

Personal Development Resources

Safeguarding - Youth Violence and Gang Crime

Quick Guide



Safeguarding - Youth Violence and Gang Crime



What is a gang?

A gang is a group of three or more people who may be involved in a crime, drugs or violence. Many children and young people think they are in a gang, but this will often just be a group of friends.

The word 'gang' was historically defined as a group of men that worked together, but nowadays the term is generally used to describe groups of youths on the street who may be involved in vandalism, organised crime, dealing drugs or other illegal activities.

Street gangs that are organised usually have a clear leader or hierarchy running the group, and the members meet either to socialise or to engage in certain activities together. Gang members will often have something in common, be it their ethnicity, religion, culture or class.



Identity

A gang may choose to have a unique identity to distinguish themselves from the crowd.

Some examples of this are:

- Dress code – style, colour
- Tattoos
- Jewellery
- Graffiti tagging
- Nicknames
- Language
- Handshake
- Marking territory



What else could a gang be called?

They may not in fact call themselves a gang.

Currently other names are favoured, such as:

- Posse
- Crew or krew
- My boys or my girlz
- Clan or klan
- Hommies
- Bros
- Breadrin's
- Cozs
- Buddies



The Law

There are no laws banning gangs or gang membership. But there are laws that clearly prohibit the criminal activities often associated with street gangs, and if an offender is involved or part of a gang, this could lead to a longer jail sentence.

Illegal activities include:

- Carrying or possessing drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy
- Keeping or carrying a gun without a licence, which includes replica or imitation fire arms
- Carrying or using a knife, even with no intention of using it



Risks of gang membership

Being part of a gang will put children more at risk of:

- Being involved in or committing a crime
- Dealing or taking drugs
- Being involved in other illegal activities such as fighting, dog fighting, or gambling
- Being put in prison or in a young offenders institution
- They will also be more at risk of becoming a victim of violence, which may lead to serious injury or even death



Indicators of gang membership

Indicators of gang membership:

- Stopping or dropping out of hobbies or clubs they're involved in
- School reports dramatically change
- Not doing as they are told, for example staying out later than scheduled
- Not telling you where they are going, who they are with and what they are doing
- Sudden extra money, new gadgets, clothes or trainers and other unexplained amenities
- New habits, for example smoking, drinking, dealing or taking drugs, taken an interest in illegal activities
- Adopting a change of name, or new nickname



What should I do if I suspect gang membership?

If you have any concern that an individual may be involved in a gang, contact your Safeguarding & Prevent Lead, Stacy Preston on 07876 824157

Further support



Family Lives – 0808 800 2222



Childline – 0800 1111



Victim Support – 020 7820 0007



NSPCC – 0808 800 5000