multi- layered trauma
- Exploitation Vs Persuasive peers?
- Is what we know based on real empirical evidence or is it based on assumptions?
- All of these challenging discussions are taking place in Empower U spaces

Incident timeline

- Inflammatory video posted by gang member
- Shooting thought to be connected in local park
- Two affiliate gangs posted videos
- One gang posted video talking about significant events
- Gang driving around rival area (making a video on someone else's turf - provoking)
- Death of Child (rumoured to be linked to one gang)
- Firearm discharged (thought to be a reprisal attack)
- Older gang members 20yrs+ stopped by police with loaded firearm affiliated member stabbed
- Disorder in streets- young people fighting
- Rival gang posting taunting videos
- Another video posted by gang (affiliated to main gang)
- Rival gang member stabbed (influential drill artist- lucky to be alive)
- Shooting of a rival member
- Stabbing of another male (thought to be related)

Both Mohamed and Hassan well known to Empower U hub- thought to be part of rival gangs

RIP (786) Mohamed. Hassan's in prison now for manslaughter

Mohamed Stabbed in Summer of 2022.

Within 24 hours we:

- **Were out in the community offering support.**

We identified children who might be drawn into reprisals attacks & reached out to them, their families.

We went to Mohamed's Funeral.

We spoke to mum, sister, brother

Offered prayers with his family in the Mosque.

We spoke to his friends attending the funeral – requesting their stay away from reprisals

Police provided an important albeit sensitive presence

While we tragically lost Mohamed, because of our partnerships with Police and people in community we probably stemmed the flow of reprisals attacks.

The Birmingham Police Commander said we did this in October 2022.





9 Key Practice messages from Empower U that build on Dr Wate's report

1. Empathy and compassion for children drawn into SYV/Gangs.

When we take into account the context of ACE's, leaving home countries to settle in UK, coming from a single parent household, school exclusion, learning disability & SEND, missing, gang affiliation, offending, trauma, victimisation, weapons, poverty, compounded by intersectionality you understand that these children are just trying to survive

“In a lifestyle they had not really chosen”.



9 Key Practice messages from Empower U that build on Dr Russell's report

2. Timeliness in response is critical – remember chronology
3. Forget about one size fits all approach – Interventions should be co-produced, bespoke, they should inspire, develop a culture of aspiration, be visible in affected communities and offer real alternatives to exit gangs.
4. There is a place for 1.1 and **Group work** – the latter is often neglected – Counter narratives on weapon carrying, realities of gang / or “road life”
5. Shared vision Multi agency co-produced with affected Communities. Zero tolerance to SYV/Gangs – (Gangs aren't Robin Hood figures)
6. Leaders must be experienced and must be trusted by affected communities
7. Respect formal boundaries of safeguarding with the informal boundaries of a trust adult relationship
8. Engage with young people in secure estates so upon release they can move from dependency (e.g. Werrington YOI)

9. Finally, the Importance of Place ...

The report states that despite Positive engagement Mohamed and Hassan were drawn back to “Place”

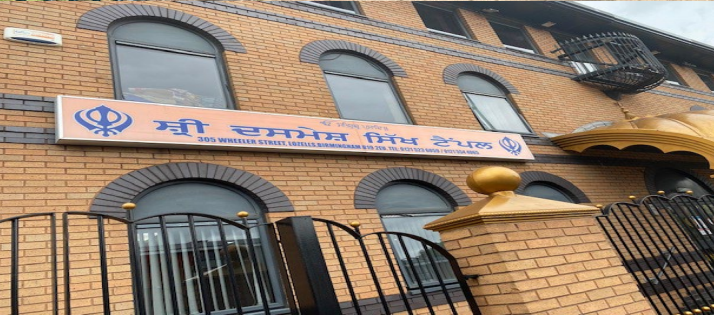
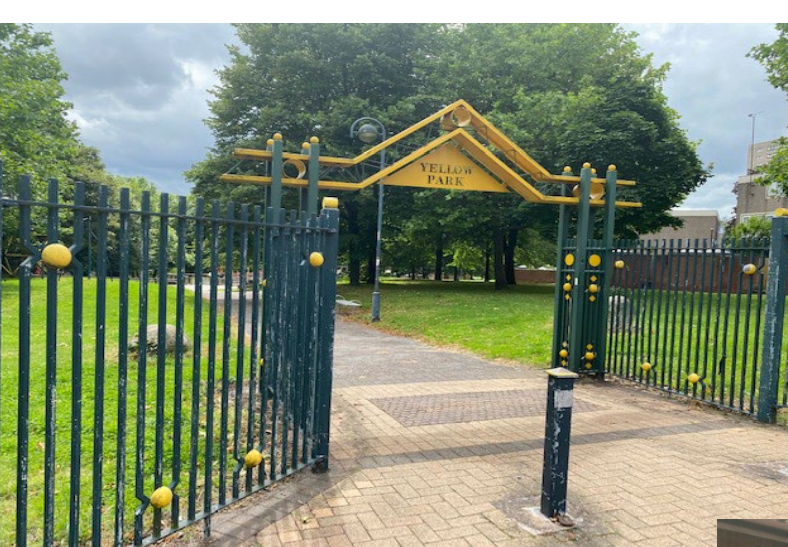
The more we can invest in the places/spaces children are connected to the better

Leave you with some visuals of what this work could look like & what can be achieved if there is the will from all...



We planned and delivered walkabouts in areas affected by youth violence– using this word is very significant – it’s how indigenous aboriginal communities reconnect spiritually with their land and their culture traditions in the context of racism and colonialism suffered by this people – “it resonates with us too” (Pravin Patel in conversation with Dr Debelle).

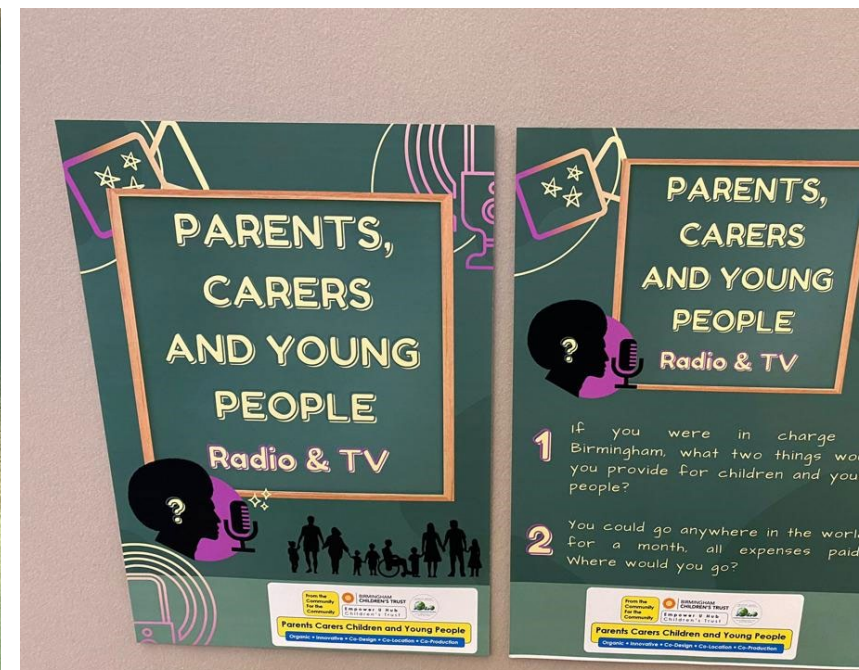
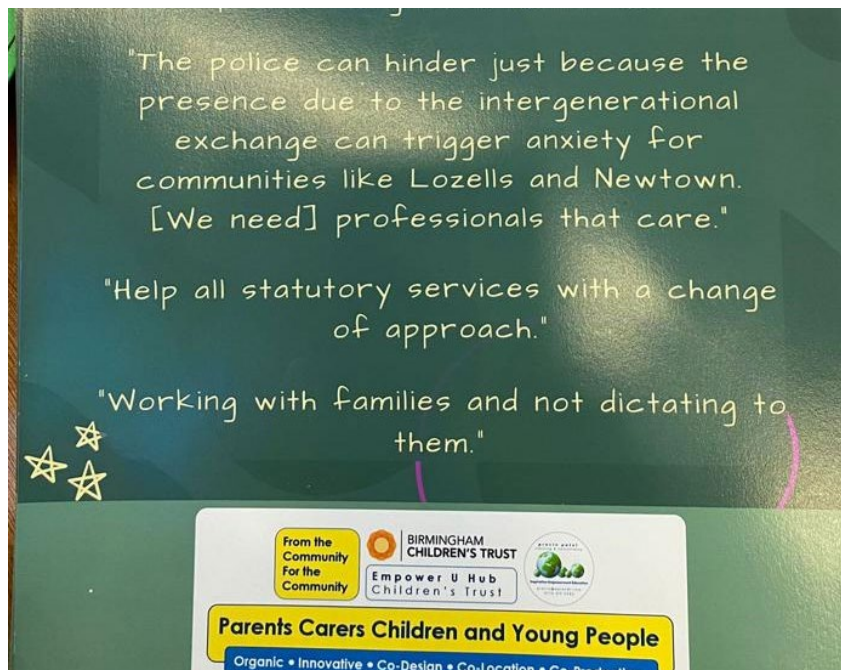
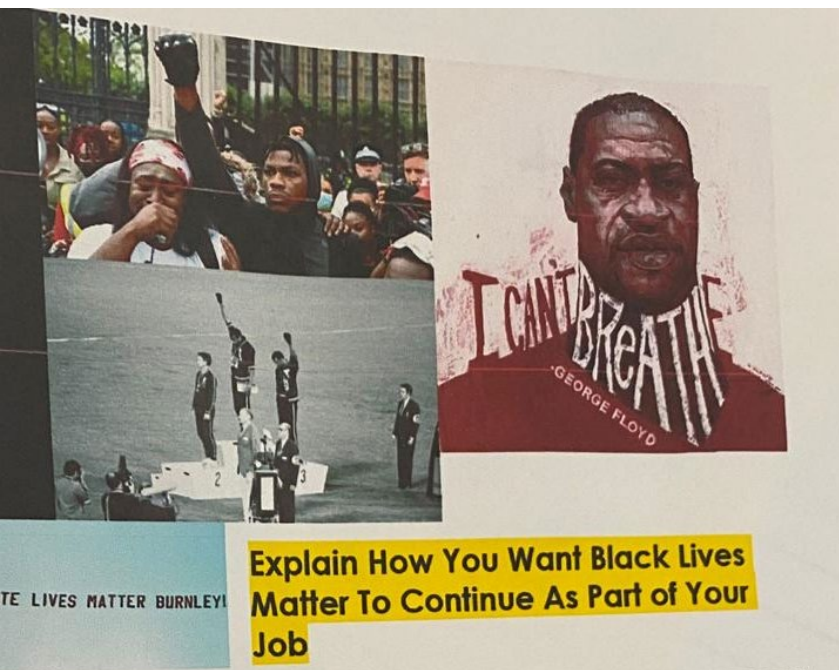
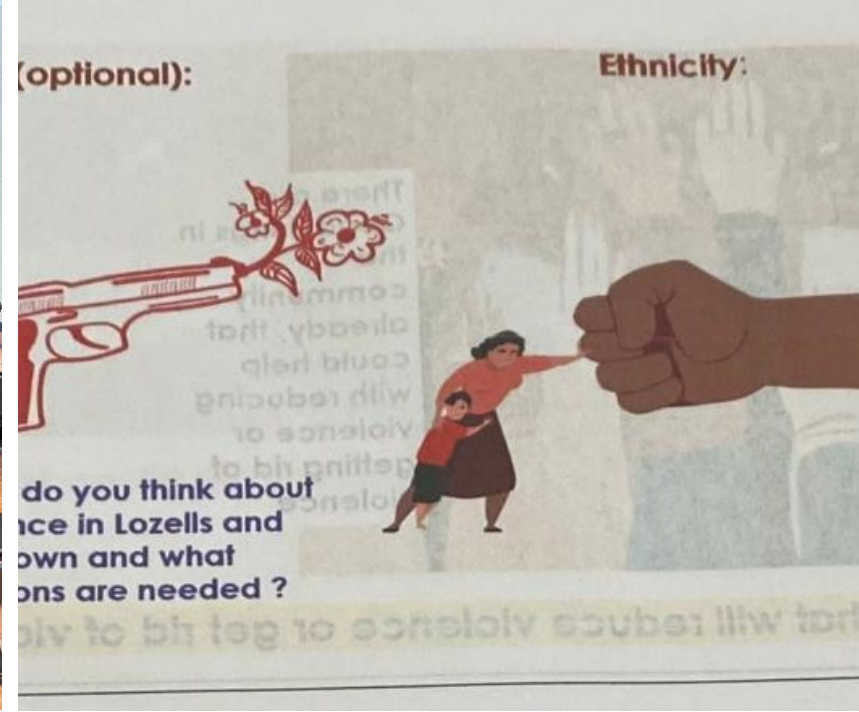








Developed Innovative Parents/Carers group to strengthen resilience of parents who were affected by SYV, providing a central voice on related issues, a safe space to offload, get relevant support on housing health advocacy and hold each other during critical incidents. Also group have levelled in YEF £1 million additional resource into area.





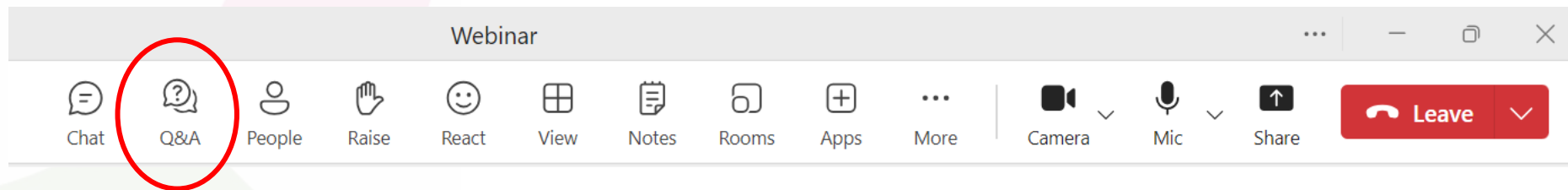
Q&A session

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Raising your hand and unmuting your microphone when prompted.

OR

Click on the Q&A button on the top toolbar and type your question.



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