



THE SOURCE

The Source Academy Safeguarding Newsletter

November 2017

Gang Activity

In 2016, The Sheffield Star reported that there were over 100 criminal gangs operating in the South Yorkshire area, posing significant risk to both themselves and the public at large. These gangs can be “organised crime groups” or “urban street gangs” and the Police report that many are linked to drugs markets and firearms.

Gang Activity and Safeguarding

The NSPCC reports that “children and young people involved with, or on the edges of, gangs might be victims of violence or they might be pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited or put into dangerous situations.”

They believe that for lots of young people, “being part of a gang makes them feel part of a family so they might not want to leave. Even if they do, leaving or attempting to leave can be a really scary idea. They might be frightened about what will happen to them, their friends or their family if they leave.”

There are many reasons why young people join gangs. They might be bored and looking for excitement or feel attracted to the status and power it can give them. The NSPCC suggest that peer pressure is an issue along with experiencing money or family problems. A child or teenager can feel protected and that they belong through gang membership.

Connection between gangs and grooming

There is evidence to show that many children and young people are groomed into joining gangs, using the same tactics as sexual grooming. It is reported that street gangs are grooming children as young as 9 to carry and sell drugs for them and they are often enticed to do this by offers of “gifts” of money, cigarettes, alcohol and sometimes cannabis. These children will then become gang members and start to lead a life of crime. In many cases, gang members are victims and find it very difficult to get away from the abusers.

What are the signs that someone is part of a gang?

It is usual that a child or young person involved in a gang will demonstrate certain behaviours or will have changes to their appearance and these will include:

- Being withdrawn, losing interest in school or studies
- Lack of academic success with studies
- Dropping out of social activities
- Talking about another young person who seems to have a lot of influence over them
- Staying out late without permission or without telling anyone
- Suspected of taking drugs
- Changes in clothing, a new style or wearing a “uniform”
- New and often expensive items e.g. a new phone
- Unexplained physical injuries
- Drawing “tags” or graffiti on books, folders etc.

What can we do?

Take time to understand gang activity, check out the following link and video - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/gangs-young-people/>

Discuss with the Safeguarding Officer.

For more information:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/gangs-young-people/>

<http://birminghamcsp.org.uk/admin/resources/young-people-gangs-parents-carers.pdf>

<http://controlledconfusion.com/top-6-signs-your-teenager-is-in-a-gang/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7592170.stm>

If you have any concerns about a learner or a colleague please follow the safeguarding reporting procedure found on the I drive / Safeguarding and speak to the Safeguarding Officers:

- **Andy Womble on 0114 263 5638 / 075843981447**
- **Helen Lee on 0114 263 5619 / 078278552504**