Early intervention to reduce youth gang involvement

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CV in this area

DA/IPV: WORKED WITH 'RESPECT' 2006/7

GANGS: 'EUROGANG' member since 2007

Shute (2008). Parenting & youth gangs: risk, resilience and effective support. Report for Manchester City Council. Manchester: CCCJ

Aldridge et al (2008). Parents, families & gangs: effective family interventions for reducing harmful outcomes. Report for Manchester City Council. Manchester: CCCJ

Aldridge et al (2011). 'Blame the parents?': challenges for parent-focussed programmes with families of gang-involved young people. *Children & Society* 25 (5), 371-381

Shute et al (2012) "Loading the policy blunderbuss." *Criminal Justice Matters* 87, no. 1(2012): 40-41.

Shute (2013) "Family support as a gang reduction measure." *Children & Society* 27, no. 1: 48-59.

Shute & Medina (2014) "Hunting Gruffalo: 'Gangs', Unreason and the Big Bad Coalition." *Criminal Justice Matters* 96, no. 1: 26-27.

Medina et al (2014) "Proximal Adolescent Outcomes of Gang Membership in England and Wales." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 51, no. 2 (2014): 168-199.

Shute (2016) 'Hunting Gruffalo with a blunderbuss: On the ethics of constructing and responding to English youth gangs'. In J. Jackson & J. Jacobs (Eds) *Handbook of Criminal Justice Ethics.* London: Routledge.

OUTLINE

- why gangs?

- why early intervention?

- why family-based intervention?

- learning from current & past policy

- moving forward

(1) WHY STUDY GANGS?

- they exist (*youth* gangs vs. other youth groups & organised criminal networks)

- involvement amplifies harms of all kinds (incl. DA/violence against women):

  - DA in household may be risk-factor (RF) for gang membership(GM)
  - GM an RF for experiencing & witnessing gendered violence
  - likely to be longer-term effects/continuity after GM

PRIORITY TARGET IN TIMES OF AUSTERITY

(2) MODAL RESPONSES

- community organisation/detached youth work

- policing: co-ordinated deterrence & suppression

- '**UK BLUNDERBUSS**': EGaYV: LARs; activity vs. achievement

(3) PROBLEMS

- evidence of **effectiveness** (theory of change?; adequate evaluation; complexity; outcomes; ST vs. LT, etc)

- **costs** (financial, community relations, 'sticky labels')

(4) AN ALTERNATIVE?

public health approach

- primary/secondary/tertiary

- rationale: longitudinal evidence base; **understand & reduce RFs** (pushes), maximise protective factors

- **£££** econometric argument

(5) AN ALTERNATIVE?

family-centred public health approach

- family factors predict GM; exert effects there

- best programmes 'use' family as setting but link to other causal domains

- range of benefits

(6) MODAL REPSONSES

- **UK BLUNDERBUSS**: POs, FIPs, IIPs, TFP

  - clear positives: logic of the keyworker; multi-agency; whole family approach BUT
  - complexity, evidence of effectiveness; costs

- 'Blueprint programmes': **no gang measures**!

(7) MOVING FORWARD

- trial Blueprint programmes but measure (well!) GM as RF and outcome.

  - add in 'gang-modified' components

- trial ANYTHING as long as:

  1. clear evidence-base & theory of change
  2. monitoring & programme 'drift'
  3. **evaluation**: independent, comparison group, valid measures, sensible timescales

(8) ROLE OF THE POLICE?

- **planning & advice**: engaging individuals, families and communities (as part of a multiagency approach)

- **assessment & targeting**: better/best/common methods for identifying GM ('other report') [PILOT]

- **partner & guarantor**: referral & enforcement

SUMMARY

- GMs a **priority target** in times of austerity

- try (again!) **THE BEST family-based** interventions but measure effects on GM
  - opportunity for dedicated modules

- DA/IPV: measure in individual/family/gang
  - opportunity for dedicated modules

- **EVALUATE or waste/stand still**

AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

- REACTION TO BASIC ARGUMENT: GANG PREVENTION per se & AS ROUTE TO TACKLE DA

- EXPERIENCE OF WORKING ON PROJECTS WITH GANG COMPONENT/CONTENT AND/OR WITH GANG MEMBERS? **LEARNING?**

- EXPERIENCE OF WORKING ON MULTIAGENCY FAMILY INTERVENTIONS? **LEARNING?**

- HOW CURRENTLY MEASURE/ASSESS GM?

- POSSIBLE PROBLEMS & PAYOFFS?