

REDUCING RISK TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY GANG ACTIVITY GUIDANCE NOTES

Introduction

Young people becoming involved in gang activity can have serious consequences for the community and for the young people themselves. Communities can become ruled by fear and feel intimidated and so lose cohesion. The young people may become physically and emotionally harmed or their activity may lead to involvement in the criminal justice system.

As a result of local and national learning Bournemouth and Poole have produced a protocol and toolkit to help all agencies working with young people identify when they may be forming a loose or formal grouping or “gang” and what they then need to do to obtain additional assistance or resource. These guidance notes are intended to guide front line practitioners and workers through the toolkit that should be used in conjunction with the protocol.

The protocol and associated documents are available on:

www.boroughofpoole.com » Communities and People » Crime and Disorder » Anti-Social Behaviour
www.bournemouth.gov.uk/PeopleLiving/CrimeDisorder/Anti-SocialBehaviour/Anti-socialBehaviour

The Protocol for Working Together to Reduce Risk to Children & Young People Who May be Affected by Gang Activity

If someone working with young people believes a gang or group is forming that may lead to risk in the community of other young people or the young people themselves they should first activate the protocol. If the practitioner, henceforth called the Assessor, is satisfied the evidence points to the formation of a group or gang the protocol is activated and a procedure followed to ensure a referral is made to the relevant Bournemouth/Poole group as outlined in the protocol.

The Assessment Tool

In the first instance the evidence available should be tested by completing the Assessment Form for **each young person** suspected of being a member of the group or gang. Some of the boxes contain a star * that indicates a young person may be at particular risk of harm and a multi-agency meeting such as Team Around the Child may need to be convened. If the Assessor has specific safeguarding concerns a referral should be made to the appropriate Children and Young Peoples’ Social Care Unit. If the evidence leads the Assessor to have concerns that a group or gang is forming, or has formed, a referral should be completed.

The Referral

After an assessment has identified the formation of a gang or group the Assessor should complete the appropriate Referral Form and email it along with each assessment to the secure email address on the form depending on your location - Bournemouth or Poole. The Assessor should record this information on their case management system. The Assessor’s role is temporarily complete notwithstanding any child safeguarding concerns or

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behaviours in the young person's setting. The Assessor should be prepared to attend the multi-agency meeting to present their evidence.

Group Profile

When the Referral Form has been received by the Bournemouth and Poole Anti-Social Behaviour Teams (ASB) on behalf of their respective Community Safety Partnership (CSP) a more detailed profile will be compiled before the next appropriate multi agency meeting. A checklist is provided for this purpose.

Multi-Agency Meeting

Bournemouth and Poole both have monthly operational or tasking groups where representatives from Dorset Police, Children's Services, Youth Offending Service, health and various council departments meet to discuss the current situation regarding crime and disorder, vulnerable victims and repeat offenders – adults and young people. The meeting will decide if the evidence suggests a formation of a gang under the terms of the protocol. If accepted the meeting will take responsibility for dealing with the gang referral, tasking actions, allocating resources and monitoring and reviewing progress through appointing a Lead Officer.

If the threshold is not met and the referral refused the meeting will make recommendations or signpost or refer to another agency. The Assessor may then be responsible for future actions.

It is the responsibility of the appropriate Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team to ensure the respective meeting organiser distributes the papers prior to each meeting. They should also ensure the Assessor is invited to the meeting to present their case.

Multi-Agency Action Plan

If accepted the meeting will decide the actions the Lead Officer, supported by others, needs to take to prevent the group or gang from causing harm to the community and to themselves.

The action plan becomes the responsibility of the Lead Officer to complete, action, monitor and report on. The purpose of the action plan is to guide practitioners in what needs to be done to break up the group or gang through support or legal action, to support and protect vulnerable victims and to protect and reassure the wider community. It is expected the Assessor will become a key partner in developing and delivering the action plan.

The action plan should be reviewed by the Operational Group and make the decisions on future actions and decide when the plan/case should be closed.

For further assistance contact

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