

LOOK OUT for your children being vague or secretive about their activities – if you are in doubt as to what they are doing in their spare time – ask and if necessary monitor their activities.

Look Out for children possessing relatively large sums of money or bringing expensive items home – ask yourself do they have things that they couldn't have bought – be ready to challenge excuses. Look out for your child getting in trouble with the police – be ready to challenge any obvious signs of unnecessary or unacceptable behaviour – make a compact and have consequences if they misbehave.

Get I.T. Aware of the websites your child is viewing. Social networking sites can glorify gang culture some gangs even have their own websites – put the computer in the main room where you can monitor what they viewing. Be aware that chat rooms and texts can be used to bully young people to join gangs. Monitor all their games for inappropriate content – if necessary play the games with them.

Hear the Music. Rap music associated with gangs can be threatening and violent – it makes sense to know what your child is listening to and what the music is about.



GET SUPPORT

From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation (FBMF):

FBMF is an independent school, that provides support for black boys of African and Afro-Caribbean descent who were in danger of, or were already educationally and socially excluded. FBMF provides a service for boys (12-17 years) and young men (17-21 years) in its "Lifestyle Management Programmes".

Contact: Uanu Seshmi on 020 7703 6415 or 07980 447 612 or uanu_seshmi@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.usatfbmf.com

Kids Company: provides emotional and practical support to children to bring about positive changes to their lives. The charity seeks to re-engage young people and encourage them to value their lives and futures, which has a significant impact on youth offending levels. Kids Company also provides support to teachers and parents who work with disadvantaged children. Contact: 0207 274 8378

Eternal Life Support Centre (ELSC): provides a wide range of practical support to young people and parents, including Mentoring, One-2-One sessions, counselling and Life Skill training. ELSC work with individuals involved in gang, gun & knife crimes and aim to re-integrate them into society by enabling them to develop self confidence.

Contact: Jennifer Blake on 0207 3588566 or jenniferelsc@aol.com

Website: www.elscuk.com

COMBATTING VIOLENT CRIME IN SOUTHWARK



**Advice for
Parents**



Violent crime is increasing; it seems like everyday there is some kind of **knife, gun or gang related crime** that is reported in the media...



This leaflet exists to give YOU - **the parent, carer or guardian** - some advice...

We are living in a time when crimes are getting more serious, the term 'Gang' is almost sexy and with more and more youngsters getting involved. No one could blame a parent for worrying about what happens to your child or for asking themselves what could they do to stop their child becoming another victim.

Don't blame yourself: Even with good parental support, young people can be easily attracted into negative associations or habits despite your best efforts.

Equally, not every group of youngsters that hangs around together are in a gang. And while there are negatives of becoming involved in a gang, there are positive, valid reasons that attract youngsters to join, and why they would want to be part of such a collective group.

If we don't do this, we will continue to find it hard to understand gangs and negative peer groups and their pressures. When you speak to your child, they will find your concerns hard to take on board.

There is a fantasy: Some TV, movies and music glorify drugs, sex, and violence as an acceptable lifestyle and do not show the reality about gangs, like the death and destruction they can cause for families, friends and the communities we live in. Young people join gangs for lots of different reasons, some are good and some are bad. Some don't even see themselves as being in a gang at all. They may just 'hang out' on the streets with mates to keep safe and avoid trouble.

There are warning signs: As a parent, guardian or carer you should keep your eyes out any for the following:

Gang symbols or tags: For example on schoolbooks, bags, bedroom posters and personal possessions. – If you notice this, ask your child about it, ask what it stands for, what does it mean for them?

Clothing: Sometimes young people wear certain clothing to align themselves to specific groups – again, ask them about it and why they feel it is necessary.

Post codes and unsafe areas: This is harder to spot but some young people often align themselves to post codes and therefore have 'no-go' areas, if your child shows reluctance going to any specific areas, you should ask why, and be ready to ask again.

A rise in truancy – are you checking on attendance, are you speaking to teachers, have their tutors noticed anything? These are things to look at because if kids are not at school, then the question is – where are they?

Sudden changes in your child's selection of friends – friends fall out sometimes and children change their interests – but who are your child's friends? When your child goes out what do they do?

Gang names – does your child's group of friends have a 'name' and how do they see themselves?

Signs of Bullying – Be aware that your child may experience bullying and pressure to join a gang. They need your support. Make time to listen and encourage them to trust you.