

# London Crime Reduction Board – Strategic Ambitions for London Gangs and Serious Youth Violence

Shield pilot

Frequently Asked Questions – Version 1.0

## *Top Lines for Shield*

- **Gangs are responsible for a significant portion of the violence in the capital.** Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) data on gangs indicates that they are responsible for 40% of all shootings in the capital and 17% of all serious violence and stabbings.
- **There has been an increase in Violence with Injury offences in London in the last six months.** Despite the increase in Violence with Injury, levels of violence remain lower than they were in 2010. **Tackling violence is central to the Shield approach.** The aim of the Shield pilot is the **reduction of serious violence by an identified gang cohort.**
- **There is evidence to show that effective partnership enforcement and prevention activities have resulted in significant reductions in gang violence.** The reduction in gang violence has created an opportunity to trial innovative new approaches in the Capital.
- **We have selected the three pilot boroughs, Westminster, Lambeth and Haringey, because gang offending is challenging in different ways in these boroughs; they are also markedly different in terms of geography and need; and the infrastructure of their community safety partnerships and borough services make it possible to trial this new way of managing and reducing gang violence.**
- **The delivery of the Shield pilot is a multi-agency partnership effort, involving local and regional partners, including, the MPS, the Crown Prosecution Service; the Youth Justice Board; the London National Probation Service; London Community Rehabilitation Company, Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Service and the National Offender Management Service.**

## *Why is Shield being introduced in the capital?*

**Londoners want the authorities to tackle gangs and reduce harm in communities.** In a survey<sup>1</sup> for the Police and Crime Plan 2013-16, "tackling gangs" was cited by 49% of Londoners as one of their top three priorities to improve safety in their neighbourhood. "Preventing youth violence" was cited by 37%.

<sup>1</sup> Conducted by TNS Market Research, published in March 2013.

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Since the launch of the Trident Gang Crime Command in 2012, there have been significant reductions in gun and knife crime; however, gangs are still responsible for 40% of all shootings and 17% of all violent crime recorded. Therefore, the Mayor and the MPS have made tackling gang violence and the causes of gang violence a key priority.

**This approach works.** The Mayor and the MPS are keen to trial an innovative and proven methods of addressing gang violence. The Group Violence Intervention method (GVI) has proven successful in the US, where it was pioneered, and a similar model that was introduced in Glasgow in 2008 saw a 50% reduction in youth violence. Therefore, the Shield pilot based on the GVI model will be trialled in London to reduce serious violence.

*Why were Westminster, Haringey and Lambeth selected as pilot boroughs?*

Westminster, Lambeth and Haringey are markedly different in terms of geography and need. In addition, the strength of their community safety partnerships; their willingness to adopt the Group Violence Intervention method and their collective agreement to work within clear parameters made it possible to trial this new way of working in these three boroughs.

*Why was my borough not selected for the pilot?*

It would not be possible to pilot Shield across every London Borough. It was important that in selecting boroughs for the pilots, we identified boroughs that varied in terms of

- gang membership;
- offences committed by gangs;
- location across London

The aim is to test the concept in a few boroughs, in order to demonstrate whether it is possible to implement the model in all boroughs. Moreover, of course, a pilot by definition cannot happen everywhere to start with.

*Are boroughs being given any funding to deliver Shield?*

The three London boroughs already receive significant funding from MOPAC via the London Crime Prevention Fund, which includes funding for their existing gangs intervention and exit work.

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MOPAC has identified an additional £200k of funding which has been used to fund four new fixed term posts to support the implementation of Shield in the three boroughs and to fund technical advice and support from Professor David Kennedy who developed the GVI model. This is a significant investment by MOPAC to support the implementation of the pilot.

*If there is a need in my borough during the pilot for specialist support from Trident will this support be available?*

The MPS Trident Gang Crime Command will be supporting the operational implementation of Shield in the three pilot boroughs. However, the Shield pilot will not affect the day-to-day business of the Trident Gang Crime Command. Alongside supporting the implementation of Shield in the three pilot boroughs, Trident will also continue to provide operational and specialist support to those London boroughs that require it.

*Is Shield simply about enforcement?*

Shield is not just about enforcement, though this is one element of Shield. Individuals who are subject to Shield will be given the choice to exit gangs and criminality. If they choose to take up that offer of help, local partners will support them.

Shield is also about enabling and empowering affected communities standing up to say we want violence to stop.

*How will Shield involve communities?*

Community representatives will have a critical role to play throughout the implementation and delivery of Shield. They will have a role in the local Shield governance structures; in the identification of the Shield cohort; in the planning and delivery of the call in; in informing the development of Community Impact Statements and crucially in the delivery of the key Shield messages – a reduction in serious violence and an offer of help for those who ask.

*How are you deciding who will be targeted by the Shield pilot?*

Whilst it is not appropriate to share operational information, we can advise that the gang members, who will be subject to the Shield pilot, will be identified on offending history and by multi agency partners based on verified information.

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## ***Will Shield result in the eviction of families from their homes?***

In every London borough, housing providers have clear stipulations regarding ASB and criminal activity. Should the pilot boroughs wish to include a gang member's housing situation as a possible civil enforcement option, because there is clear evidence of a breach of tenancy, then this will of course be considered.

We recognise that eviction is always the last sanction utilised by housing providers and depending on the tenancy of the individual or family a number of measures will be implemented prior to a family or an individual facing eviction for a breach of tenancy regulations.

## ***How will the sanctions against gangs work?***

Shield will be operating within the existing legal framework and the collective enforcement response will be informed by evidence of involvement in violence and criminality gathered by the police and community safety partners.

Whilst it would not be appropriate to share operational information, we can advise that there will be a bespoke enforcement plan for each individual. We will use the tools within existing legal and statutory frameworks to respond to violence committed by a member of a gang targeted by Shield.

## ***Is Shield Joint Enterprise in another name?***

No, Shield is not Joint Enterprise in another name. The Group Violence Intervention model has no legal link with Joint Enterprise. Joint Enterprise is often deployed to prosecute crimes involving large numbers of people. This centuries-old law allows a whole group of people to be prosecuted for the differing roles they may have played in a murder. This is not the intention of the Group Violence Intervention model, which instead aims to reduce violence by providing viable positive opportunities to those who choose to exit their involvement with gangs and criminality.

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## ***How will Shield complement existing activity?***

Shield will not replace the existing gang intervention and exit work being undertaken in pilot boroughs. It is our intention that Shield will support and be aligned to existing activities being undertaken by police and partners.

## ***What is different about Shield?***

There are two critical elements to Shield which make this model different to the existing gang intervention and exit work being undertaken in the Capital.

The first difference is the community element of the GVI model. The model was designed with community mobilisation as a critical element. Community leaders from the areas in each borough which are most affected by gang violence will be identified and asked to support Shield. They will work alongside community safety partners and the police presenting a united front and a consistent message to gang members – that the violence must stop and support is available to those who ask.

The second key difference is proactive collective enforcement. All gang members will face either criminal or civil enforcement measures if one of their gang members commits a violent offence.

## ***What is a call-in?***

A call in is a meeting which brings together the police, partner agencies, members of the community and gang members. The aim of the call in will be to deliver the key messages of the Shield pilot to gang. The three key messages are: that violence must stop; that partners will provide help and support to gang members who wish to exit gangs and criminality and finally that proactive enforcement will be taken against gang members who fail to desist from violence.

## ***What do you do at the call-in?***

We are not willing to talk about operational detail or individual call-ins. More generally, for gang members this is an important reckoning – to be confronted by members of the community about the significant impact of their actions, and offered positive opportunities to exit their current gang lifestyles.

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## ***What does success look like?***

A reduction in violence associated with gangs and an increase in the number of gang-affiliated young people seeking support to exit offending behaviour.

## ***Hasn't this been tried before, why do you think it will be successful this time?***

Yes, the Group Violence Intervention model has been trialled before in London. There is a critical difference between the approach that MOPAC is adopting and previous efforts. MOPAC, Trident, the three pilot boroughs and regional partners will be working to a consistent model, which is based on all the strands of the GVI model. Previous attempts have involved boroughs simply focusing on one or two strands rather than all three elements, which are the call in; an offer of help and support to those who wish to exist gangs and criminality; and finally, collective enforcement.

## ***What will happen at the end of the pilot?***

The pilot includes an independent process and impact evaluation, which will be designed and undertaken by the MOPAC Evidence and Insight Team. Learning from this evaluation and recommendations will be used by the MPS and MOPAC to determine next steps and which aspects of the pilot can be adopted in the capital.

## ***When will we know whether Shield has had a positive impact?***

The aim of the evaluation is to understand the impact of Shield in reducing serious violence committed by the gangs who are subject to Shield. In order to assess impact, the MOPAC Evidence and Insight Team will be monitoring all gang members subject to Shield for 12 months and therefore it is anticipated that the full results of the impact evaluation will not be available until the latter part of 2016.