

1. Background:

Serious violence is defined as “*the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.*” (World Health Organisation).

PCFT have identified learning from recent Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) relating to complex safeguarding and serious youth violence. Two of the CSPRs were undertaken as thematic reviews and featured seven children aged 14-17 years who had experienced serious harm within that context. One child sadly died following a violence related injury.

The learning identified for PCFT is consistent with learning identified nationally (Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2020; Joint Targeted Area Inspection, 2024), regionally (Northwest Regional Improvement Programme Pilot, 2025) and locally (GM Complex Safeguarding Hub Annual Impact Report, 2024-25).

The findings found several common themes and learning points.

2. Common themes:

- * The focus on criminality of young people as primary issue can mask underlying issues in families – rather than seeing as symptom of childhood characterised by multiple trauma and chronic harm.
- * Exposure to domestic abuse and the long-term impact on health and development.
- * Bereavement and loss – not amplified in assessments or recognised as meaningful.
- * Exclusion from education – impact on alienation and isolation from peer group.
- * Support and care need due to neurodiversity.
- * Impact of social norms e.g. violence in the area where living.
- * The need to strengthen single agency and multiagency information sharing practices with a particular focus on cross boundary working.
- * The need to apply transitional safeguarding principles, including MCA (2005) when safeguarding adolescents from extra familial harm and exploitation.

7. Resources:

- * [GM adolescent framework - Final](#)
- * GM Procedures Online: [Children Affected by Gang Activity or Serious Youth Violence](#)
- * Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit (2022) Adolescent Framework [GM adolescent framework - Final](#)
- * Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel 'It Was Hard to Escape' (2020) Safeguarding Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation. [The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - It was hard to escape - report](#)



3. Adulthood of Young People:

Young people need to be understood as individuals - in several CSPRs they are often considered to be 'street wise' or 'grown up' –the adulthood effectively hands the responsibility for safeguarding children back to themselves. Young people can then be seen as a threat rather than in need of support. This is the case for black children – race and racism remain central tenet in which this bias operates.

Understanding cultural identity is key.

6. What we need to do?

- * Effective early intervention is needed, using a Think Family approach with specialist support from Complex Safeguarding Teams, Youth Justice etc. multiagency approach is key.
- * Recognise adolescents as individuals with their own goals and needs.
- * Understand the value of trusted relationships with adults including professionals who have access to safe and inclusive spaces.
- * Recognise how grief and loss impact on identity when support is not provided and how that translates to exploitation risk.
- * Recognise impact of exposure to domestic abuse (as per DA Act 2021)
- * Recognise the impact of exclusion from education if isolated/alienated from peers.

5. Trauma informed practice:

Professionals need to understand the trauma experienced by young people at risk of or engaged with Serious Youth Violence and the consider the impact on the young person.

Externalised behaviour including anger, violence and aggression can be an expression of distress or a fear-based response for young people at risk of harm.

Understanding cumulative risk over time. How can we ensure that what has happened to young people is not 'lost' in future?

4. Understanding community and extrafamilial harm:

How is the lived experience of the child impacted by poverty, deprivation and criminality in the locality where they live? Do they feel sense of belonging? Do they feel safe?

Identity and pro-criminality – 'everyone carry's a knife', seen to be making own decisions. Negative reinforcement.

Recognise signs of exploitation – young people might not see themselves as victims at risk.