

GANGS AND KNIFE CRIME

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The term 'gang' may mean something different for different people. A gang is legally defined as a group of people who spend time together and engage in crime, often in the form of illegal businesses. For vulnerable young people, there can be intense pressure to join and, once in, it can be difficult to leave. Research shows that gang members are more likely to carry knives and, with knife crime on the rise across London, it is important to tackle gangs and knife crime together.

WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

People join gangs for many reasons. These include wanting respect or to gain a sense of belonging, peer pressure, needing protection and making money from crime. Young people living in poverty are more likely to join gangs—in areas where gangs are prevalent, membership can be an inevitability rather than a choice.



HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

Across London, young people will have different experiences of gangs and knife crime. For some, gangs will be an everyday reality. For others, gangs might seem far removed. The fact remains—no one should feel unsafe on London's streets or be forced into joining a gang, and no one should lose their life due to knife crime.

KNOW THE FACTS

Data shows that...

- ◆ In a recent survey, around a third of young people said that London was a safe place to grow up in.²⁰
- ◆ Gangs are most often found in areas with high levels of deprivation, unemployment and lone parent families.²¹
- ◆ Under 25s accounted for more than half of knife-related crime in 2017.²²

The good news...

You can start spreading the message that knives don't keep us safe with the Mayor of London's

#LondonNeedsYouAlive campaign.
Download the toolkit at www.london.gov.uk/inya-toolkit.

GET TALKING

Use the discussion questions below to start a powerful conversation.

- 1 How does the issue of gang and knife crime make you feel?
- 2 What do you understand by the term 'gang'? What words do you associate with gangs?
- 3 Do you feel safe in London? Why? Why not?
- 4 What are some reasons that someone might join a gang and/or carry a knife?
- 5 What are some ways you can take action to help tackle gang and knife crime?

EXPLORE THE ISSUE FURTHER...

Search for:

- ◆ Gangs Unite
- ◆ Childline
- ◆ Catch 22
- ◆ Safer London

WHAT CAN I DO?

To learn more about how you can take social action, go to the Student Guide and turn to page 3 for primary, or page 14 for secondary.

