

# The Southwark public health approach to serious youth violence prevention

*Southwark's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment*

Healthcare Public Health Team

Southwark Public Health

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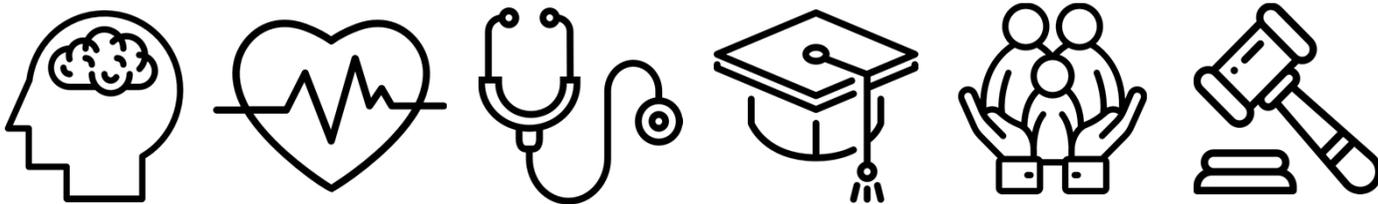
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# Serious youth violence is a complex and multifactorial manifestation of societal issues

## BACKGROUND

**The causes and consequences of serious youth violence (SYV) are multifaceted.**

- Involvement with and exposure to violence has significant negative impacts on a young person's emotional wellbeing and physical health
- SYV carries a high cost to health and social care, education, and social protection services

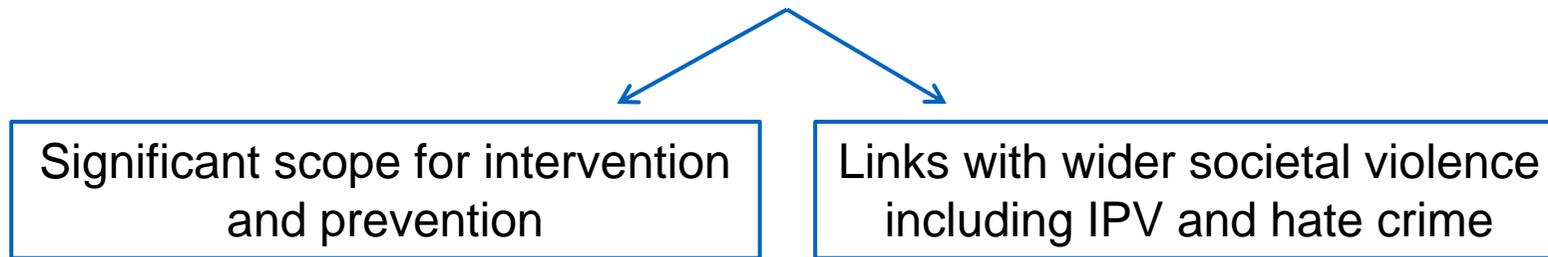


**Locally, Southwark and London have seen an increasing number of both fatal and non-fatal stabbings and a rise in gun violence.**

# The public health approach – upstream and at scale – has been emphasised in tackling youth violence

## BACKGROUND

Need for **improved coordinated action** to address underlying determinants of SYV, as it is influenced by a variety of individual, family, and community risk factors



Recent publications have highlighted a **‘Public Health Approach’** to preventing violence.

- In essence, a joined-up, multi-agency approach that works upstream and at scale to tackle the root causes of violence
- At the forefront is nurturing a bottom-up response and empowering communities to address the normalisation of a violent lifestyle

# This framework aims to help guide action across systems involved in serious youth violence

## AIMS & APPROACH

The 'public health approach' to SYV is underpinned by a focus on prevention and importantly, partnership working.

### Prevention occur at three levels:

1. Primary prevention: preventing the development of risk factors for violence e.g. by reducing adverse childhood experiences or poor mental health
2. Secondary prevention: preventing violence before it occurs for example through community policing strategies
3. Tertiary prevention: reducing the long term impact of violence, such as rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and support for victims

### These layers of prevention are focused on three target groups:

1. Universal: approaches aimed at groups or the general population without regard to individual risk e.g. curricula delivered in all schools
2. Targeted: interventions targeted at people with one or more risk factor
3. Specialist: interventions for those who have committed violence to prevent reoccurrence

This approach advocates focusing on different levels of violence prevention and targeting efforts to different groups according to their risk factors.

These responses should be delivered collectively by Local Council, statutory health and social care services, and by the range of voluntary providers working in our borough.

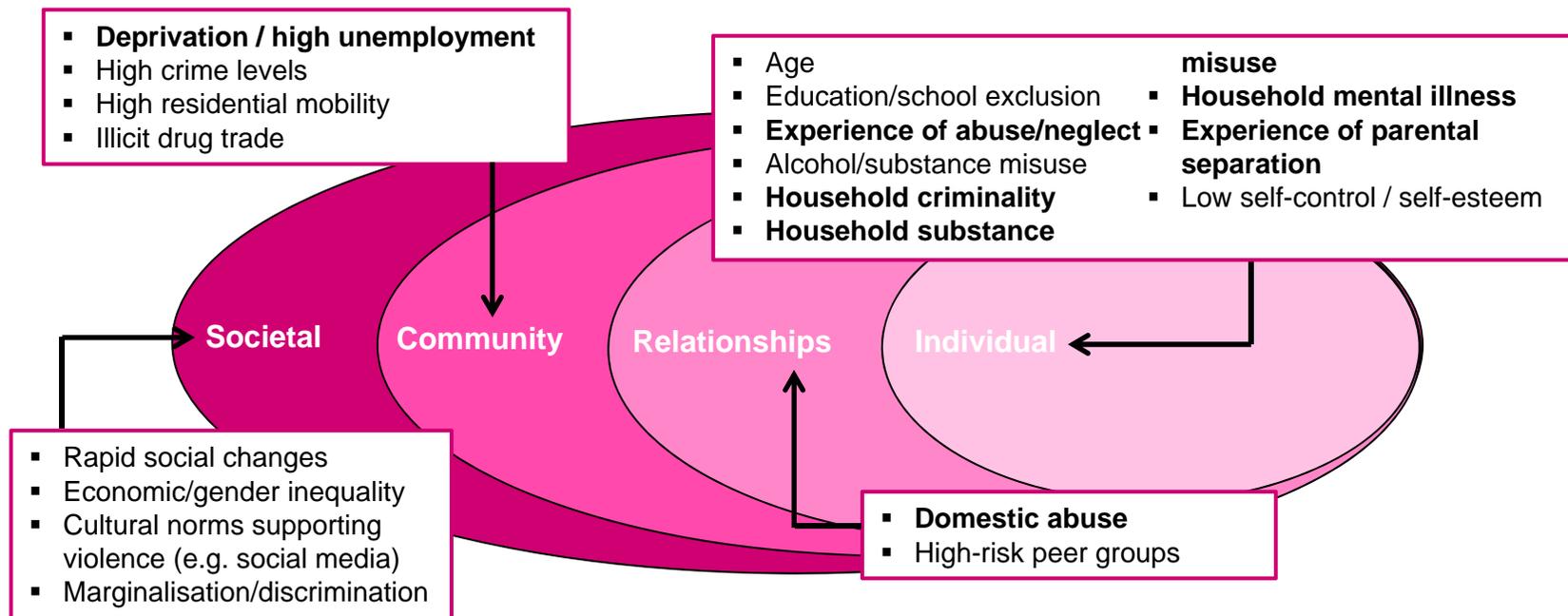


# This framework aims to help guide action across systems involved in serious youth violence

## AIMS & APPROACH

The public health approach supports a multi-faceted response and uses an ecological model to establish a level of risk and identify areas for intervention.

- A range of factors and experiences are considered for their impact on a person's risk for violence, including adverse childhood experiences ('ACEs')
- This model suggests that no single factor can explain a person's risk for violence, rather it is the collection and multiplicity of factors at various levels that determines whether someone is at risk for involvement in SYV



The aim of this Framework for a Public Health approach to violence is to develop a model that can be employed across systems to prevent or mitigate these risk factors for SYV.

1. WHO (2018) Violence Prevention Alliance. The ecological framework  
 2. Home Office (2018) Serious Violence Strategy

# Youth Violence Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

**This aims to clarify and understand the determinants and causal pathway towards violence and identify opportunities for prevention, using a public health approach.**

The objectives of the project are to:

- Understand the epidemiology of serious youth violence (SYV) using a variety of data sources, including Metropolitan Police, Youth Offending Service, London Ambulance Service, and emergency department data
- Understand local drivers of violence and variation in risk (geographic, ethnic, sex, age), considering violence from a public health, systems-wide perspective
- Outline current offer to prevent youth violence, using an ecological model and a public health approach
- Identify opportunities to improve the provision of local support
- Support the evaluation and impact of efforts to address SYV in Southwark

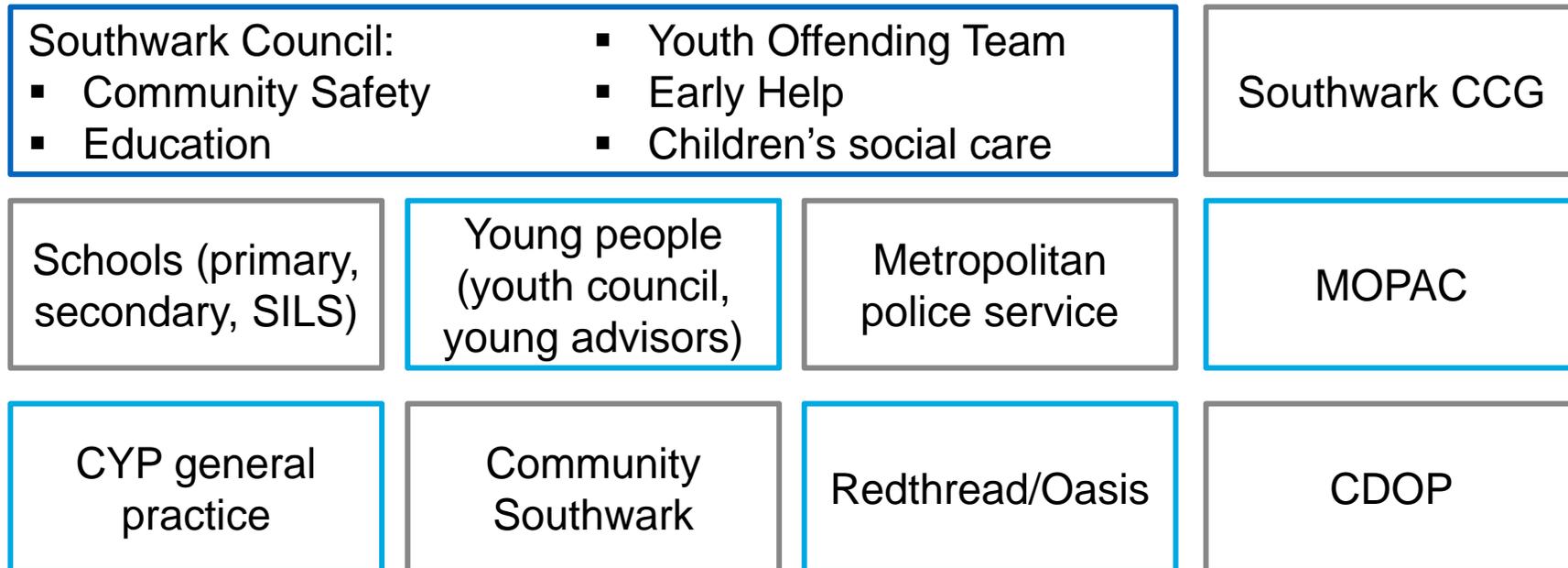
# Identify opportunities to prevent youth violence, using a public health approach

## THE JSNA

- **Introduction:** why is SYV an important issue in Southwark and what is the public health approach
- **Policy Context:** relevant national and local policy
- **The Local Picture:** epidemiology derived from data from Met, YOS, and possibly other health sources (emergency dept., ambulance)
- **The Local Response:** what are our current prevention approaches
- **Community & Stakeholder Views:** what do our stakeholders think, what are the barriers, what are the data not capturing
- **The Evidence Base:** what works
- **Summary & Recommendations:** what more should we do

# This report aims to identify opportunities to prevent youth violence, using a public health approach

## STAKEHOLDERS



### We want to hear:

- Is there anyone we're missing?
- What would be the best way to engage with our stakeholders?

**Find out more at**  
**[southwark.gov.uk/JSNA](https://southwark.gov.uk/JSNA)**

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