

## Public health approach to gangs

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How do we fight against positive factors that gangs offer young people

Sense of love caring, money, status that young people aren't getting in their homes or communities

Drug crime in particular devastates people's lives. Since 2018, this rise in serious violence has been in a duality of roles, people carrying a knife are more likely to be stabbed by someone else with a knife.

What can we do about this wicked problem? How do we work with communities and let communities lead us to how to get to those early intervention opportunities?

Who are the right professionals to be working with young people? Especially when professionals have no lived experience of being in gangs. How do we involve parents, carers, family and friends?

Consultant for Gangsline – Sheldon Thomas

It's so important for us to change direction and take a public health approach and how / who implements this. At this moment in time, most LAs do not employ professionals with lived experience. Community's perceive and feel about professionals negatively. If we don't implement that, how will we use a model that will help the community when we haven't even got them on board.

A person with lived experience will always have more knowledge than someone with no lived experience.

Need a manager at the top who is brave enough to recruit people with lived experience and genuinely knows the value of having them on the work force.

90% time, the people going into school, giving talks etc have no lived experience.

## STEP DAD TO A YOUNG MAN REFERRED TO THE VERU

Q) Do you think that the statutory service understands your child and what he has been going through over the last year and half?

A) No. They give the impression but I believe they just see these kids as trouble and don't have the fundamental understanding to effectively interact with them. It feels as though they use a 'one size fits all' approach which demonstrates this.

Q) Do you believe that having someone with a lived experience is making and has made a difference in supporting your child?

A) Huge difference. Boy x immediately engaged with Sheldon as they were talking the same language. He listens and takes advice as he knows that the advice given is from personal experience and not the output of a flow chart type approach. Sheldon has influenced and advised boy x in many ways. e.g. Improving his diet/self care has improved, reducing his weed use, being more considerate of who he interacts with and the potential for being gully by association are a few examples.

Q) Do you think with Sheldon's lived experience and his understanding of street gangs should be a model that all statutory services should consider as a way forward if they want to reduce countylines and street gangs?

A) Absolutely, until Sheldon got involved we struggled to get boy x to even speak with the authorities, let alone interact. Without really understanding the way that gangs operate and being able to relate, the authorities in my opinion are ineffective. This is evident in the changes for the good that boy x has made since meeting Sheldon.

Niven Rennie

In 2003, Glasgow described as the murder capital of Western Europe.

Traditional police response. Seizing weapons, calling for tougher sentences. That approach suppresses the problem. You can't arrest your way out of a problem.

Violence reduction unit. Coincided with the World Report on Violence and Health.



