

## London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – Thursday 20 September 2018

### Transcript of Item 5 – Tackling the Rise of Violent Crime in London

**Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman):** We now get to the main part of the meeting. Again, thank you very much to our guests for coming along. I know you are all busy people and we genuinely do appreciate it. I know some had a little bit of short notice as well, so again thank you very much for coming along.

The context of the meeting, as I said earlier, is violent crime in London, the fact that we have had an unacceptable level of homicides reaching 100, and also, notwithstanding that, the many other victims and the families of victims that have been affected. Violence has been rising for some years but the spike this year is absolutely unacceptable. We have heard from the Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis] in front of us that while it is stabilising - which is a word I do not like - the level is far too high. We want to hear from you today around that.

What we want to hear about today particularly, in the limited time that we have, is solutions and recommendations. We are going to be writing and publishing a report aimed squarely at the Mayor and, by extension, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), about what Londoners - whom we represent and many of you represent also - believe the Mayor can do to address this. We heard a declaration yesterday from the Mayor about some money around the public health investigation. Therefore, we want to hear from you about solutions and we are looking forward very much around that and, again, I am grateful that you have come along.

The morning is going to be split. I will set the scene. I have spoken to some of you personally already, but the morning is split into three sections: a section about the causes of crime, a section about police in the community, and importantly, at the end, a section about what City Hall and what the Mayor can do. Each section will have an invited speaker to speak for two or three minutes. After that Assembly Members will chair that half hour, and I would ask you to indicate. We are going to be tight for time - we only have two and a bit hours - and I will uncharacteristically be quite stroppy about chairing it. If I offend anyone I am sorry, but I want to hear from as many people as possible. If you do not get the chance to speak because we have run out of time, there will be a mechanism to write to us in case you did not get the chance to say something that you really wanted to say. We do not want to miss anything when we publish our report. That is probably enough from me at the moment.

First of all, for the first five or 10 minutes, before we go into the three sections, I want very much to introduce the Mizen family. We are blessed today to have them with their experiences. As a South Londoner I was aware of the problems you had all those years before and I am delighted that you are both here. Perhaps you would like the opportunity to comment about how you perceive things may or may not have changed over that period through the work of yourselves and your foundation. I do not know which one of you wants to speak. Just introduce yourself. We have a roving microphone today so they will be heading your way when you are ready.

**Barry Mizen MBE (Co-Founder, For Jimmy):** Mr Chairman, thank you very much indeed for inviting us along to speak. We are Barry and Margaret Mizen, parents of Jimmy Mizen [16-year-old schoolboy], who was

murdered 10 years ago in south-east London. You just spoke about a spike and this will be the worst year since 2000, the way things are going.

We know we only have a brief amount of time to talk, so stop me about halfway through because it is important you hear from my wife.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Yes, absolutely.

**Barry Mizen MBE (Co-Founder, For Jimmy):** My wife provides perspective as well. As to your report, I have read through the drivers you have already recognised and we would certainly agree with those drivers. I would like to add to that the driver of anger. We are not speaking enough about anger, unrequited anger, the anger we see on our streets every day not just from young people but from older people, the causes of anger and perhaps managing that anger.

Historically, about 100 people a year have been killed in London anyway, but there would tend to be a domestic basis for that and it would be a shame if this focuses entirely on the horrific instances with young people at the moment. For the overall homicides in London to be reduced would be a wonderful thing.

For us, what we have learned over the years -- we now have the charity that we call For Jimmy. We have set up a programme working within schools, working with the most recognised schools and disadvantaged young people, whether it is through their behaviour or confidence levels. For us, part of that schools' programme is about creating safe havens in local areas. At the moment we are predominately focused in two parts of Lewisham, which is the borough that is very precious to us. Hopefully, with what we have developed and the evidence we are gathering, we will be able to present: this is what we have done, these are the outcomes, and there is the evidence for that. Part of the schools' programme is creating safe havens in local areas, working with the schools, local businesses, local police and local councils to ask businesses to be places of safety should someone need them. City Hall is a recognised safe haven from many years ago.

The importance of that is not so much the safe haven but what is going on underneath that. It is about community-building. If we really want to make some changes here, we have to take the community along. Together as Londoners, we have the power to create the sort of communities that we all want to live in. There has been far too much blame going on over the years, and I am not picking out any particular areas. It is such an easy rhetoric, "Well, lock them up. We blame this, we blame the parents" or whatever it may be. A harsher punishment will not change this. Again, there are issues that you have identified. If we can change that narrative, if we can get all of us pulling in the same direction, we are very confident that changes can be made. From what we have found out from our charity, the work we do and the evidence we have gathered, we are optimistic that things can change if we want.

Mr Chairman, it is not about, "What are you going to do?" What am I going to do? It is individual responsibility for all of us in London. I would just like to encourage that. Thank you.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Barry, thank you. Margaret, thank you very much.

**Margaret Mizen MBE (Co-Founder, For Jimmy):** I come at it slightly differently from Barry because I speak about love, really. If we go back to when we lost our son, it did not just affect our family. It affected our whole community. In fact, it affected the whole of the country, really. What have we seen in the past 10 years? We have seen a lot of people working very hard to make a difference. However, as we know, it has got

worse and I do not know why but I do think young people are losing themselves slightly and we have to look at that.

When we go into schools the one thing we do not do is go in and tell them off. We do not go in and tell them to put their knives down, put their guns down, "Do not carry weapons". We go in, first and foremost, and tell them how much they are loved, how they are valued and how they do matter. That is what young people need to hear. They need to hear more of this. They need to know they are precious and how we feel that they are the special ones, but we also believe in our charity that our young people are the change makers. We can make recommendations, we can go and help them, guide them and inspire them, but the real changes in society will come from our young people themselves. Let us listen to their voices more. We tend to go and say what we think they need but let us hear from them, let them tell us what they need and I think that is where the changes will come.

Let us stop blaming people. I hear so much that it is the Government's fault, it is the Mayor's fault or it is the police's fault. Well, I do not believe that. I believe the Government would want to make a difference. I believe the Mayor is desperate. He has children of his own. The police, they have children. They want to stop these things, so let us stop blaming and let us start working together. Let us build our communities and let us make London the great place it really is. Thank you very much for inviting us.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Barry and Margaret, thank you very much. Again, a good point from Barry. This is a complex subject but, also, we must not ignore the fact of the violence in domestic situations. The numbers of homicides from that are at an alarming level. Thank you very much for that. I know that you will probably write in - if you have not already - with submissions to our report, because that was not enough time to represent your foundation. I accept that completely. We look forward to that and, again, thank you, thank you very much.

We now go to the first section of the meeting. I mentioned it is in three parts. This first part is around root causes and tackling the root causes. This is going to be led by Sian Berry [AM].

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you very much, Chairman. The question we are asking in this section is: where do we focus our efforts and how can we pinpoint the real root causes and tackle those? We have heard evidence and there is talk all around London of what might be causing what is definitely an increase in violence and murder, but we are not sure. We want to hear from you what you think those root causes are. The immediate causes are criminal organised crime and drugs. We have heard stories about social media being implicated but also we have been looking at the cuts to youth services, exclusions from education and then, even further down the line, family situations, poverty and violence there. We want to hear from you about those kinds of causes and how we can focus our efforts to change them.

I want to introduce our speaker to start off this section. This is Courtney Brown. He is the founder and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Father2Father. He spoke very eloquently to us in Hackney about his work and he is here now to speak.

**Courtney Brown (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Father2Father):** Thank you, Chairman, and good morning everybody. My name is Courtney Brown. I am the CEO of Father2Father. I am also the Parent Liaison Officer and behavioural mentor in Cardinal Pole School in Hackney. I am also a Senior Youth Worker in Hackney and a co-sponsor of BlackSox. The reason why I have said all of this is because I think it is necessary to show my background and where all my experiences come from.

My first thing is I look at three strands: home, school and community. I am going to start with the home first. Some of the root causes I have seen, speaking to young people in schools, are family breakdowns. What I mean by that is the fact that one parent has left the home, the young person is coming to school upset and does not have anywhere to go to talk and they start building up emotions inside. I have seen that in school a number of times. One of my solutions with those young people is to give them a safe haven so that they can come and speak and express their emotions before it leads to anger. That is one of the things I have seen.

A couple of other root causes are domestic abuse - again, which I have seen - and mental health. What we are doing in our school at the moment is that we have invited child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in, so that we can get the early intervention and recognise the triggers, so we can put the right services in place for that young person. What we have also done is empowered the parents. We have had programmes in school where we have invited parents in so we can empower them by giving them knowledge of the triggers and where they can go, where they can signpost to get that early intervention in there. Those are a couple of things we have been doing in the school in terms of home [life].

In school, as you touched on before, there are fixed term exclusions. What we have done in Cardinal Pole School is we have turned that around by using restorative justice and, again, building a relationship with the young people. Restorative justice comes from the criminal justice system, but we have used it in school and we have had a reduction in fixed term exclusions and permanent exclusions. We have also used the young people as restorative practitioners. They have learned how to manage their emotions, but they have also learned how to mediate between themselves as well without resorting to violence, which I and the school believe will make a difference going into the community.

Also, what we have done in the school is worked with community organisations that are trusted and recognised in the community. For too long we have been looking at a school as just being in a community. I believe that the school should be part of the community. There are so many great voluntary organisations in the community that are trusted and that can come in and deliver these workshops, not just to the young people but also to the parents.

One of the biggest things that I have realised, and Hackney has realised, is cultural competence, having the right person deliver the right service, people who understand their community and are not judging the community. My own experience of that is working and living in Enfield with a new head teacher and actually witnessing my six-year-old son being pinned to the floor by the head teacher, even though I was working with the school. On the back end of that I realised it was the whole cultural understanding. He would see me from an unconscious bias thing, see me as a black man who, for him -- the number of questions he was asking me or asking my wife, whether I beat her up at home or anything. I was always questioning, "Why did you ask that?" Therefore, where was his thought process coming from? I think unconscious bias needs to be trained in the schools and in the wider community as well, cultural competency.

There needs to be positive role models. That is what we provide in Father2Father. Again, talking from experience in schools and my own experience, a lot of young people have talked to me about the absence of their father. What I mean by "absence", I could talk about emotionally or physically, and again I understand that there are a lot of fathers out there that are working to try to provide - which touches on poverty - for their children. When you sit down with young people and you can see them emotionally upset, crying because they want that connection, that attachment, then, yes, it is very frustrating and you feel emotional. That is something I went through myself growing up in Tottenham, Broadwater Farm, not having my dad around and seeing the violence that was in the house from there, hence why I set up Father2Father.

Those are just some of the things. I know it is time we are working with, so those are my opening comments. Thank you very much again.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you, Courtney. We are opening up this topic on the root causes to the floor. If you put your hand up if you want to speak, we have a roving microphone. I would like to encourage the young people from Hackney to put their hands up at some point and speak because I know they are here and they were great when we spoke to them before as well. At the front here and then at the back if that is OK, and please introduce yourself when you speak.

**Amani Simpson (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aviard Inspires):** My name is Amani Simpson. I am the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and founder of a youth organisation called Aviard Inspires. We inspire young people through personal development, media and also business. I am someone that was stabbed. Seven years ago, I was stabbed seven times in one go. Essentially, the mindset that I had then is completely different to the mindset I have now. I had to go through the pressure and I had to go through my own personal development to get there.

I think that when you look at the mindset that young people have - I echo what you said - a lot of us have lost our identity now. We are not necessarily striving for anything positive. A lot of the, I guess, negative side of our street culture is creeping into our daily lives and our habits in the way that we behave. That is something that we need to try to counteract. That is not to say that everything is negative but we need to give space for young people to explore their brilliance and unlock their superpowers, essentially.

For me, another thing that is missing is that we do not have many positive role models growing up. That may be through the lack of fathers in the home, it may be through the people that we see on our television, but we do not have a lot of positive role models and I think we need to provide platforms in our community. This is not something necessarily that is going to be put on you but, as a community, we need to provide platforms for positive people to come forward and to lead with this change and for young people to follow, in that sense. I think the other solutions - well, I say "I think" - I know the other solutions that I have are to make sure that we have the funding for these things as a community. We have youth clubs that are unused. I am from Enfield. If I told you what the situation was up there, it is a problem. We need to try to counteract these things, not necessarily rely on the Council to do these things but to empower us as youth organisations and voluntary organisations to use these spaces for social enterprise. Why do we need to keep going for funding when we have all these empty buildings we can use? That does not make sense to me. I would also say, sir, it is not even appreciated.

The last thing I want to say is - as I mentioned, I got stabbed - for me, one of the one of the things that young people really engage with well is media. I have created a film - it is a short film - and we are going to take it into schools from November [2018]. It also features my brother, Robyn Travis, over there as well. He has written an amazing book called *Prisoner to the Streets* and *Mama Can't Raise No Man*. We come from two different ends of the spectrum. I started school playing a violin. I got into a grammar school and I got stabbed. I got kicked out. I went and I did county lines. I sold Class A drugs at the age of 16, so it can happen to anybody. It can happen to the boy from the Council estate and it can happen to the boy whose mum and dad did everything in their power to make it happen. We need to give both sides of the spectrum an opportunity to talk and give them platforms to represent themselves properly.

I appreciate what you guys are doing and, as a few people have said, you guys have been doing it for a long time but it is now down to us to do some stuff as well. We need to be empowered with the spaces that you have, to be able to do what we need to do. We have been saying this for 10 years, as my brother said. We

have been saying this and I do not think the answer is going to come from the people in this room; as you said, it is going to come from the people doing the work. So just empower us to do the work, guys.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you very much.

**Hamida Ali (Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon and Communities, Croydon Council):** Thank you. My name is Hamida Ali. I am the lead Cabinet Member for Community Safety in Croydon [Council]. I just want to highlight a piece of work that we are doing there, which our local Safeguarding Children Board has commissioned. It speaks very much to the findings you have found and what our speakers have already said. They took a thematic approach looking at 60 cases, a thematic, serious case review to try to understand how our response to vulnerable adolescents could be improved and to see if there is something that we could learn about the common characteristics of those young people, some of whom have very sadly lost their lives and some of whom are still with us. In all of those cases, those young people were already known to the local authority and, in some instances, before they were born, their mothers were known to us.

In every single one of those 60 cases, not one of those young people had a permanent place in school. We are very familiar with the conversation around exclusions and Courtney Brown [Founder and CEO, Father2Father] - who I thought talked very interestingly about the impact of restorative justice, and I will be taking that back to Croydon - was also talking about paternal absence. What we found - and these are interim findings at the moment - was that maternal absence is also a very important feature. Again, it is that concept of emotional absence and not just physical absence, massive unaddressed mental health needs but also, in speaking to the conversation already about role models, not one of those young people had - as the jargon goes - a relationship with a trusted adult. Forget a parent; not a grandparent, not an uncle or an aunt, not a neighbour, not a mentor, not a family friend. I think that is very powerful in terms of what Margaret Mizen [Co-Founder, For Jimmy] was talking about, in terms of love and attention for our young people.

I just wanted to highlight that one approach that our Safeguarding Children Board is doing and we will be using those findings to inform our response.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you very much. I would like to ask Dwayne Vincent to speak, if that is all right. I know you have to leave before we finish today.

**Dwayne Vincent (Musician, So Solid Crew):** Steve O'Connell, thank you for inviting me. Most would know me as Mega[man] from So Solid, founder of So Solid Crew, founder of many other ventures, clothing lines and stuff like that.

It has been 25 years since I felt I have become an adult in the United Kingdom (UK), when I had my first child in 1995, and there are a few issues. I have grown up in a culture where we do grow our kids as adults at an early age, teenagers and stuff like that, and when we actually do leave the house, we forget the initial reason why we left our doorstep before we can enter the real world, without our parents and without mentoring from our home. A few of those things happen when we actually hit the real world. We felt that we were enemies of society or we thought we were enemies of the authorities and the communication barrier has actually left.

When I was in primary school we had police discos and we had better communication with the authorities in our area. That seems to have been lost. Like the young brother said, there are empty community halls. When I was growing up all of those places got knocked down, for whatever reason it was, and to me it just fell behind in moving with the times. Therefore, if we do have empty buildings in our areas, we do need them to be filled with staff and with people who are qualified to actually entertain the youth with technology and things that they are more interested in doing, more than just the physicality of sports or running or football and so forth.

I have been around many environments and to me I feel that our coaches are doing very well, apart from what we hear today and the rise of knife crime, which is similar to the statistics in 2010. I would say our coaches are doing well. A lot of people are successful. A lot of people are stepping into the business world - Asian, black communities - so we are doing quite well but there is still a lot more work that needs to be done. The Mayor and the authorities need to follow our communities all the way to the end and not treat our youngsters as enemies, treat them as British citizens and take care of their wellbeing.

There are many factors. I am not going to go on for too long, but I am sure there are other discussions that I would like to have with individuals on a personal basis to see if we can move forward. I am here to show my support and I am very pleased with the progress of our community over the years. It has been a long time coming. We are almost there but we just need a little bit more support from the Government and our leaders. Thank you.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you. I want to pick up Robyn Travis, if that is OK, and then over to --

**Robyn Travis (Author):** There is a saying - and I am going to start because we are strapped for time - in the Bible which says: "he who has ears, let him hear and he who has sight, let him see". I have been here before, guys, and I have been doing this work for over 10 years. We are being asked a question today to break down three things, which is the solution, police effort, and what is the other one?

**Sian Berry AM:** City Hall. Root causes?

**Robyn Travis (Author):** What can he do as the Mayor? We have explained it: "he who has ears, let him hear and he who has sight, let him see". I did a documentary prior to this event today. I was not coming to talk because I met Sadiq Khan [Mayor of London] the other day. I have been in a room with him. I am not sure if this lady was here but we had a meeting. We have been talking for years. This book is called *Prisoner to the Streets*. It is not about me promoting a book. It is about me promoting your questions, giving you a solution, giving you the explanations and giving you the answers and exit strategies to a mindset.

Now imagine you are playing football and everyone is shooting and that is the goal, and you guys will think you are scoring. You are all saying clever things, "We have gang issues. We have knife crime. We have gun crime". You lot all think you are scoring goals. You are even recruiting people, ex-gang members, to come and work alongside with the police to make a difference to our communities. You are thinking you are doing good work, or you know you are not doing good work and you are pretending. Now I do not know which one it is, and a lot of people on the streets we do not know if you genuinely care or you do not.

Now me, I am not going to stand up here and pretend that you guys are listening, taking in anything I am saying. I am standing here as the author of two books, which talk about parenting. *Mama Can't Raise No Man* talks about the lack of an absent father. It gives you a story. It gives you the solution. It gives you the problems and it tells you what we need in case you do not have that parent, you look past them. *Prisoner to the Streets*. Let us go back to the first book. Who in this room can say that they have been stabbed and stabbed? Who in this room can say that they have been shot and shot? Who in this room can say that that was the beginning of a war, which started in Hackney, Harley Street versus London Fields, and that they are responsible for it? I am. I still live in London Fields. I did not write a book and go to South London or any other area. I am still in the same area, getting the same respect, being the same person I used to be.

I said you are shooting at the wrong goal. "Gang issues". We do not have gang issues. Stop running with this narrative. I have been saying it for years. Funnily enough, I wrote this book six years ago. Now I am hearing people who have organisations about gangs. They get more exposure than me and they will stand up and say, "We do not have a gang issue". I wonder where they got that from. *Prisoner to the Streets* is a mindset. I have explained it. We do not have gun crime, knife crime, we have a mindset. It starts from about five-years-old, when you are on the estate - like I said in the first few pages - and you get hit and your mum says, "If anyone hits you, hit them back". Learned behaviours, emotional immaturity. It goes into the teenage stages. You hear a lot of these rappers, even in their 30s, talking out their backside because they have not emotionally developed, still talking in a way that people did, like Tupac [Shakur], when they were still young in that mindset.

But my whole purpose is this: this book a young man read who killed Quamari [Serunkuma-]Barnes [15-year-old boy]. Who has heard about that in this room? Can I get a raised hand if anybody has heard that? One, two, three. The guy who killed Quamari [Serunkuma-]Barnes read this book and he said to the judge, "I confess my crimes. While I was on remand, I read this book" and turned to the parents in court and said, "I'm sorry for killing your son, Mr Paul [Barnes] ", Quamari's dad. "I'm sorry for killing your son. Had I read this book before, we wouldn't be in this situation, I wouldn't have killed your son".

This is not *Dragons' Den*. I am not trying to sell you anything. Yes, I am not trying to talk wise to get you lot to get behind, but this book was on a curriculum and a young lady from school here, called Jess Hope, put that book into curriculum Key Stage 3. They did it as part of their GCSEs. They learned a hell of a lot. We did a short video. I was told that video was going to be shown. The second I got here and was told that video is not going to be shown, I was about to go home because I said, "What am I here for? You are not seeing the quality of my work". Now what is the solution? OK, we cannot explain *Prisoner to the Streets* in a short period of time. It is a four-hour workshop, so we cannot do this now. I am about to get cut off. But the point is - and it is disrespectful to get cut off and it is disrespectful to get rushed - when I can bring people I have stabbed right now, and put my arm around them, and people who have stabbed me, how many of you in this room can do that? How many of you have walked it, talked it and made peace? Can I get a raise of hands?

You see, if this was *Dragons' Den* you should be investing in me, is what I am saying, because I have the solution you are talking about. It is not coming from just my mouth. It is coming from the mouths of the people. It is not arrogance. It is frustration. We have been here before. I was in the room with Sadiq Khan [Mayor of London] just two months ago. He bought my book. We spoke. Talk is cheap. Get the workshops in the schools, invest, what is the solution? OK, it is not me going to a school, doing a talk, getting a round of applause. What is my strategy? It is simple: let me tour the whole country. Because when my mum was young she said, "If anybody hits you, hit them back". She was disciplining me, but she was not able to discipline your children who were hitting me. There is no point in me going to one school and educating one child. Let us get into the schools on a consistent basis. Scrap Black History Month. Let us put in *Prisoner to the Streets* month. Allow me to train young people, like my brother, Amani Simpson, all these guys who are passionate and understand, it is not a gang issue we face. It is not a knife issue because guns do not kill people, people kill people, and if you keep talking about gun crime what we are going to call it next? Actually, we have acid crime. It is a mindset. It is not the weapon. People want to cure the pain and not the addiction.

Guys, I am fed up with saying things that sound smart to get you lot to believe in the work I am doing. I could carry on but all I am going to say is: please invest in what we are doing, workshops, get this book in the curriculum, as the young children said on the DVD, that is not being shown today, and let us do work.



**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you so much. We will watch your film, we promise, and thank you for that. That was really great. Mark Blake, at the back, I think you had your hand up.

**Mark Blake (Project Development Officer, Black Training and Enterprise Group; Cabinet Member for Communities, Safety and Engagement, Haringey Council):** I am Mark Blake. I am a Councillor in Haringey and lead Member for Community Safety for the borough since May [2018]. There are just a few points I want to raise. We submitted a piece of research that we commissioned from the Godwin Lawson Foundation. It is a local charity by Yvonne Lawson who lost a son in Tottenham in 2010.

Yvonne and a team of researchers went out and spoke to young people in Tottenham, and in terms of the themes that they fed back, they want opportunities. They want safe places to go. They want their schools to operate in a different way. We have spoken about the issue of exclusions. We have spoken about how children get labelled and the poor response to those with special educational needs. They specifically spoke about racism in the school system and in the police. There was a lot of scorn for social workers as well.

I just want to make a couple of comments in terms of my observations over the last four months in the job. Firstly, children. As a Borough, we are going through what we call our Borough Plan, which is the corporate plan for the Council for the new administration. We have agreed that preventing the criminalisation of children will be a corporate objective at Haringey Council. That is going to mean real challenge for us as a local authority but also for the police, for schools and for our partners in the National Health Service and CAMHS. Quite clearly there is a pipeline in terms of children into the youth justice system and we need to do a hell of a lot better in terms of diverting young people away from that.

My second observation is austerity. We need to come out and say it quite clearly that austerity is right at the heart of this. I have a 2.00 [pm] meeting back at the Council talking about our youth justice plan for the year ahead, which we have to submit to the Youth Justice Board and to the Ministry of Justice. What has happened in terms of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) in London is that YOS in Haringey is now seeing fewer young people. They have fewer resources and those kids have more complex needs. But what is more worrying, if you think about it in two concentric rings, if you look at the kids who access the YOS and then you look at that outer ring of kids who are at risk, all the services, the youth services, the earlier interventions, they have been absolutely decimated. In Haringey in 2009/10 we had a youth service budget of about £3 million. I am dealing with a budget of less than £400,000 and I am talking to people every week who I know can make a difference, like the people speaking here now. We do not have the resources. We have a pittance to deal with this issue.

My penultimate point is around drug dealing. Drug dealing is now pervasive in London. I have to work with MPS colleagues in Haringey, so I am not criticising them, but we had a Members' briefing with our Borough Commander on Monday. Drug dealing from the prosperous west of our Borough, right across the Borough, our Council estates, our high street, is all-pervasive. The kinds of operations the MPS need to do to tackle this from an enforcement perspective are very intensive. They cost a great deal of money and the resources are not there. The worry I have is the drug dealing culture - anyone who has ever watched *The Wire* - when it becomes embedded in communities, in the people around you in your block of flats and the kids you went to school with. If your role models are in that lifestyle, if on social media you are getting pumped with that lifestyle, it is a very, very worrying trend.

My last point, which I raised with Sian [Berry AM] at a meeting in Hackney, is around mediation services. In Chicago and New York, services have been developed in terms of a public health approach around guys like a lot of people who have spoken here today, supporting them, employing them, and funding them to go out and to mediate in terms of potentially violent situations. That is at the centre of what happened in Chicago. That is at the centre of what has gone on in New York. We need to fund that. It should not be funded through the MPS. I think MPS is currently getting about £400,000 a year for a mediation company that they set up. MPS should not be doing that. The money should be coming to local authorities and we should then be funding guys - like these guys in this room - to do that work on the ground. Thank you.

**Sian Berry AM:** Chairman, do we have time for one or two?

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Two more. Thanks.

**Sian Berry AM:** Two more, brilliant. This young man at the front here with the white shirt and then the man at the back there.

**Kevin Yfeko (Pastor, SPAC Nation):** Good morning, everyone. My name is Kevin Yfeko. I have been to prison seven times and I just came out in 2016. Now I am an entrepreneur. I run a big chauffeuring company, a concierge company. The reason why I gave you that kind of introduction is because I am attached to a church called SPAC Nation. I am sure you have probably all heard about it because we make a lot of noise on social media.

Now SPAC Nation, when I came out of jail, these were a bunch of people that just look like me. Do you understand? By me saying they looked like me, it is that they could relate. There were people in that place that could relate to everything that I had been through. Do you understand what I am saying to you? The person that was talking to me was not just somebody that was trying to talk about what was happening with my life. The person that I would talk to had had some kind of experience in what I had been through myself.

Now coming from 2016, I currently run the biggest community unit group in East London right now. I know I have heard a lot of people speak but currently I am the person that has all the young people coming to my community unit at this moment in time. In the last five months we have been running, we have raised £100,000 and we gave it back to the people that we are trying to help. That is just the community unit that I am talking about. The church as a whole has raised over £1 million by itself and gave it back into the community. Every single month, or every two months, we put up the accounts, everything that we received and how much we gave back into the community. That is without any help. Do you understand? Like I said, I am not here to boast. We are here to change lives. Do you understand what I am saying to you?

It starts when you are in your house and you get an education, but when you leave your house, you also get an education. We could all be in this room thinking about what to do and how to help but as we are all in this room right now, there are a bunch of young kids or youths outside that are getting a different kind of education as well, to even harden the kind of result that we are trying to perceive today.

What I am saying is that everyone wants to work together without working together. Do you understand? There are so many different things that everyone wants to do but if we all had one voice -- do you understand what I am saying to you? If we all actually partnered up and we backed one voice and we backed something that is actually working, we would reduce everything that we are trying to reduce. We would reduce it dramatically. Do you understand what I am saying to you?

Now I am talking about, in five months, we have had over 500 people come into Eastside. Do you understand? Over 500 people. That is the community, and I have some of my mentees that I mentor here today. I have some of them here. What we do is practical. Do you understand what I am saying to you? It is practical. We can sit here and talk for two hours, like you said, Chairman. We can talk here for two hours but that is just talking. Do you understand what I am saying to you? The youth have clocked, if I may say "clocked". I know some of you might not understand what I am trying to say. But if I can say that the youth now have clocked that, when we come to places like this, all we are going to do is talk. Do you understand what I am saying to you? They have realised that if we sit in a room, we are just going to talk. Do you understand?

Now, if we can actually get a result and we can speak about something and we can get a timeline of, you know what, we have spoken about this and, "Listen, this is what we are going to do" and we actually do it, then what you will do is you will now win the trust of the young people. At the moment, the reason why we cannot change anything is because they do not trust us. Do you understand what I am saying to you? The reason why they trust me is because I have been there. The reason why they can trust him or him is because we have been there. Do you understand?

The last point I am going to make is this: you have the keys. We are not telling you to do it by yourselves. What we are trying to say to you is this: give us the key and you get behind us and you will see the change.

**Sian Berry AM:** That was really great and we will be making recommendations to the Mayor for action and getting involved. It is really important. That is part of our job. Just one final brief word from the gentleman at the back there.

**Dave Walker MBE (Director of Mediation, Southwark Mediation Centre):** Hello, my name is Dave Walker. I am a community mediator and a resident of London all my life. I just want to touch on that point that my brother said over there in terms of community mediation centres. We not only train young people in skills to mediate, we take those teenagers out of school into the community to mediate as well. They are the role models out there.

To the point that was made over there about families that are fractured, I also do work with separated parents. It is not just the fact that the parents are absent. It is the war that they are witnessing between the two parents. It is the parents fighting for contact or residence that they see. What children hear, what children see, children do, so it is also about working with those parents, so they can actually calm that. It is not just about contact. It is the quality of that contact. It is the conflict that they witness.

When we had 40 to 50 youths in the north of our borough in Southwark that were causing anti-social behaviour, when you asked them what they wanted they wanted somewhere to sit. It was about opening up the youth club. You opened up the youth club for one day, the crime rate dropped, and I tell you what, let us talk about pound notes, forget community, forget love, think about money. How much money does it cost to solve one, when you have to deal with one murder? When I was a gang mediator it was £1.2 million to deal with one murder, and that is if you find the person that committed it within a week. That is how much it costs. How many murders have we had? It does not even make financial sense. It is stupidity, what we are doing.

If you want to think about money, invest in those community mediation centres, invest in those schools, and invest in the young people. They are the role models. It does not make financial sense at all and it is as Margaret Mizen [Co-Founder, For Jimmy] touched on. It is not just about that one murder. It is the ripple effect that affects our communities in doing that. Please back your community leaders, your peacemakers. The young people can do it. Get your money into those youth clubs. Get them open. Get them skilled up.

You have heard the answers today. Let us rock on now and do it, please.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Thank you for answering that point around actions. You are here and many are representing a lot of people who do a lot of good work, and you are coming here with ideas that we want to turn into recommendations; that we want to then turn into solutions from this building. You can hopefully go back to the people you represent to say that there was a purpose in this, and it is to be helpful. We have heard some very positive things that we will pick up on, too many now to talk about but we have captured them and I am grateful for that.

We are now going to move into the next section, which is around the police - and welcome today to them - and relationships with the community. I think, Florence [Eshalomi AM], you are leading on that for us.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Yes. Thank you. Good morning, everyone, and thank you so much for the contributions already. In this section we are looking at what the relationship with the police looks like. I think about my own experience with the police as someone growing up in Brixton, in the heart of Brixton in Somerleyton [Road], and some of the interactions I have seen with the police and some of our young people, some of them not always good. Within seconds an incident with the police escalated and that was just because of body language and the way the police were speaking and engaging with these young people. Something could have been addressed. Something could have been dealt with quicker.

Equally, when there is an issue or a problem the police are the first people we call, so why is it that with some communities there is still a mismatch in terms of their relationship and their trust. I touched on the fact of the trust with the police, but these days they actually interact with the police a lot more.

There has been a lot said around the fact that MPS needs to do a lot more in terms of engaging with certain communities and maybe we need to encourage our young black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) men and women to actually join the police, so that the police look, feel and sound like Londoners. But the reality is the police have a difficult job in terms of going into areas that they may not be familiar with. It has to be a joint effort with the police and the communities because, time and time again, people have said that the police cannot solve this on their own. We know that the answers lie within those communities, so how can we work with the police to address and reduce this violent crime? What role can the police play in this and is it just about putting more money into initiatives, like the Violent Crime Task Force that has now received funding of £15 million from the Mayor, or do we want to go back to that good old-fashioned community policing where, actually, the police officer knew the names of the young boys and girls? When we used to run around Brixton market all those police officers knew us by first names. We need to see some of that back in our communities so that we can build up trust.

I want to introduce Thaddeus Brown, who is part of the Hackney young inspirational group leaders. He is going to talk about some of the things they have been doing in Hackney and the young black men partnership.

**Thaddeus Brown (Hackney Young Inspirational Leaders):** My name is Thaddeus Brown. I am currently a design apprentice at Hackney Council, so that is how I got involved in the Hackney Council for Voluntary Service and the young black men's programme that Hackney Council is pioneering. It is the first council to actually have a programme dedicated to young black men.

My journey started with Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) by me interviewing the youth leadership manager [at Hackney Council], Ayodeji [Adeosun], and then he put me on to a bunch of workshops and events that they were doing. Some of them are police training; some of them are stop and search meetings that we have with the police.

In terms of what a better relationship looks like with the police, I want to give you a visual. The other day I saw a staff headline that there would be a bike mechanic at Mabley Green on Saturday. I did not know what else was happening. I did not know the context of why there was a bike mechanic at Mabley Green, but I wanted my bike fixed for free, so I went down on the Saturday. When I got there, it was a whole event. There was actually a boxing/sparring thing happening. There was an amateur, turning professional, boxer from the area that had come down to help the kids out and stuff like that.

When we first got there we just thought, "OK, this is like a fair". There were loads of kids around. You could see it was obviously a community event, so the first thing me and my friend did was try to find a bike mechanic because that is what we wanted to do, get our bikes fixed. As we went over we were approached by police, so the police that were at the event. It already sounds like a negative story, which is quite crazy, but it is a positive story. Our first interactions started off positively. They offered us meal tickets to then get food for free at the food stand, so something so simple. I thought, "Wow, OK". I was already anticipating a negative interaction when it first happened. I was probably expecting them to ask me, "Are you guys OK? This is a community event", whatever, to try to mediate a problem that maybe did not exist. That was my kind of anticipation, but what I saw was that they were there to actually serve the community. You actually forget sometimes that the police are actually there to serve the community.

I had to look back in hindsight to my experience in my childhood, because I am 21 years-old, so being a young kid growing up, I do not ever remember having a positive image of the police. I do not ever remember seeing police in my community doing positive things, so that event alone -- there were kids at the event, so I was thinking, "What is this doing for the kids at the event? It is giving them a good positive interaction with the police. You are getting to understand that they are there to actually serve and protect, not just enforce", so that was really cool. That is a visual I just wanted to give to you guys. That is what a better relationship with the police looks like, because I can tell you I do not remember seeing that when I was a kid growing up. It is good that that is happening now and we need more of that.

In terms of what HCBS is doing and what we are doing in Hackney, like I said we are doing stop and search meetings. We are meeting police officers at the police station and we are essentially talking to them about educating or cultural competence, like Courtney [Brown, Founder and CEO, Father2Father] mentioned before, so those are the types of things we were doing.

I believe that this is all good work and this is all bringing us to a better relationship, but the ultimate thing I need -- so what we are tackling there, quickly, is we are tackling the negative perception of the police within the community. That does need to happen within the police and the community as well. By engaging in these events that will happen anyway, so that is why I used that visual because it serves a mutual purpose. The community are seeing the police as people that are just serving, protecting them and keeping the peace, and the police are seeing the community, no animosity. They are seeing how we engage and interact with one another, which is high-energy. We might be loud, but this is how we interact with each other. When I say "we" I mean particularly the black community that exists in these areas where youth crime and youth violence are quite prominent. That is working-class communities in general.

Going on from that, I believe that all this work can be done and it is good but, ultimately, we need accountability. In terms of the community's perception of the police, we need accountability. The situation, like the [death of] Rashan Charles incident. I know that has been resolved recently. It has come out to say that the police officer has not been charged. Nothing has happened and it was justice, I guess, or it was fine. That does not do much for the trust and the confidence of the community in the police. That actually destroys a lot of the work that had been built up in, well, just building that foundation of trust. It absolutely destroys it. If we continue to have incidents like this and there is no police accountability whatsoever, we are basically just doing this work for nothing is what I am saying. That is what I wanted to say.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** A range of areas and I think a key question coming out from that - and it is something that we on this [Police and Crime] Committee do - who is policing the police? It is right that police officers are held to account for their actions if there is a wrongdoing. I think the rollout of an introduction of things like body-worn cameras, something that a number of us have campaigned for, is long overdue and it is something that is welcomed. I think it is about making sure that people - not just young people necessarily - know their rights when they are being arrested, in terms of how far an officer can go. If there are incidents, like Section 60 [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994] is implemented, people know that is happening.

But it is about looking at the wider role of the police as well, in terms of what they can do in terms of helping us. I think the police are crucial. We have to remember that these police officers were young as well. Some of them did grow up in the area, so they have an important role to play. I just want to get some thoughts on, maybe we can hear from former police officers as well - we have a few in the audience - on what role we think that the police can play in helping us to address this issue. Do we have the microphone?

**Leroy Logan, (Youth Violence Commission; former Superintendent, Metropolitan Police Service):** I am Leroy Logan, a 30-year veteran police officer, and primarily, since leaving the MPS in 2013, I am working with the voluntary sector. I have been doing that since 2001 when we set up a youth leadership programme. One of the things about the leadership programme - which is now a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) level two - is they actually get UCAS points at year nine, which the [former] Mayor, [The Rt Hon] Boris Johnson [MP], used to fund but these things move on, so we get our own funding.

The key issue that those young people say on a day-to-day basis, during that 100-hour programme we do, is they feel over-policed and under protected. That is a theme they have said for the last 17 years since 2001, and we have been feeding that back into the MPS. A lot of it is around the leadership of that borough and, in particular, the supervision of the officers.

We know violence has peaked and troughed over the years but at least, say 10 years ago, we had the supervision, more hands-on. Supervision now is very much arm's length. You do not see a sergeant patrolling with an officer, just to see how they interact during that critical encounter and, as a result of that, you are seeing that officers -- most of them are good but there are those who do not understand their impact in that critical encounter, and so that one bad encounter can roll back trust and confidence. Whereas, if it is dealt with respect and dignity, that builds trust and confidence and that builds intelligence, and that for me is one of the keys to good policing, the cultural intelligence. The cultural competence is key to know how to work with your communities.

Another issue is the lack of capacity in policing at the moment. It is firefighting policing we are seeing, and they are just reacting to events. There is no proactivity, so as a result of that you are not getting the partnerships with the community, the voluntary sector, in particular with young people, not recognising the adverse childhood experiences they are going through. Therefore, the narrative is you try to scare them into

submission, “Drop the knife” or “Drop the gun” or whatever you are doing, instead of caring for them and recognising the trauma they are going through.

Until we get that mindset shift, a paradigm shift in how policing is conducted on a day-to-day basis, and how it can have an impact on long-term interventions and preventions, and I will end with this. About five years ago the clear up rate for murders was over 90%. That has now halved. Now you could say to some extent it might be down to fewer officers. Remember, we are 700 detectives down in the MPS alone and we are under 30,000 for the first time in 15 years. You have to then say, “Where is the wall of silence? Where are the barriers?” They are not getting information. Some of it is through fear, some of it is through not really appreciating the impact police have on them but, more importantly, it is because people are thinking, “Well, if clear up rate is half, that person has got a 50/50 chance of getting away with it”, so you have a really negative cycle that policing needs to understand.

Unfortunately, I feel that a lot of my colleagues are in denial. They do not really understand the scale of it. It is not just about police numbers. It is around not working with the communities that we serve in a sustainable way that they believe appeal in principle, the police of the community and a community of the police.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** We also have a member from the Greater London Authority (GLA) Peer Outreach Team who has got some thoughts. Is it Georgina Appeageyi? Do you want to share your thoughts with us and then we will come back to some comments?

**Georgina Appeageyi (Hackney Inspirational Young Leaders):** My name is Georgina. I would just like to quickly mention that I used to go to Cardinal Pole School. I do not know if you recognise me, so hi. While I was at Cardinal Pole School I used to be part of a lot of initiatives that were run by the council and various charities in the local area in Hackney.

One of those charities was an organisation called the Youth Independent Advisory Group (YIAG) for Wick Ward. This was an advisory group that was a youth section for an independent advisory group that had already existed, where the people of Wick Ward could come together and advise the police on how they should be going forward. We had a youth faction where we would meet with the police and we would sample some of the initiatives that they were thinking of rolling out to schools and local youth communities. For example, I remember when they brought out a stack of cards that they intended to use as a game in order to make young people more familiar with the police, their role and their rights, in an attempt to bridge the gap between our community in Hackney and the police.

Unfortunately, services like the YIAG were shut down because of lack of funding. Of course, I was in school during the financial crisis in 2008 so a lot of youth groups that I attended after school were also shut down. People who used to go to the YIAG were people who teachers recognised could either go down one route, which would not be particularly good for them, or another route. I remember a boy who used to go to the YIAG, who used to work with the police, and after it was subsequently shut down, went to the other route.

I am just here to say, like others have been saying, building that relationship with the police, allowing young people to be comfortable, allowing for attitudes to change around the police and the community and allowing for these relationships to develop is vitally important. It is very sad to see that we are losing people to the streets because we are not able to build that relationship between young people and the police.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Thank you. Could we get some more comments? I have Margaret [Mizen MBE] in the front, then two young people at the back there and Alastair [Reid].

**Margaret Mizen MBE (Co-Founder, For Jimmy):** Thank you, Florence [Eshalomi AM], for allowing me to talk again. I love what you were saying about going back in time because to have the bobby on the beat, if you like, getting to know the community, is definitely what we need. However, I want to take you back to when Jimmy was killed. I am the mother of nine children. My role in life was to be a mum. I had never had anything to do with the police until my son was killed. The day that he was killed the police came around and I was very apprehensive. I was really frightened. They were coming into my house and we were going to be given a Family Liaison Officer. Again, I do not want this person in my house.

But what I found was that these police officers were absolutely amazing. The Family Liaison Officer was a young woman of 30 [years old] who came into our house and we could phone her at any time, this very young woman. I think we have learnt not to trust the police but we know that the majority of the police work incredibly hard and we must recognise that as well. I feel they do a lot more work than we all know because I know when Jimmy was killed they worked 24 hours a day. They did so much work underneath that nobody knew about. We must recognise that. What is going on in society, we have to let the police do their work. We are criticising them all the time while they are out there trying to find the perpetrators of these crimes. Please, please let the police do their work. We know there are some who are not so good but the majority are.

Also, what we do in our charity [For Jimmy] is we have safety conferences. Twice a year we have these safety conferences. We bring about six schools within the Lewisham Borough together with Community Officers, the police and people from our local authority, and we get the young people to talk to the police, to talk to people from the local authority, to question them and to build that relationship. We need to build relationships.

I am going to touch on stop and search. It might be something that you all disapprove of but I have to speak about it because I have always disapproved of stop and search. However, at this moment in time, with what is going on in London, we have to have it. In the short term, not the long term. If you talk to a mother who has just lost a son or a daughter and they say, "If we had stop and search my child's life would have been saved", how would you feel about that? Let us also praise the police because they do a fantastic job, and for those who are not working so hard, they are the ones we need to watch. Thank you.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Hear, hear. No, thank you.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** The GLA Peer Outreach Team are bursting to speak. They are towards the back. Do you want to indicate, guys, and make sure you do not miss out? There you go, Florence [Eshalomi AM].

**Mwila Chilufya (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Hi, my name is Mwila [Chilufya] from the Peer Outreach Team.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Just do one at a time. How about that?

**Kismet Meyon (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Yes. I am Kismet [Meyon] from the Peer Outreach Team.

**Lemarr Nembhard (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** And I am Lemarr. We are from the Peer Outreach Team and we are all different ages, from 15 to 25, from different backgrounds and different walks of life.



**Kismet Meyon (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Basically what we do is we work for the GLA and we advocate for young people. We have done a lot of work with serious youth violence, we have done a lot of work with the Mayor. We also worked on his Knife Crime Summit. We sat on the panel discussing the findings that we found working with a range of young people from Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). We found that there was a range of issues that young people face with the police, one being trust. A lot of the things have been raised. One thing that we wanted to round up is that if you empower young people, then we can know our rights, we can stand up and we can come up with better solutions, but also if we are being stopped at that moment by the police we will be able to handle situations better, as opposed to getting yourself in more mess. Also, the whole thing about support. We do a lot of outreach work with these young people and YOTs so that they can understand that there are different groups out of situations like employability, crime and all the issues that have come up today.

**Mwila Chilufya (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Yes, and a lot of the things that Kis [Kismet Meyon] has mentioned with the young people that we have done work with, we have found are really important. Not only, as Lemarr has said, have we found it important that young people should be from all different spectrums who have experienced what we are talking about today, people on our team have also experienced and lived through what we are talking about today. That is why we find it very important. We also have done a lot of work with some roadshows and PRUs as well, understanding what young people require and want. We have found in lots of research young people talking about trusted relationships with an adult.

**Kismet Meyon (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Also, obviously the community should play a part, not just the police. Faith leaders should also play a big role, and like you mentioned about there being bad police, it is about police understanding that you do get racial profiling. They need to hold accountability, as was mentioned earlier as well.

**Mwila Chilufya (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Thank you.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Before we go on to Alastair [Reid], can we just get the young boy at the back? Then we will come to Alastair and then to this side. Thank you.

**Islam Fessih (Young Advisor, Waltham Forest Street Base):** Hi, I am Islam from the YIAG in Waltham Forest. We have been set up since 2008 and we have been working really closely with other boroughs such as Newham and Tower Hamlets to set up the YIAG. We have helped Southwark Young Advisors, which are a national network, a national charity, to set up their own YIAG. What we do is we work very closely with young people and the police to enhance community safety. We do a lot of work with the Youth Offending Service. We go out into schools, deliver assemblies and workshops.

I think the most interesting thing that we have found being a part of the YIAG is that by training new police recruits, they come to understand how intimidating it is to be stopped and searched as a young person, especially when you do not know your rights. You feel sort of threatened by an individual who is more knowledgeable than you are.

One of the things that we teach is an acronym called SEARCH. Staying calm, S. E, eye contact. Making sure that you are engaging in eye contact with the police officers who are stopping you. A, asking questions. "Officer, is this a stop and search or a stop and account? Do I have to give my personal details?" R, receipt. Gaining the receipt from the stop and search so you can take it forward if you feel like you have been stopped without enough evidence. Record. "Officer, can I record this conversation for my own proof and my own safety?" C, confidence. Making sure that you are treating it as a conversation rather than a confrontation. H,

making sure that you are holding the stop and search to account. As a young person, if you feel like you are being stopped and searched without a justifiable basis you cannot take it forward.

One of the things that we try to bring forward as the YIAG is that as much as we, as young people, all sat here love to do the work that we do, we do not have enough resources and tools to go out there on a national scale and help these young people who need our help. The thing is I know that you guys are looking for the answers. We have the answers. We need your support to go out there and be the voice of young people. A lot of the young people out there need our help. It is about finding them and providing them with the resources that we have that are already there and have worked time and time again. They are successful.

There are a lot of people who we work with, who are in the YIAG, who are former criminal justice system members. They have been through the criminal justice system. When we go out there to schools and they tell their speech and tell their story of how they have been stabbed or they have sold drugs or whatever they have done that has been illegitimate, there is a pin-drop silence. When it is from young person to young person, peer to peer, it is what really gets to them. It does not make sense for an adult who has not been through the criminal justice system to talk about it and talk about what the solution is. It is about providing young people with a platform to speak, and actually go out there and change the UK and change the world.

**Alastair Reid (Lambeth Safer Neighbourhood Board and London Independent Youth Safety Advisory Board):** Thank you, Florence [Eshalomi AM]. I am Alastair Reid. I am a retired MPS police officer and, swinging the lantern a little bit, I was runner-up Community Constable of the Year in 1997.

I want to look forward. This is about relationships between communities and police. Relationships are a two-way street. Communities have a responsibility and it is only right and proper that community responsibilities are identified, promulgated and supported. The flipside of that is that Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs) must be ringfenced and selected appropriately, not just put in place. They need to be the best cops possible on the streets to do the most wonderful work, engaging with communities. The final point I want to make: engagement is not measured. What does not get measured does not get done. Let us have a strategic directive that engagement is measured and that DWOs are fully ringfenced, not just used as some operational pawn on the board. Thank you.

**Superintendent Darius Hemmatpour (Violent Crime Taskforce, Metropolitan Police Service):** Hello, I am Darius Hemmatpour. I am currently a Superintendent in the MPS and I work on the Violent Crime Task Force. Just a couple of points I would like to make, really. First, about the work that we do, which obviously is quite an important aspect in terms of policing. Obviously, that has its place. I would say that post any event where sadly someone has been assaulted or the subject of any type of violence, whether that is a homicide or perhaps somebody has been stabbed, shot or subject to domestic abuse, it requires, of course, an intervention. It requires a proactive response to investigate that crime and to try to prevent further incidents from happening, perhaps because of community tensions, using our tactics, whether that is stop and search - which I appreciate is a very divisive tactic - or things like working with the community around weapons sweeps, anything at our disposal really to try to reduce the amount of weapons that are out on the streets of London.

Critical to a lot of this is engagement. Of course, we have heard today from many people in the audience that it is absolutely critical that we the police are seen as part of that community. We can only do that by working with people in the room here and by having some of the shackles around performance measures taken off, and I think we are seeing a change in that tide, moving away from perhaps performance measures to working far more holistically with our colleagues. Again, that also includes colleagues in other organisations and agencies in the public sector, where it is absolutely vital that, whilst we are all subject to austerity, we come together for

a common purpose, realign our priorities and make sure that we all have the same objectives, which does not always happen. That could be a key issue.

The final point I would say does kind of relate to some of our powers around stop and search but also some of the powers we use to search people post an arrest, for example. In the last 18 months we have seized 4,200 weapons from the streets or from people in London. Now, I cannot quantify my next comment, but it begs the question, "How much violence could that have caused? Could that have prevented homicides, further acts of violence?" Who knows, but 4,200 weapons is a significant amount.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Thank you. I am just mindful of time. We just have time for one more. The gentleman at the front there has been indicating for a while.

**Sergeant Michael Stephens (Community Engagement, Metropolitan Police Service):** My name is Michael Stephens, I am a sergeant within the MPS and my actual role is running a project called *#Together* at the moment. I work on the Central Engagement Team and my job at the moment is to work with the Superintendents of each Basic Command Unit around London to empower the communities to come to us with your ideas and solutions, to work with us at the moment.

My colleague here [Thaddeus Brown] spoke about the Community Event Days that he went to when he was younger. That is what I put on at the moment. My job is to plan the Community Event Days, to go to the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams, the DWOs that you mentioned to get everyone to put together a Community Event Day so that people get the positive interaction. They include our Territorial Support Group, who do the convoy stuff for the Violent Crime Taskforce. They go out, they talk to the community, tell them why they go out and do the stop and searches, what powers they have. They welcome the feedback from these days. Then I take the best practice from them and put them into other events.

So far, we have done five or six across London. The first one started off in Enfield and they are beginning to grow, but I need people to come to us as well, and the local officers, who then feedback in to me. On what the gentleman said there in relation to monitoring engagement, the Commander holds a weekly conference all with all of his Superintendents around the engagement that has gone on. I collate all of those returns into one document briefing for him, so he knows about the engagement that is going on in the boroughs. That then goes back to the Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis].

Any projects, anybody that is in this room or if they know of anybody else outside this room, go to your local police teams and feed it in to us. It comes in to me and I will happily put on these Community Days so that we get all of our blue light partners - Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service - and all the schools, communities and local authorities. But we need the volunteer groups as well. Everyone has mentioned funding and everything else. If we do pull in the same direction we will get there, but we need you to come to us as well. My team is only so big, there are only so many of us and there are many organisations out there. Please come to us. Please tell us who you are and how we can help. I will gladly put it all together and feed it back in to the higher echelons of the MPS as well.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Thank you.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Thank you. Thank you very much. Before I introduce the next section, I am going to use the Chairman's prerogative. I know Councillor Selman has been indicating. I want all the Cabinet Members to have one opportunity to speak. I think you were indicating, Caroline, were you not?

**Caroline Selman (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy, and the Voluntary Sector, Hackney Council):** I am Caroline Selman, I the Cabinet Member for Community Safety at Hackney Council. It was partly, first of all, just to endorse some of what was said about the importance of the opportunities for the police to speak with, engage with and exchange views with young people and members of the community. You really can see the difference when you meet a police officer who has, for example, been on the Stop and Search Monitoring Group, *Trading Places at The Crib* [Youth Project] or different workshops at schools in terms of the change of perspective.

The real challenge that comes with that is the high turnover you have in officers, which was touched on by Florence [Eshalomi AM]. You also have police officers who are coming from off-borough, often, who might not have had the opportunities to have those exchanges of views. I would endorse what was said before about the importance of ringfencing and also supporting DWOs because some people naturally do it and other people do not. They need support, but how best to do it? It is also about ensuring that there is an MPS-wide commitment. You can be doing lots locally but there needs to be an MPS-wide strategy with measurables in it that sends a clear message that it is not just a 'nice to have' but is fundamental to the success of the job.

The other thing I just wanted to say was slightly picked up on by Florence [Eshalomi AM], about the police reflecting the community that they are serving. Often when that gets raised the answer back is talking about the requirement for people to be recruited locally. That helps but that is not the answer when you look at what the diversity figures are, the workforce diversity figures are still very low in terms of BAME and, in particular, black representation. There was a campaign a few years ago about languages. There needs to be something much more assertive about going out and speaking to the people that the police want to see in the workforce, so that it is genuinely serving the community that they are there to protect.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Thank you.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** Right, thank you for that. We are now going to move on to the last session, which is the logical end to the morning, trying to drill down what more or what indeed can City Hall and the Mayor do. It will be interesting to hear from colleagues around that. Susan [Hall AM], I think you are leading on this.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you. Good morning. The question here is, "What is the role for City Hall in helping you to prevent violence?" It has been touched on that it is a case of helping you because there are so many issues here. There are so many reasons for violence and one size does not fit all by any means. Somebody said, "We want to know if you care". I can assure you everybody around this table does care. We are all absolutely in listening mode. Somebody said, "But we want you to do something". This part of this morning is for you to tell us, in very short terms, what you think we can do. It does not all revolve around money. There are lots of other things. I have taken a lot of multi-agency approaches when I was Leader of Harrow [Council] to solving issues and there is absolutely no doubt that the multi-partnership approaches really do work. I am hoping that the gentleman who is going to talk to us next, Kristian Aspinall, is going to tell you what he is doing in Lambeth.

**Kristian Aspinall (Lead Commissioner for Crime and Disorder, Lambeth Community Safety Team):** I am going to talk briefly about the public health model, partly because I do not think I can speak as eloquently about direct intervention as our previous speakers and partly because it is a current term that is being used a lot. It is key to what we are doing in Lambeth and I think it is key to the long-term solution to this.

First, just so everyone is on the same page, what do I mean when I say “the public health model”? In really simple terms, the analogy I like to use is that if there is a cholera outbreak in a village or town, you do two things: you treat the people who are immediately sick and then you find the dirty water that is causing the sickness in the first place. What we have tended to do is focus most on the people who are currently sick, who are currently vulnerable when it comes to knife crime, and what we need to do is focus more of our efforts on stopping the illness in the first place.

You have to do two things at once. You have to work to prevent the immediate risk. That is the young people right now who are in danger or whose siblings are in danger, those immediate cohorts. Then you also need to fundamentally change the borough and the communities so that it is not happening in the first place, which is a much longer and different thing.

First, in terms of what we are doing in Lambeth, one of the main things is changing the whole system. Traditionally this is the responsibility of a Community Safety Unit working with the police and maybe some specialist Children’s Services Officers. If you are going to try to make a long-term change, it needs to be everybody’s job. It is not just my job as our Community Safety Lead, it is also housing officers, librarians, leisure centres. You have to make every part of the system think about youth violence and about those long-term causes.

Secondly, they have to be locally led partnerships. As many people have already said repeatedly, this cannot be done from the outside. It cannot be done by the statutory services. We all have to be working together. Also, when you are talking about changing communities each community is different. There is no one size fits all solution and you have to have a partnership at a very local level with those communities.

Then finally, underpinning that there is a single Borough approach, which is not just a Council plan or even a Council police plan, it is a plan for the whole Borough of Lambeth involving our charities, our residents, our housing associations and the statutory services.

I was going to speak briefly about what works but being conscious of time, the most important thing I would say there is that if you are trying to change a community, the community has to want to change and the community has to lead the change. That can only be done if the community is not just consulted on what we are doing but part of developing it. That is a really important step. It is quite challenging, especially for people like me in local government and statutory services, but the fact of the matter is we do not have all the answers and only when we have other people around the table, can we write the plans and develop the actions that make the most sense and will have the effectiveness.

They also need to be long-term. It is not just about funding the interventions right now but if you are trying to tackle the things that are causing violence, things like adverse childhood experiences, parenting and mental health, those are not issues that are solved in a one or a two-year programme. Our strategy is for 10 years and to be honest with you, that is an optimistic estimate for some of the things we are looking at here. You need to commit for a long term if you are going to tackle what is causing this in the first place.

Finally, just to finish up on City Hall, I thought of two things where City Hall has a key role to play. The first is linking back to that shift. It needs to shift away from the police and crime agenda. It needs to shift away from the community safety agenda. They and myself have a key role to play but we are not the entire solution here and the role for City Hall, in my view, is to champion this across all aspects of London. These issues that are causing this in the first place are not caused by the police. They are caused by housing, by mental health and things like that. You can only tackle those if you bring everybody in.

The second thing is around that hyper-local approach. If you are trying to change a community the best people to do that are people already in the community, but it is very, very hard for a very small local group to make the leap from working in one estate to then getting funding, getting regional attention or even national attention. City Hall is an enabler of local practice, working in a direct line through the local council, the local police and the local third sector groups, so that we are not asking people who are doing brilliant work and who are trusted very much by those communities to make that huge leap. They can work with their local boroughs and deliver solutions that way.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you. A lot has been said about the so-called Glasgow model and that is correct, but we must all remember Glasgow is a completely different area. It is much, much bigger and therefore looking at it borough-wide may well be the solution. Does anybody else have -- right, OK. Who has not spoken? We have not heard from you. The gentleman at the back.

**Nana Benson (Young Advisor, Southwark Street Base):** My name is Nana Benson and I am a Southwark Young Advisor. I have my manager up there. One of our projects is called *Street Base* and what we do is we go and we engage with young people throughout Southwark. We want to spread that and do that throughout all other London boroughs. One thing that I think works well is engaging and interacting with young people. Me personally, I do not think you need funding to talk to young people, to interact with them. Normally for me personally when I am out doing *Street Base* it is easy to interact with them because they might see me and think, "Do you know what? I can get along with you, I can relate to you, so I can open up to you".

One of the things that I think works well is conflict resolution. It is just a thought and I would like to get other people's opinions, but can you imagine two opposing gangs, trying to talk to them and end the conflict and get their feelings as to why they are against each other? I feel like effective communication, basic skills like effective communication and active listening can work well. I would just like everyone to give it a try, try to talk to young people and interact with them. Ask them, "How do you think things can be done to tackle the problems in our community?"

**Susan Hall AM:** The lady next to you. I do not think we have heard from you.

**Roni Weir (Young Advisor, Waltham Forest Street Base):** Hi. I am from the Waltham Forest Young Advisors. We are trying to roll out the same model as Southwark Young Advisors, to do a *Street Base*. We did a pilot project of *Street Base* for one week when there was a spike in youth violence in Waltham Forest and we had amazing results from it. We engaged with 450 young people in that week alone. We were out there and we were a face that people could recognise and relate to. We thought that that was for us to do, to go out there and support our young people and to direct them into positive opportunities and ask them what they want. A lot of them know what they want if you speak to them and say, "What is it we can do for you? What would be an ideal solution for you?" It is about us being out there and proactively speaking to young people.

We are hoping to roll this out more. Like Nana said, all the boroughs should have this and be able to have funding to go out and deliver *Street Base* for young people, to be there.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. Thank you. The gentleman at the back there we have not heard from. Thank you.

**Stephen Griffiths (Director, Copenhagen Youth Project):** Hi there. My name is Steve Griffiths. I am from Copenhagen Youth Project, based in King's Cross. I have been looking at a number of things here around education, health, early intervention and rehabilitation, all areas that need a lot of concentration.

What I see as probably the biggest problem is trust. The voluntary sector have some amazing projects and we are all front-facing. We are based in the communities. We see the people, we know the problems and we have the solutions. Support is required from the statutory sector. We are front-facing. The statutory sector should be behind us, backing us and unblocking some of the blocks that are preventing funding from coming through. I think about simple things for the statutory sector. Secure emails. Information-sharing protocols. I look at the Bronze Group, the Gold Group, I look at the Magpie meetings. The representation is not good enough from the voluntary sector because there is a lack of trust. For me it is about getting behind the voluntary sector organisations, getting behind a lot of the people in this room who spoke very well about the solutions. They do have the solutions, but they have to be trusted. That is what I would want to leave it with.

**Susan Hall AM:** We will go back to this gentleman.

**Courtney Brown (Founder and CEO, Father2Father):** Thank you. One of the things we have done with Father2Father, we used a model called an asset-based community development model, ABC. What we have done is looked in our community at what is available without funding and [can be] just basically approached. Also, what we have done is set up a mini consortium with other organisations: Leroy Logan's organisation, VOYAGE, Manhood Academy. We are all organisations within the community that came together and looked at, "What talent do you have? What can you bring in? How can we use your skillset and just come together?" From that we were able to develop a park festival called A Father's Love where the whole community came in and was able to practice love. It was about talking about empowerment with the young people, it was about parents not feeling that they are on their own and can share their problems but not be judged. We did that in Hackney this year at Hackney Marshes and we had about 400 people there. We are looking to roll it out again.

There is something about the asset-based community development, recognising that the community has people with talents and gifts who are willing to give up their time freely. We just want City Hall to recognise that and the people of stature to recognise that, not look at us as though we do not have the answers. We do. Work with us. That is what I would say.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. Thank you. The gentleman in the middle, please.

**Alastair Reid (Lambeth Safer Neighbourhood Board and London Independent Youth Safety Advisory Board):** The question is: what is the role for City Hall? Empowerment. Just the one word. Empowerment. Encourage and empower all 32 boroughs to have their own Violence Reduction Units, City Hall to have a pan-London violence network and really to commit to the 10-year-plus model that Kristian [Aspinall] outlined, support boroughs in unblocking obstacles, coordinating media, encouraging and supporting information-sharing, and resourcing the borough Violence Reduction Units. That is the role for City Hall.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. Thank you very much. The gentleman at the end, please.

**Leroy Logan (member of the Youth Violence Commission):** Thank you for allowing me to speak again. I just want to highlight the Youth Violence Commission, the All-Party Commission report. The interim report was published in July [2018] and we have a substantive report that is coming out later this month. It is going to parliamentary conferences so we hope that we will get political will because all of this is not going to happen unless we have real political will nationally and regionally as well as locally. We have already spoken about the public health approach and the Violence Reduction Unit, and that is our first recommendation in the report that we did in July [2018]. We need to have that political will. It was very appropriate and we

welcomed the Mayor's announcement yesterday around this, but a lot of it is how that is rolled out and having the right people to deliver it. We want to support that because everyone here can plug into that and get that critical mass of advocates, practitioners and academics to work in all the aspects that have been highlighted, especially what has been done in Lambeth.

Like every single initiative that the public health approach relies on, trust and confidence in policing is a key part of it. I know my ex-colleagues do an amazing job, I do understand that, but it is just like stop and search. Stop and search is a blunt tool but it is sharpened up by community intelligence. Trust and confidence is aligned with community intelligence. The more confident people feel in their police service and other statutory agencies, the more they will give information.

Also, the narrative has to change, as has already been said. I understand the enforcement piece. I understand that they have to apprehend those who are committing these crimes, especially those who are grooming. We have not spoken about those individuals who groom youngsters into this, and it is extensive and very complex. But the key thing is that you have to make young people feel confident and less fearful on the street. They need to feel secure so that they do not fall into the hands of people who groom them into that. One thing also is around exclusions. I remember when I was Deputy Borough Commander in Hackney I used to say to the heads of schools, "Once those individuals are excluded they are my problem, because they are four to five times more likely to be involved in crime when they are outside education".

All I want to know is that we understand those key elements. The elements are there. The Mayor has made the pronouncement yesterday. We have to hold him and his team to account on how he delivers this because we are at a paradigm shift and at that tipping point where we can really make some breakthroughs because the people of London are desperately seeking it.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes. You are quite right, they are indeed, and this is why Assembly Members are here. We are here to hold the Mayor to account. Who has not spoken? Has anybody here not spoken? No. In that case I will come to you.

**Amani Simpson (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aviard Inspires):** Hey again, everyone. I have a handful of solutions and I just want to roll them off so you guys can write them down.

I personally believe that essentially you guys need to encourage business from an early age in school. I think we have a one size fits all model when it comes to education and we need to look at the ways that we can engage with young people who are not necessarily going to go through the traditional means of school and go and end up being, I guess, employees. Some of these from early have really entrepreneurial minds. You see it in the way they survive the street. Someone said to me a lot of people in corporate positions could never spend a day on the street, looking over your shoulder, trying to hustle your way through life and make something of yourself. We have to use that in a positive way. We have to show them that these same skills that you guys have that you use to maybe do illegal things, this is how we empower you, which is a word that has been used today. This is how we empower you to create businesses and create different solutions for you and your family.

I also think that we need to think about positive mental health. We always talk about the negative side, depression and anxiety. What we need to think about are the affirmations that we are saying to each other, "I hate you" and these really depressing words. We need to say, "What are all the positive words that we are saying to ourselves and we are saying to other people?" These are things that are going to change the way



that we speak. As they say, there is power in the tongue. There is power in the things that we say over each other, the things that we listen to, that we digest and put into our system. We need to really challenge that.

I also think it is about allowing aspirations to flourish from early, from an early intervention stage. You speak to kids and they say, "I want to be a policeman, I want to be a footballer", for example, "I want to be an information technology developer," whatever it is that they have at an early age, we allow them to be given these opportunities to, as I said before, embrace their superpower. Everyone has something. They all have a purpose. We need to just go and be empowered to really chase that.

Finally, I would say -- not finally. One more point after.

**Susan Hall AM:** There are quite a few people still.

**Amani Simpson (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aviard Inspires):** Literally I am going to wrap up very quickly. There is a project called the 4MATION Project by a lady called Temi Mwale. She has asked me to get involved in that and that goes back to what Leroy [Logan] said in terms of having something that we can do, almost like a manifesto, something we can present to politicians. Essentially, as we said, this is great, I understand that we have a role to play here, but really to get this changing we have to do it on a political level.

Finally, self-defence.

**Susan Hall AM:** Self-defence?

**Amani Simpson (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aviard Inspires):** Self-defence. There is an organisation called The Safety Box run by Nathaniel Peat and essentially what they have been doing, they have been working prisons for many years. They have some serious statistics in terms of turning around these violent -- they are violence interrupters, essentially. We have to look at the fact that this is a problem. Yes, as you said, weapons are part of the problem, but we need to look at how we can defend our kids as well.

**Peter Whittle AM:** What kind of self-defence, sorry?

**Amani Simpson (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aviard Inspires):** I think the best way to look at it is: how do you defend yourself against a knife? Essentially, yes, the first case is run away, but if you are in a situation: how are you going to disarm that person and stop them from stabbing you in that moment so that you can run? Then teaching them about first aid and all these different things that are going to allow them to save lives. We have to empower the young people who are going through this every day. This is not going to affect them for probably about five years, let us be real. We need to think about what we are going to do tomorrow that is going to help these young people to really live and then go to some of the solutions that we are talking about doing, basically.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** We will canter through. Make sure you write to us later so that we capture all those because there was loads of good stuff there.

**Amani Simpson (Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aviard Inspires):** 100%. I've got you, don't worry. It is fine.

**Susan Hall AM:** I will come to you in a minute. The gentleman at the back, can I ask one very quick question? You said it would be a good idea to have a mediator, in effect, between gangs. That is something quite different. Exactly who would that be? If you have two gangs as an example, it sounds like a really good idea but who would you have to mediate? Who would the communities think would be a good idea to mediate?

**Nana Benson (Young Advisor, Southwark Street Base):** People that they will listen to. I do not want to sound rude but if a gang member was to look at you and you were to interact with them and say, "Look, you should come off the road", they probably would not listen to you. That is just a fact. But they might look at ex-gang members or they might engage with them. They might think, "Do you know what? I do not want to die". Do you know what I mean? "I want to stay alive". There are gang members out there who I have spoken to who have said that they have had former gang members talk to them and be their role model, encourage them to come off the road, that there are better things out there.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. All right then. Thank you. It is just a different idea and it would be interesting. This gentleman.

**Robyn Travis (Author):** Cool. Just quickly, briefly, to the young kid over there, loved that train of thought. Please, guys, please stop using the "gang" word. I do not care if they even claim they were in gangs. You have to have a 'prison to the street' mindset before you even become a gang member. Most of them Bloods and Crips have been killing each other from the 1970s. They have a mindset before joining those gangs. If you are going to look at the system of how Bloods and Crips came to be, brother, we went from Black Panthers to Bloods and Crips. Stop using the gang narrative. Eradicate that word from this youth field, please, everybody, because it is not fair. It further reinforces a stereotype of people who dress and look like me, that "gang" word.

Mediation, great. We have heard his points. He is a young man. I have heard his points over 10 years now. I came up here not long ago and said there are people who I have stabbed, who have stabbed me, and we could all be here now and talk about ways to go forward. Can any of you do that? I have asked the question. No one has given me the answer. I am hearing the same old rhetoric and we are sitting here and clapping. No disrespect to anyone here. I really do not mean to undermine anyone. I have been doing this for years. I can bring every person I have stabbed, every person who stabbed me, without going to the police to get justice. We resolved our own issues. Why are we not getting the work done? Because you -- no disrespect. I am not saying "you" as individuals. You guys as a system, City Hall, you are not putting your money where the people who can -- everyone here is talking about talking to the guys.

**Susan Hall AM:** Well --

**Robyn Travis (Author):** Sorry. I am the guy you are talking about. I brought guys from --

**Susan Hall AM:** Right, I --

**Robyn Travis (Author):** One second. Let me just make a point so you guys understand the work. I did a book launch in Hackney --

**Susan Hall AM:** We do understand.

**Robyn Travis (Author):** Sorry, no, I do not think you do.

**Susan Hall AM:** But we are just asking --

**Robyn Travis (Author):** Sorry, one second. I will leave in one second. Sorry, just one second.

We did a book launch in Bernie Grant's (purpose-built multi-arts centre in Tottenham, North London). I am just trying to show you the evidence of the work. I had Hackney and Tottenham boys in the same room. Fact. You know I am not lying. I do not see people putting this in the media. You lot are talking like this is something, a new idea, a fresh idea. Temi Mwale, she had a company called Get Out of the Gang. It was only from reading *Prisoners to the Street*, but she understood things about child trauma and [she] learnt and I was able to speak on the things that I am educating [people about]. I am saying stop silencing me out, stop putting me on the same level as people who only started work the other day, and hear a message that has a solution. I am begging today. Whether you do not fund me or not, I need to be allowed into the schools with people who understand this concept.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK --

**Robyn Travis (Author):** I know you are trying to cut me short but I will finish right now. I need the support. I do not care about the money, just let us into the facilities --

**Susan Hall AM:** Stop that. No, no, if I could just stop you because we definitely got that message in the first and I shall be, for one, looking at the book to see. We are all interested in any solution because every single one of us in this room wants to put an end to this violence.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** I have your book.

**Susan Hall AM:** Right, who else is --

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** I have your book. We have your book.

**Robyn Travis (Author):** Let me give it to someone who can actually --

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** No, I have this. Now you sit yourself down. I want your book. I want to take it home.

**Robyn Travis (Author):** I do not want to waste my time, mate, like, we are talking about serious --

**Susan Hall AM:** This gentleman.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** This is fine. This is cool. Right, next one. Go on, Susan.

**Dwayne Vincent (Musician, So Solid Crew):** As the brother said --

**Robyn Travis (Author):** --

**Susan Hall AM:** Excuse me, could -- look, let us listen to everybody because everybody has a different angle to come from.

**Dwayne Vincent (Musician, So Solid Crew):** Once the brother's got it off his chest because he is right, a lot of people have spoken today. There are many solutions.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes.

**Dwayne Vincent (Musician, So Solid Crew):** One of the situations that I have seen in our communities is that there are a lot of new builds, there are a lot of new things being built in our community. I am not sure whether the people who have lived there over 20, 30, 40 years have an invested interest in these builds, whether it is a new gym, a new community hall, a café, whatever it is. There has to be some way where we can -- like I say, prevention is better than cure.

If it was a community centre that was built and family members and local charities actually earned from these new builds, from these new gyms, then we might see a lot of change. We might see an incentive for families to send their kids to these places, where in turn it is invested back into the families and the communities. I see a lot of new things being built up in these communities but the people who live there do not have any communication. We do not necessarily need money from the Government. People can come to me, people can come to a lot of our peers who have a lot of money now. Like I say, we are successful as well and they can come to us but we do not have the jurisdiction, we do not have the authority and we do not have the access to take over these places and in turn utilise it for our communities. That might be one solution that we could look into. A lot of these private companies have access to our communities and are building things that we did not necessarily ask for, but if they are entering our communities we need to have some sort of invested interest which in turn delivers income and support for the families in the community.

**Susan Hall AM:** We have time for one other person.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** I just thought it would be really great to hear, for the last voice, from the GLA peer guys, youth. Come on. That would be nice to finish on a good note, if it is fine with you guys.

**Kismet Meyon (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority):** Yes. We are the Peer Outreach Team. Firstly, I want to say thank you for City Hall for giving me a platform, for helping me out of my situation and whatever I went through in life. What I wanted to say is obviously we are a team of young people helping these young people. We need ammunition as well from City Hall. I think what everyone has said today and what that man has said, that is just passion. At the end of the day, obviously it is a build-up of a lot of feelings and a lot of things that need to be said out, but all in all we want to talk about solutions and I think that one thing you could do - because it is not all just people on the streets, there are also the young people who have severe mental health issues, who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, all of these issues - is to try to access them as well.

One thing that I have not heard today is online services. Maybe do an online directory of services that are already existing. Get some people to do some mapping. You have the Peer Outreach Team. We can take that work on. Maybe you can map services around areas so young people can go online themselves, be proactive and find things that help them, so it is not all down to the Government. Then they can find these local organisations helping. That is about it. Thanks.

**Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman):** That is brilliant. Right, I would like to thank you all for that. I think all those who wanted to speak did have the opportunity and we are grateful for that. I am just going to finish briefly a tiny bit of business here.

Lastly, again, massively thankful for what you have done today. If you have not been able to say something you wanted to, write to me. We are going to be publishing a report and we are going to be using this stuff, so watch out for it and please do keep in touch with us. Thank you very much.