

HYPE's "Street Politics" Knife & Gun Crime Summit; Report

WHY HOLD THIS SUMMIT?

Since November 2004 the Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group have been working with a core group of 40 young people from across the borough of Haringey. Its first mission was to gauge the feelings of the young people on the crime within the borough and what solutions they feel they can be implemented. These young people range between 10 – 21 years and mainly derive from the highest crime rate wards within the borough. Many of them fell into various categories of social exclusion including those known to the YOT, looked after in care and various inclusion/behaviour programmes within the borough.

The young people stated that they felt the type of crime and the levels of youth, gun and knife crime in the borough were reaching an undesirable limit. Most feared becoming victims of crime and all did not feel confident or satisfied with the services of the Police. The group's youth project HYPE (Haringey's Young People Empowered) therefore decided to launch a knife and gun crime initiative

Members of HYPE produced a number of ideas on different initiatives which could be used to raise awareness of issues surrounding knife and gun crime within Haringey's youth, as well as providing possible solutions to these issues. Top of this list of suggestions was the idea that the project should hold a knife and gun crime summit for young people in Haringey. This suggestion was then signed off for development by HYPE's Young Peoples Steering Group as well as the HYPE's Partnership Steering Group.

PLANNING OF THE SUMMIT

HYPE's Young Peoples Steering Group were then asked to decide what the project should aim to achieve through the summit, what the summit should involve and who should be targeted to attend the summit. It was decided that through the summit, the project should aim to:

- 1)** Educate young people in Haringey on the *real* effects and consequences of knife and gun crime.
- 2)** Provide young people with the opportunity to voice *their* opinions on why young people are becoming involved in knife and gun crime.
- 3)** Produce a number of possible solutions to knife and gun crime within Haringey's young community.

It was decided that the summit should involve a number of guest speakers, various discussion groups centred on knife and gun crime, and some entertainment. It was also decided that the target audience for this summit

should be for 100 young people aged between 13-17 who are already young offenders or those who are at risk of offending.

Venue:

HYPE's Young Peoples Steering Group were then asked to decide on a preferred date and venue for the summit. The summit was originally planned to take place at the Dominion Centre, Wood Green on Wednesday 15th of August 2007. However, it was suggested by HYPE's Partnership Steering Group that the summit should take place during term-time in order to encourage a fuller participation. It was also suggested that the summit should take place in Tottenham rather than Wood Green, as it was believed that young people from Wood Green would be more likely to travel to Tottenham, than young people from Tottenham were to travel to Wood Green. These suggestions were agreed upon by the HYPE's Steering Group and the summit was rescheduled to take place at the College of North East London (CONEL) on 3rd November 2007.

Participants:

HYPE's Young Peoples Steering Group then produced a list of individuals who they thought should be involved in the summit e.g. hosts, guest speakers, entertainers etc..... The group was then able to cut this list down and produce a rough programme for the day. The group also produced a list of 10 themes which would be used for the break-out discussion groups. The group then secured the services of a number of speakers, entertainers and discussion group facilitators, and were then able to construct a final programme for the day.

Promotion:

HYPE's Young Peoples Steering Group then decided on an Action Plan on how to advertise the summit. It was agreed that a flyer should be produced, and distributed to Haringey's young people by members of HYPE. This flyer was then produced in early September and originally distributed to young people all over Haringey at the many events held during Peace Week. HYPE members then further circulated these flyers by going into various youth clubs, schools and other youth related agencies. A total of 1250 flyers were circulated all with a freepost address attached. A total of 76 young people registered after being given a flyer for this event, and a number of inquiries were made.

It was also agreed that the project should ask for the support of its partner agencies in providing a number of young people to attend the summit, an idea which was agreed upon by HYPE's Partnership Steering Group. Numerous e-mails were sent out to all of the partners as well as key figures from other youth groups, asking them to register young people for this event. A total of 53 young people were registered to attend the summit by the project's partner agencies.

In order to ensure the safety of all attendees, a search arch was put in place at the venue accompanied by an amnesty bin. Haringey Community and

Police Consultative Group also provided 10 stewards to assist with the flow of traffic at the event.

THE SUMMIT

Presentations:

A number of guest speakers with different portfolios relating to knife and gun crime matters were invited to attend the event. Below are detailed descriptions of each individual's presentation.

1. Chief Inspector Rod Charles of CO19 – Chief Inspector Rod Charles of the Metropolitan Police Service's Firearms Unit CO19 gave a brief presentation centred on the procedures that CO19 follow when they have been informed that someone is in possession of a knife or gun and may be about to use it. He explained that CO19 are often called out to incidents involving imitation firearms. He also explained that carrying an imitation firearm could lead to just as harsh of a sentence as carrying a real firearm. He then showed some images of the severe damage which has been done to people in the past with the use of knives and guns. These images were very powerful and seemed to have a great effect on the young people present.

2. Ann Oakes-Odger – Ann Oakes-Odger is a mother who sadly had her son taken away from her due to knife crime. She spoke briefly about her son, and the events that lead to his murder. She then went on to speak about the devastating effect that his death had on her and her family. Her speech would have given the young people an insight into just how much pain is caused by knife and gun crime.

3. Richard Trump – Richard Trump is an ex-offender who has spent half of his life in prison due to a number of firearm related offences, most notably for an armed robbery which involved the murder of a security guard. Richard spoke about his fascination with guns and the gang lifestyle. He talked about his rise to becoming a well respected member of a well known biker gang. However, he then spoke about the devastating isolation of years spent in prison and the effect that this has had on his relationships. He lost his wife and missed more than half of his child's childhood. He then spoke about how for these reasons, he decided to turn his life around and try to prevent young people from following in his footsteps. The young people listened intently to Richards talk, and during lunch-time many of the young people were seen approaching him to ask further questions.

4. Chief Inspector Shaun De Souza Brady – Haringey's Chief Inspector Shaun De Souza Brady then spoke about knife and gun crime within Haringey itself. He spoke about the increase in young people becoming involved in knife and gun crime and the need for more support to be offered to these young people. He also spoke briefly about the conflict between different areas within the borough and the need for that issue to be addressed.

These four speakers then took part in a question and answer panel in which the young people asked questions of the speakers. This lasted for about 30 minutes.

BREAK-OUT DISCUSSION GROUPS AND FEEDBACK:

A number of discussion groups took place during the summit, and the young people then feedback the results of these discussion groups. The outcomes of these discussion groups are as follows:

1. The ripple Effect of Knife and Gun Crime:

- The government, the Police and the Customs services need to work together to decrease the supply/availability of guns for young people.
- The government, the police and local authorities need to recognise that young people are the future of our community, and thus provide them with the support they need in order to flourish.

2. The Effects of Parenting on Knife and Gun Crime:

- Parents need to stop comparing “their days” to the present day as they are completely different. Parents instead need to be educated on the issues which young people face today.
- Parents need to be more trusting of the children.
- In order to learn how young people live, parents should spend a day in the life of a young person (Youth Shadowing).
- Parents need to accept that girls play a big part in youth crime and anti-social behaviour; it is not just the boys.
- In order to prevent their children from becoming involved in knife or gun crime, parents should fully support and encourage their interests.

3. The Link Between Drugs and Knife and Gun Crime:

- Young people are attracted to drugs because; it’s fashionable, it’s part of youth culture, it helps them to socialise/interact with their peers and they can make a lot of money from selling drugs.
- There needs to be more facilities made available for young people. There are not enough youth clubs in Haringey.
- More mentors should be made available for young people who do or may be at risk of having substance use/misuse issues. Mentors should be made available at all youth clubs and schools.
- Parents need to be educated properly about drugs, so that they can then teach their children about them or spot when one of their children may be taking drugs.
- More educational and employment opportunities need to be made available for young people in Haringey, especially those who get excluded from school as this often leads to drug use and crime.
- Central Government need to seriously consider the future of educational units for students who have been excluded from school. These units do

not benefit the young people and often worsen their behaviour. They should instead be put on apprenticeship courses at local colleges

4. Postcode/turf wars:

- Young people join gangs for protection or to feel as though they are a part of something.
- The local authorities need to identify the reasons for young people joining gangs and then work with other agencies to prevent these problems from occurring again.
- Parents and Central Government staff need to be educated on the reality of “street life”, by having more interaction with youth workers and young people.
- People in the community need to engage with young people and build up trusting relationships with them.
- There needs to be more positive mentors/role models for parents and young people.

5. Street Law:

- Street Law is an unwritten set of rules which many young people in Haringey must follow. One of the major rules within street law is “don’t snitch”. Breaking these rules could lead to a young person being harmed.
- Many young people do not report crime because they are scared of the consequences of this e.g. being attacked by the perpetrator and/or their peers. New law should therefore be introduced to allow for more anonymity for those who report crime.
- Young people need to be fully educated on the consequences of street law.
- There needs to be more constructive activities and opportunities for young people.
- There needs to be more activities to build relations between young people and the police.

The remainder of the afternoon session was taken up with entertainment. The BAP Theatre provided a brilliant performance of drama based on knife and gun crime. Other entertainers included comedian Jason Patterson, and musicians Rankin S and E.C.

Evaluation: (Please refer to the attached evaluation slides)

A minimum of 40 young people attended this summit, with 80% staying until the end. 52% of the attendees were male and 48% female. 80% of the young people who attended rated their learning experience as either good or excellent. 89% of the young people rated the discussion groups as either good or excellent.

86% of the young people stated that they either enjoyed or really enjoyed the event. 90% of these young people said that they would like to attend further events like this, with 68% also stating that they would be interested in becoming a member of HYPE.

The young people also voted on what they would like to happen as a result of this summit. 55% said that they would like to see more long-term youth projects being run in Haringey. 21% would like to see more interactive relations building activities between young people and the police. 14% believe that there should be more educational programmes run regarding knife and gun crime. Finally, 10% would like the police to enforce zero-tolerance policing of knife and gun crime.

SUMMARY

Did we achieve our outcomes?

1) To educate young people in Haringey on the *real* effects and consequences of knife and gun crime.

Response: The project successfully educated a number of Haringey's young people on the real effects and consequences of knife and gun crime. However, the project intended to educate a larger number of young people on this matter.

2) To provide young people with the opportunity to voice their opinions on why young people are becoming involved in knife and gun crime.

Response: All of the young people who participated in the break-out discussion groups were able to voice their opinions as to why young people are becoming involved in knife and gun crime.

3) To produce a number of possible solutions to knife and gun crime within Haringey's young community.

Response: The discussion groups did produce a number of possible solutions to knife and gun crime in Haringey. However, these suggestions were made by small groups of young people.

Observations:

It was noted that if there were a greater level of attendance it would have enabled higher participation borough wide. Some of those who attended the summit provided HYPE with feedback on how they felt this could have been achieved.

1) The project relied on the support of the Partnership groups to bring young people along. This should not always be the case in the future. The project should always ask for their support, but look at other methods, such as enhancing the participation of its own membership of young people.

2) It is not recommended to hold a similar event on a Saturday because young people view this as their recreation time.

3) Instead of asking the young people to come to us we should bring the event to them, as this would encourage a fuller participation.

What Next?

- Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group will be widely circulating this report on behalf of HYPE.
- HYPE will continue to run its Young People and Police Relations activity programme, a copy of which will be attached.
- HYPE will produce a business plan for 2008/09, which will outline the projects and activities HYPE plans to run during this time. This will include producing educational workshops, presentations and a DVD.

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