Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults at risk of Gang Activity

Multi-agency Protocol

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1. Introduction

The safeguarding risks posed by violent gang crime are a consistent concern for Manchester. Gang culture has been a prominent issue since the late 1980’s and is still a major issue for all agencies working to safeguard children and adults. This is evident in the learning from Serious Case Reviews in relation to children suffering fatal injuries as a consequence of firearms discharges and local research with affected females by Race On The Agenda.

This protocol refers predominantly to children and young people but it is recognised that vulnerable adults may also be targeted by gangs either as members or associates and require statutory intervention. Adult girlfriends, sisters and mothers of gang members are at particular risk of violence, especially sexual violence and young people will require protection during transition from child to adult hood.

Manchester Safeguarding Children’s Board serious case reviews have identified a number of areas for improvement when managing safeguarding concerns relating to gang activity including:

- A lack of information sharing between partner agencies
- Inadequate joined up planning around the child
- Thorough risk assessments were not taking place
- Agencies did not understand the risk factors relating to violent gang crime.

One of the key recommendations identified following the shooting of Child B in 2006 was for Manchester to develop an increasingly collaborative approach to safeguarding young people involved in gangs. This approach continues to underpin Manchester’s partnership response.
The most significant and well known gangs are primarily located in the Central and South Manchester areas and the average age range is estimated to be between 15 years old to 44 years old. What is becoming more apparent is that younger children are being drawn into the gang lifestyle for a number of reasons including; Peer pressure, family connections, protection due to their post code and the perception that the lifestyle brings wealth.

Of significant concern in Manchester is the familial impact of gang activity. Many young people report becoming involved in gangs due to experiencing older siblings, fathers or mothers being actively involved or associating with gangs. The risk is also prevalent to younger children who may not even be at an age to actively become involved in the activity but are at risk where they reside due to a family member being involved in gangs. This creates a risk of harm toward these children not only out in their community but in their homes as rival gang members may seek to take revenge on an opposing gang member and the child gets caught in the cross fire.

Research has identified that poor parenting capacity and chaotic home environments are a significant risk factor for young people becoming involved in Gangs. Gang members target young males and females by offering them food and money where this is absent in home.

The young males and females may see this person as someone who ‘cares’ as they are providing them with things that they do not get from their parents. This is just one process of recruiting young people in to gangs by using grooming methods.

Absent fathers and lack of a positive male role model are also a significant concern and a significant risk factor. Older gang members present themselves to young males as offering ‘guidance’ and they fill the gap in this young person’s life.

The No Secrets definition of a vulnerable adult is:
“Someone who is using or in need of Community Care Services because of learning or physical disability, older age, drug or alcohol dependency or physical or mental illness or unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation”

Vulnerable adults may or may not come from chaotic home environments which increases their risk of being exploited. In addition to this, if they are not able to protect themselves and lack capacity to make safe life style choices due to learning disability, mental health problems or the effects of substance misuse for example then they may be targeted by gangs for sexual or material exploitation. This may include using them within criminal activities including storing weapons or drugs at their property.

Gang related sexual exploitation is a growing area of concern nationally and has significant safeguarding implications. The Rota report ‘Female Voice in Violence 2011’ recommended that gang related exploitation and violence should be seen as a child protection and for adults, a domestic abuse issue. Abuse of vulnerable adults would also come under adult protection procedures.

Many females are at risk of being exploited both violently and/or sexually due to their family and peer gang associations. Many of these women do not recognise that they are a risk and may ‘idolise’ the male gang members who they perceive as having ‘status’ and ‘wealth’. Others may not be able to see any safe way out and know that the repercussions of telling anyone about what is happening will result in further rape, physical violence or the lingering emotional effects of being branded or gossiped about by their peers. Some females, from BME communities in particular, may not disclose the abuse to their parents for fear that they will be perceived to have brought shame on their family and increased their risk of honour based violence and forced marriage.

In recognition of the common thread of child sexual exploitation running through this work we have combined the management role for the Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy (MMAGS) and our Child Sexual Exploitation response ‘Protect.’
is also a formal link between the Safeguarding Boards and the Domestic Abuse Forum as those over 16 years who are being exploited or abused and come under the definition of domestic abuse may require protection through domestic abuse specialist services.

This is a revised protocol which reflects the learning experienced from working with Gang Members and the changes in services available since the implementation of the MMAGS strategy in 2001 and the former Safeguarding Protocol.

**1.1 Relevant Legislation**

This Protocol should be considered as a supplementary tool to be used in conjunction with National Legislation and Guidance. It does not replace existing Safeguarding Procedures.

The following Legislation and Guidance should be utilised by all agencies involved in Safeguarding.

**Every Child Matters** identifies the Five Outcomes considered essential for all children and young people to have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. The framework outlines the requirements of all agencies working with young people and families to ensure that all children have the opportunity to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

**The Children Act 2004** sections 10 and 11 outline the statutory requirements each agency working with Children and Families must adhere to, to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding.
The Guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* emphasises the necessity for interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This Guidance has a specific section relating to young people affected by gang activity.

The DCSF produced supplementary guidance to Working Together in 2010 called *Safeguarding Children and young people who may be affected by gang activity.* Anyone working with young people involved or at risk from gang activity should use this tool for guidance.

Adult victims can be protected through the Human Rights Act 1998, The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 and civil protection orders for example. Vulnerable adults aged over 16 can be protected using the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the Mental Health Act 1983 and those over 18 years of age by the No Secrets statutory guidance 2000.

Information sharing is critical in multi agency working and should be made explicitly clear under the terms of section 29 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and sections 5, 17 and 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

**1.2 Protocol**

This protocol has been developed to ensure consistency in the management of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are affected by gang activity either as victims or perpetrators.

The protocol will aim to:

> Ensure the delivery of a partnership response in safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults affected by gang activity whilst outlining the accountability of each agency involved.
• Identify young people and vulnerable adults at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour, emergent criminality and gang activity and identify an appropriate response.

• Enable professionals to empower young people, individuals and families to make safe choices and improve the outcomes for all people identified at risk.

The accompanying practice guidance is based on the experiences of the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB), Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB), the Domestic Abuse Forum and Manchester Multi-Agency Gun and Gangs Strategy (MMAGS). It includes research on the risk factors associated with the likelihood of involvement in gangs.

In September 2011 the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership endorsed the co-location of the MMAGS team with GMP Gang Unit, The Xcalibre Task Force at Greenhey’s Police Station and the plan to draw on and enhance principles of integrated offender management. The model will identify and focus upon high risk gang members within the context of their family. The Integrated Gang Management Unit (IGMU) was established in January 2012 and is co-located with the ‘Protect’ Team providing a developing ‘Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub’ (MASH) for effective risk management, information sharing and intervention.

The purpose of the unit is to manage complex gang specific cases and provide an intensive package of support in partnership with other agencies to minimise the risks to young people, families, and any vulnerable adults whilst assisting individuals to move on from the gang lifestyle.

This approach will encompass enforcement, prevention and early intervention with safeguarding taking primacy.

Referrals are brought to the team by the core agencies involved, Children’s Services, YOS, Probation and GMP. Together the operational management team can identify the cases considered high risk, not just due to the level of criminality but primarily
due to the safeguarding concerns that a gang members behaviour presents to him/herself and their family.

Cases where domestic abuse is identified (in over 16s) can be risk assessed by the team or any other professional using the CAADA DASH Risk Indicator Checklist. Very high risk cases are referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) or low to medium risk cases to Manchester Women’s Aid as per the local guidance. Any vulnerable adult should also be referred to adult services through the Contact Centre.

The co-location of these core agencies in IGMU enables more robust risk assessment to be undertaken and an intensive package of support to be implemented. Professionals from schools, health and our voluntary sector partners can also refer into the team for prevention work.

Prevention and family support is a crucial element to this team as to successfully challenge the future of gangs in Manchester we need to skill up and support parents to identify concerns with their children or a vulnerable adult and enable them to appropriately challenge the behaviour within the home environment.

Where it is identified that parents are not discharging their responsibilities this needs to be addressed by the appropriate Child and Adult Protection Process.

1.3 Identification and Risk Factors

Definition Of A Gang

1b. Definition of a Gang
The following is the agreed definition for Manchester

A gang:
A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people

See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group

Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence

Identify with or lay claim over territory

Have some form of identifying structural feature

In conflict with other, similar, gangs.

Current definition supported by XTF 2012

“Dying to Belong” document from Centre for Social Justice

**A gang member:**

*Is someone who has self-identified themselves as being a member of a gang (as above), e.g. through verbal statements, tattoos, correspondence, graffiti etc, and this is corroborated by police, partner agencies, or community intelligence.***

**A gang associate:**

*Is someone who offends with gang members (as above); or who is associated by police, partner agencies, or community intelligence, with gang members; or who has displayed, through conduct or behaviour, a specific desire or intent to become a member of a gang.***

**1.4 The Tell Tale Signs**

Below are some of the signs that would indicate that a young person or vulnerable adult maybe involved or at risk of becoming involved in gang activity:

- Child withdrawn from family;
- Sudden loss of interest in school. Decline in attendance or academic Achievement;
- started to use new or unknown slang words;
• holds unexplained money or possessions or can not explain where large sums of money have gone (financial exploitation);
• stays out unusually late without reason;
• Sudden change in appearance – dressing in a particular style or ‘uniform’ similar to that of other young people they hang around with, including a particular colour;
• dropped out of positive activities;
• New nickname;
• Unexplained physical injuries;
• Graffiti style ‘tags’ on possessions, school books, walls;
• Constantly talking about another young person or adult who seems to have a lot of influence over them;
• Broken off with old friends and hangs around with one group of people;
• increased use of social networking sites;
• started adopting certain codes of group behaviour e.g. ways of talking and hand signs;
• expressing aggressive or intimidating views towards other groups of young people, some of whom may have been friends in the past;
  • Signs of sexual exploitation e.g pregnancy, abortion (perhaps forced), sexually transmitted infections and injuries.
  • Signs of psychological effects of exploitation – depression and suicide attempts for example.
• scared when entering certain areas; and
• concerned by the presence of unknown youths in their neighbourhoods.
  (DCSF, Safeguarding Children &Young People who maybe affected by Gang Activity, 2010)

Victims of gang related activity could come under the remit of domestic violence services if their situation meets the following Government definition:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can
encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional."

2. **Practice Guidance**

2.1 **Early Identification**

The most effective method to prevent people becoming involved in gangs is early identification. This will enable preventative services to be implemented at an early stage to support the young person and their family to make positive life choices and distance themselves from gang related activity.

The Common Assessment Framework (MCAF) is a key tool that can be used for early intervention.

The MCAF assessment can be used by all practitioners to holistically assess, share information and implement appropriate support at an early stage to prevent the escalation of any risk factors or concerns.

(For assistance in undertaking the MCAF please see Appendix 1, Continuum of needs and responses)

In undertaking a MCAF if it is identified that a young person is demonstrating some of the ‘Tell Tale Sign’ behaviours and there are concerns that they maybe on the periphery of gang activity then it is recommended that the author of the MCAF refers to the Safeguarding Gangs Group chaired by the Team Manager of the Integrated Gang Management Unit.

Any Lead Professional undertaking a MCAF can contact the IGMU for advice and guidance.

In undertaking the MCAF if it is identified that the young person is at risk of or has suffered significant harm then a Safeguarding Referral should be made to the Manchester Contact Centre requesting Children’s Services Intervention.
It is recommended that the author of the MCAF consults with the IGMU Social Worker prior to making a referral to Children’s Services to ensure that the threshold criteria for statutory intervention has been met. The decision to undertake Statutory Intervention will be made by the First Response Team Manager.

In circumstances where the risk of harm is clearly identifiable and any delay in making the referral would place the young person at further risk of harm it is recommended that the referrer makes the referral without delaying for consultation with the IGMU social worker but makes contact post referral in a timely manner.

A MCAF or child safeguarding investigation may identify the presence of a vulnerable adult in the family. They may not be experiencing abuse directly but are exposed to it in their family environment – for example, adult children with a learning disability or an older person who is living in the family home where another family member is the primary victim and is experiencing abuse. It is crucial to recognise that exposure to abuse can, as with children, still present serious short and long term harm to adults. It is also an important reminder that a whole family approach is optimum where both adults and children’s professionals not only address the needs of the person on a care plan but also those of the wider family members.

Where a vulnerable adult is identified as being at risk, an alert can be put through to the contact centre and where appropriate the multi agency safeguarding adults procedures initiated. Further advice and guidance can be obtained from adult safeguarding leads and IGMU.

2.2 Safeguarding Gangs Group

The purpose of the meeting is to identify and discuss those young people who are on the periphery of gang activity. The aim will be to implement an appropriate support
plan for the young person and their family or any vulnerable adult to prevent the escalation of the gang related activity and the associated risks. A lead professional will be identified to implement the plan.

If a professional has a concern about a young person or a vulnerable adult being on the periphery of gang activity but the behaviour does not place them at risk of significant harm then it would be recommended that they are referred to the IGMU for discussion at the Safeguarding Gangs Group.

The agencies who attend at the meeting are as follows:

IGMU (Social Worker, YOS worker, XTF Intelligence Officer and Prevention Worker)  
Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT)  
Youth Offending Service (YOS) as appropriate  
Children’s Services as appropriate  
Health as appropriate  
Probation Service as appropriate  
Greater Manchester Police (GMP) as appropriate  
Connexions  
Family Recovery Service  
Protect Social Worker  
8til Late Mentors  
Adult services as appropriate

Agencies currently involved with the young person or agencies who have previously worked with the family and who have appropriate contributions to make, will also be invited to attend.

The group will develop an appropriate support plan to be implemented and a lead professional will be identified to co-ordinate the plan and services required. In forming the plan it is essential that the needs of the young person and the family are considered to ensure a holistic plan is developed.
The meeting will be held at the Integrated Gang Management Unit, Green Heys Police Station.

2.3 Support and Interventions

IGMU

There is a prevention worker based within the Integrated Gang Management Unit who will work with Children, Adults and Families to support them moving on from their involvement in gang related activity. This will include supporting young people and families to access education, employment, housing and positive diversionary activities. The prevention worker will also be able to identify and signpost young people and families on to the most appropriate services including community interventions to meet their holistic needs. This will include services such as family support, parenting groups and positive youth provisions.

To access support and intervention from the IGMU you can contact the team on 0161 232 0540 or email mmags.team@manchester.gov.uk

The 8 til Late Project

The 8 ‘til Late Project is an early intervention project for children aged between 8 and 16 years old and are deemed to be ‘at risk ‘ of joining gangs / committing crime and using weapons. The criteria for referral to the project are that children have to be:

a. Aged between 8 and 16 years old
b. Have siblings / family members/ friends involved in gangs
c. Affected by gang violence
d. Showing an attraction to gangs / weapons

A mentor will work with a young person undertaking one to one sessions addressing the gang related activity. They will also involve the young person in group work programmes, sporting activities and school support to divert them from participating in the behaviours.

The mentors also work in primary and secondary schools delivering preventative work to children around the consequences of joining gangs and advise staff and teachers on gang related issues.

To access support from the 8 till Late Project you can contact the IGMU team manager on 0161 232 0540 or email mmags.team@manchester.gov.uk

Vulnerable Adult Information Sharing Meetings

Greater Manchester Police are piloting information sharing meetings to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable adults from anti social behaviour and other abuse. This may be an option which adult services consider after referral into the Manchester Contact Centre when an alert about a vulnerable adult has been raised.

2.4 Significant Harm and Statutory Intervention

Where there is concern that a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of or has suffered significant harm as a consequence of gang related activity then a Safeguarding Referral should be made to the Manchester contact centre on the following:

Contact Centre Telephone – 0161 2345001 Fax – 0161 2558266
Email - mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk

The concept of significant harm should be considered as outlined in The Children Act 1989 or No Secrets 2000 for Vulnerable Adults. However the Home Office has
outlined ‘harm’ within a gang context within their supplementary guidance

Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be affected by gang activity.

The key definitions are as follows:

- Not involved in gangs but living in an area where gangs are active, which can have a negative impact on their ability to be safe, healthy, enjoy and achieve, make positive contribution and achieve economic well being;

- Not involved in gangs, but at risk of becoming victims of gangs;

- Not involved in gangs but at risk of becoming drawn in, for example, siblings or children of known gang members

- Gang involved and at risk of harm through their gang related activities (e.g. drug supply, weapon use, sexual exploitation and risk of attack from own rival gang members)

(DCSF, 2010)

If it is identified that any of the above applies to a young person or vulnerable adult then a Safeguarding referral should be made to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children’s or Adult’s Services intervention.

The following incidents should also result in an automatic referral to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children’s or Adult’s Services intervention.

2.4.1 Letter of Concern

GMP will issue a young person and their parent/guardian with a letter of concern advising them that they are at risk of harm due to their behaviour.
In order to be eligible the person must be a juvenile and either:

- A (suspected) gang member
- A gang associate
- At risk from gang activity
- At risk of gang related sexual exploitation

If it is determined that a young person is to be issued with a letter of concern the best practice approach is for this to done with a joint visit from the police and the IGMU Social Worker.

**This will trigger an automatic referral to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children’s Services Intervention.**

GMP will also work with adult services to develop a protection plan if a vulnerable adult is at risk at harm due to their behaviour.

(For an example of the letter of concern please see Appendix 3)

**2.4.2 Gang Injunctions**

Gang injunctions are a power created by the Policing and Crime Act 2009 which enable the police and local authorities to apply for an injunction against an individual age 14 -17 years old to prevent gang-related violence.

The objectives of the injunctions are to:

- prevent acts of serious violence occurring
- break down gang culture and prevent young people’s behaviour escalating
- Provide an opportunity for local agencies to engage with at risk young people and develop effective strategies for them to exit the lifestyle.
One element of the injunction is to enable agencies to implement Positive Requirements as part of the order. This could include engagement with education, employment or other services deemed appropriate dependant on the young person’s needs assessment.

When a young person receives or is considered for an Injunction, a referral should be made to Children’s Services and any other agencies working with the young person informed not only to advise of the risk but to enable agencies to contribute to a support plan.

This should trigger an automatic referral to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children's Services Intervention. Any decision to apply for a Gang Injunction in relation to a child should be approved by the Assistant Director, Safeguarding Provision, in consultation with the appropriate Divisional Commander, normally the Chair of the Violent Gangs Board.

**2.4.3 Threat to Life Warnings**

If a Young person or Adult residing with/or having regular contact with a young person receives a Threat to Life warning, a Strategy discussion/meeting will be convened and chaired by the IGMU Children’s Services Team Manager.

The outcome of which will automatically result in a referral to the relevant Children’s Services Area social work team for an Initial Assessment and/or Core Assessment to be completed once the imminent risks have been addressed. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Procedures will be initiated for any affected vulnerable adults.

**2.4.4 Police Protection Powers**
Section 46(1) of the Children Act 1989 enables a police officer, who has reasonable cause to believe that if a child would be likely to suffer significant harm, to place the child under Police Protection and remove them to a place of safety.

A Designated Officer, inspector rank or above will need to authorise the use of police protection powers and where possible consult with Children’s Services as part of the decision making process.

Where a young person is involved or at risk of harm due to gang related concerns consultation should take place with the IGMU regarding appropriate places of safety for the young person to be taken to. This will enable an assessment of the young person’s gang affiliation, age and holistic needs to be considered when identifying an appropriate place of safety.

Wherever possible, the child or young person’s home will be the place of safety.

In exceptional circumstances the police station may be deemed the appropriate place of safety.

This should trigger an automatic referral to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children’s Services Intervention.

If a Vulnerable Adult is at risk of harm then Police and Adult Services will discuss the appropriate powers of intervention to protect that person and apply them immediately. Protection may be gained through the Court of Protection for adults lacking capacity, through Domestic Violence Protection Orders and other civil remedies for example. Proportionality and empowerment of the vulnerable adult to protect themselves will be key to this process.

2.4.5 Media and Internet Risks

A significant development in the Gang Culture has been use of social networking.
The numerous social net-working websites also allows gang members and their associates the opportunity to declare ‘cyber-war’ on each other, providing a vehicle which fuels inter-gang rivalry. This allows gang members to access forums whereby their violent crimes and sexual assaults continue to cause pain and suffering to their victims.

Recently the Police have come across specific websites that provide professional filming and editing of rap and hip hop music videos. This has been seen and clearly shows rival gangs and gang members from South Manchester in dispute with each other and rapping about previous shootings, murders, incidents and gang allegiance etc.

Due to the risk of harm presented by this activity if it is identified that a young person is involved in any Rap Video’s or Social Media sites promoting gang rivalry or appearing to be the victim of the rivalry it is essential that a referral is made to the IGMU for consultation.

If it is identified that this footage places a young person at risk of harm then this should trigger an automatic referral to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children’s Services Intervention.

MSCB and MSAB have engaged in wider work to promote e safety in schools and colleges and to develop awareness amongst children, parents and vulnerable adults. Sexual exploitation and control of children, young people and adults can be threatened and steered through the internet by posting sexual pictures and video clips of females in particular.

2.4.6 Exploitation by Gangs

Both males and females can be exploited by gang members sexually and/or violently. In Manchester the experience of practitioners has found that females are very rarely granted ‘gang member’ status and are more likely to be pressurised into associating
with gang members through intimidation and pressure or their perception that it will give them status.

In some cases females have been exploited for sex, forced to carry weapons and/or drugs. Some vulnerable adults are particularly vulnerable to financial and sexual exploitation.

Once a female is involved in gang activity it can be very difficult for them to exit due to the knowledge they may have obtained about criminal activities which makes them a threat to the gang or due to being perceived as belonging to a gang or gang member. This is particularly so if their family member belongs to a gang. They may be isolated by both male and female peers and often there is more than one perpetrator involved. Mixed with this may be a sense of shame, knowledge that they have been associated with criminal activity and poor self worth which results in a low number of reports about abuse from females.

For further details see the Race On the Agenda, Female Voice In Violence Report, (2011) where a number of women and girls across the country confidentially disclosed their experiences.

If it is identified that a young person has been exploited in anyway or is the perpetrator of the exploitation this should trigger an automatic referral to the Manchester Contact Centre for Children’s Services Intervention.

If a non vulnerable adult has been exploited then domestic and sexual violence services may be appropriate to assist them. A vulnerable adult should be referred to the Manchester Contact Centre and initiation of Vulnerable Adults procedures.

1. Assessment and Intervention for Children

When a referral has been made to the contact centre for Children’s Services intervention the First Response Team will make enquiries to determine if the threshold criteria have been met for a Statutory Initial Assessment.
In circumstances where there are gang related concerns the best practice approach is for the referrer to contact the IGMU for consultation and advice about the level of risk before the referral is made. The IGMU social worker can then advise if a referral to Children’s Services is required.

In circumstances where consultation with the IGMU has not taken place it is recommended that the First Response Team contacts the IGMU social worker for advice and guidance regarding the level of risk prior to making a decision regarding the requirement for statutory involvement. Consultation with the IGMU will enable an informed decision to be made.

When it is identified that an area social work team will undertake a statutory Initial and/or Core Assessment it is the responsibility of the Allocated Social Worker to refer to the IGMU for advice, guidance and support in undertaking the assessment.

The IGMU social worker will provide additional support in all gang related case work to ensure that the most up to date Intelligence is shared enabling there to be a robust risk assessment and support plan in place addressing the gang specific issues.

If the young person is an open case to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) it is the responsibility of the YOS worker to refer the young person into the IGMU for the IGMU YOS worker to undertake gang specific intervention and up date the YOS worker on the most up to date intelligence to ensure there is a robust risk assessment and support plan in place addressing the gang specific issues.

In undertaking assessments professionals should always assess the needs of both the young person and the family collaboratively. Assessing a young person in isolation from their family will limit the success in enabling a young person to distance themselves from gang activity and to make positive life choices. Family members maybe both a protective and/or a risk factor and this needs to be considered as part of any assessment.
In undertaking assessments it is identified that the young person requires support and intervention but has not met the significant harm threshold the case will be managed under **Child In Need Case Planning**.

If the threshold has been met for significant harm then procedures should be followed as outlined in National and Local Safeguarding Guidance to initiate an **Initial Child Protection Conference**.

In some circumstances it maybe assessed that the young person is at imminent harm within their home environment and consequently a decision made for them to be placed under Police Protection or to become a Looked After Child under the Children Act 1989.

Professionals should contact the IGMU to seek advice and guidance with regard to the assessment of risk.

(For assistance in undertaking assessments please see Appendix 2, The Triangle of Development, Parenting Capacity and Environmental Needs)

**3.1 Child In Need**

Where it is assessed that a young person requires support and intervention to enable them to develop to their full potential but they have not or are not likely to suffer significant harm, they can be supported through the Child In Need Process. An example of this would be a young person who is not attending at school, not accessing any universal services and regularly spending time in areas of concern but not at direct threat of harm.

The allocated social worker will hold six weekly multi agency case planning meetings to discuss the support required and ensure there is an appropriate support plan in place. Any support plan will need to be focused on both the young persons needs and the needs of the family to provide a holistic plan.
All agencies working with the young person and family will be required to attend the meetings to contribute to the plan. Where appropriate the family and young person will be invited to attend and contribute to the plan.

Where concerns have been raised regarding gang activity or association it is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to refer to the IGMU for advice, guidance and support. The IGMU social worker will also attend at the case planning meetings.

**3.2 Child Protection Conference**

Where a young person is considered to be suffering, likely to suffer or has suffered significant harm a Child Protection Conference provides a multi agency forum to implement an appropriate support plan around the young person and the family in the format of a Child Protection Plan. All the core agencies involved with the young person and family will be invited to attend to share information and contribute to the plan. Where appropriate family members and the young person will also be invited to attend and contribute to the plan.

In considering harm within the gang context it essential to recognise that a young person’s own behaviours can place them at risk of significant harm.

Also the presenting harm maybe a consequence of someone’s behaviour who resides outside of the home environment for example a mother’s partner or the young persons peer group.

For guidance and support in determining the risks agencies can contact the IGMU for advice.
In all cases where Gang related concerns are identified a referral should be made to the IGMU to request the attendance of the IGMU Social Worker at the Initial and Review Conferences.

It is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to make the referral for an Initial Case Conference and to the IGMU.

3.3 Looked After Children

Where it is assessed that a young person is at risk of imminent harm due to gang related activity and therefore needs to be removed from their home environment to ensure their safety, the allocated social worker will need to follow Local and National procedures.

Consultation should take place with the IGMU to determine places of safety taking into account the young person’s gang affiliation.

It is essential that this is taken into account as if a young person is placed with an opposing gang member and/or in rival gang territory this will increase their risk of harm and could incur a possible fatality. This could also place other residents and community members at risk of harm.

With all LAC children the local authority will exercise it’s corporate parenting with a proactive response.

The young person will be subject of LAC case planning and a multiagency response will ensure information is shared appropriately in a timely manner to minimise risks to the young person and ensure there are appropriate support plans in place. The allocated social worker is responsible for referring to the IGMU for advice, guidance and support. The IGMU social worker will also attend at the LAC review meetings.
Vulnerable Adults

If the person is a vulnerable adult and is at risk; for example they may not understand or have insight into the decisions they are making, then an alert must be made to adults services through the Manchester Contact Centre.

Following referral and discussion with IGMU a safeguarding strategy meeting will be held and the adult safeguarding procedures may be initiated. One of the key things those at the strategy meeting will need to determine is whether the adult has the capacity to give consent or make specific decisions for example to engage in sexual activity, to decide to be in a gang, to manage their finances. The MSAB Mental Capacity Act Policy and Procedures provides information on how to do a capacity assessment regarding the key specific questions by a trained professional. This policy and procedures can be found at:

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200050/help_for_adults/4870/mental_capacity_act

Whether or not someone has capacity, risk reduction and protection will be central to the vulnerable adults processes whether the adult is a victim or perpetrator. This should dovetail with relevant domestic abuse remedies if they are a victim of domestic abuse – which could include:

- Inviting a domestic abuse specialist (Such as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor / Manchester Women’s Aid Worker) to the strategy meeting.
- Offering specialist domestic abuse support to the victim such as Sanctuary Scheme and civil remedies.
- Considering refuge accommodation or referring them to MARAC

It is important to recognise that where an adult with full capacity wishes to make a decision that professionals view as unwise, we may still need to offer support as part of our duty of care or even, in some instances, implement protection measures that could help keep the person safe – for example, with a Domestic Violence Protection Order or refer them to MARAC without their consent (if this can not be obtained) if they are at high risk of serious injury or death. We may also take measures against the perpetrator or have to protect children or other adults without the victim’s consent.
2. **IGMU Statutory Support**

4.1 Children’s Services

There is a social worker based within the IGMU whose key role is to support Area Team Social Workers in all gang related case work.

Below are some of the methods in which the IGMU Social Worker will be able to assist;

- Assisting in undertaking assessments

- Attending Meetings (e.g., Core Group Meetings, Case Conferences, LAC Reviews and Child In Need meetings)

- Undertaking Joint Visits

- Sharing intelligence updates and information with appropriate agencies

- Developing and implementing appropriate support plans to minimise risk caused by gang activity and ensure appropriate support is in place for the young person and their family

- Delivering bespoke parenting work with parents/guardians

It is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to refer to the IGMU for this support and to notify of any gang concerns.

The social worker will also be able to provide advice and guidance to all professionals who have concerns regarding the welfare of a child due to their association with gangs.
4.2 Youth Offending Service

There is a YOS support officer within the IGMU who can provide support to YOS workers in all gang related case work. The aim of this role is to provide advice and guidance on gang related issues to YOS practitioners and to undertake interventions with young people on statutory orders to the YOS who are involved or at risk of being involved in gang activity.

Below are some of the methods in which the IGMU YOS support officer will be able to assist;

- Assisting in undertaking assessments by contributing information from IGMU risk assessments and intelligence updates
- Attending Meetings (eg, Case Planning Forums)
- Undertaking Joint Visits
- Sharing intelligence updates and information with appropriate agencies
- Undertaking gang specific intervention work with the young people identified as needing the support.
- The YOS support officer will support Statutory YOS worker by attending YOS meetings, sharing information and developing practitioners knowledge of gangs.

It is the responsibility of the allocated YOS worker to refer to the IGMU for this support and to notify the IGMU of any gang concerns.
4.3 Prevention Worker

There is a prevention worker within the IGMU who can support both statutory and non statutory service users (both adults and children) in exiting from their gang association by supporting them to;

- Access Education
- Access Employment
- Access Housing
- Access Parenting Courses
- Access Positive Diversionary Activities

Referrals for this support can come from Professionals to support their current safeguarding plans.

The prevention worker can also undertake family support work with parents/guardians to provide them with the skills and knowledge to identify the ‘Tell Tale Signs’ and how to address these behaviours.

4.4 Women’s Advocate

The IGMU has a Women’s Advocate to support any females who have experienced any form of exploitation, abuse or violence as a consequence of gang activity. The Advocate will work in close partnership with the Protect team, SARC and community resources to support young women accessing services such as sexual health, self esteem building, keeping safe and therapeutic intervention to address their needs. The advocate can also sign post victims to domestic abuse services and rape crisis.

4.5 Probation
There is a probation worker based within the IGMU. If any professional or agency has concerns regarding the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult due to an adult’s gang related behaviour the Probation Worker can undertake gang specific intervention with the adult to support them moving on from the lifestyle.

4.6 Voluntary Sector

There are a number of community organisations who can offer support and guidance for young people, families and individuals affected by gang related activity. The IGMU staff will work closely with these organisations and community members to ensure that any work undertaken is addressing the needs of the community. The IGMU will also provide advice and guidance to the voluntary sector organisations to support the development of the projects and the people accessing them.

For advice about organisations please contact the IGMU.

IGMU Contact Details:

Email – mmags.team@manchester.gov.uk

Telephone - 0161 232 0540

3. Training

The MSCB Safeguarding Children and Young People at risk of Gang Activity training, is accessible on the MSCB website.

The practitioners at the Integrated Gang Management Unit are available for advice, guidance and briefings. Please contact them on : 0161 232 0540 and mmags.team@manchester.gov.uk
4. **Contact Details**

Integrated Gang Management Unit – Telephone 0161 232 0540
Email – IGMU@manchester.gov.uk

Manchester Contact Centre – 0161 255 8250/2345001 Email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk

Xcalibre Task Force – 0161 856 4292

Women’s 24 hour domestic violence helpline 0808 2000 247. Directory of local services see [www.endthefear.co.uk](http://www.endthefear.co.uk)

The Domestic Abuse Assessment and Referral Form for MARAC and Domestic Abuse Service referrals can be found on the MSCB website.
Some “Tell Tale Signs” Identified but no concerns regarding Significant Harm at this stage Undertake a CAF Assessment or for vulnerable adults initiate a strategy discussion.

Contact the IGMU for consultation &/or Referral to the Safeguarding Gangs Group

During Assessment and/or intervention work further risk factors are identified

Contact IGMU Social Worker for consultation regarding the risks to determine if threshold criteria has been met for statutory Children’s Services intervention.

If concerns for significant harm are clearly evident DO NOT delay for consultation proceed with Safeguarding Referral to the Contact Centre & notify IGMU immediately Refer any vulnerable adult to the Contact Centre immediately.

Contact Centre notify The First Response Team or adults services. First Response Team/adults services to gather information and consult with IGMU to establish if statutory intervention is required.

First Response Team/Adults Services
1. Refer to Area Social Work Team for Initial Assessment/initiate Adult safeguarding procedures.
2. Signpost to another agency
3. NFA Referral & Inform referrer
Risk factors for a person becoming involved in gangs

HIGH RISK FACTORS
- Early problems with antisocial and criminal behaviour
- Persistent offending
- Unable to regulate own emotions and behaviour
- Physical violence and aggression
- Permanent exclusion from school
- Friends condoning or involved in antisocial and aggressive behaviour
- Alcohol and drug misuse

MEDIUM RISK FACTORS
- Mental health problems
- Aggression, behavioural problems
- Depression
- Truancy and unauthorised absence from school
- Bullied or bullying others
- Medical history of repeated injuries or accidents
- Child in local authority care or leaving care

LOW RISK FACTORS
- Aggressive bullying by siblings
- Lack of ethnic identity
- Peer rejection
- Not involved in positive activities
- Few social ties
- Exposure to violent media

HIGH RISK FACTORS
- Historically involved with or known to social services
- Lax parental supervision
- Lack of parental attachment to child
- Conflict and violence in the home
- Parental abuse
- Parents aggressive towards or unwilling to engage with statutory agencies
- Child is not protected from significant harm or danger, including contact with unsafe adults

MEDIUM RISK FACTORS
- Lack of emotional care
- Allowing child to associate with known troublemakers
- Violent discipline
- Lack of parental discipline
- Inconsistent or minimal boundaries

LOW RISK FACTORS
- Parents don't model positive and responsible behaviour
- Absent parent
- Unstable family environment
- Child left with multiple or unsuitable carers
- Parents unable to communicate effectively with children
- Parent–child separation

HIGH RISK FACTORS
- Family members involved with or associated with gangs
- Wider family involved with gangs
- Community norms that tolerate crime
- Local tensions between ethnic/cultural/religious gangs
- Known gang recruitment at school
- Presence of gangs in community
- High level of local crime including drugs market

MEDIUM RISK FACTORS
- Availability and use of drugs
- Criminal conviction of parents or siblings
- Witness or victim of domestic violence

LOW RISK FACTORS
- Lack of positive role models in the community
- Transient families
- Lack of age-appropriate, safe play facilities or diversionary activities for young people in the area
- Financial difficulties affecting child
- Little interaction with neighbours and community
- High unemployment
- Sustained poverty
- Lack of reliable support from wider family
- Limited access to conventional careers
Young person or adult is identified at risk though a CAF, PPO, Threat to life or Safeguarding Concern. A referral should be sent to the contact centre. First Response Team will determine which child cases require statutory involvement and adults teams will determine where adult safeguarding procedures should be initiated for vulnerable adults.

**Violent Gangs Flowchart**

- **Threat To Life Referral?**
  - **YES**
    - The Children’s Services IGMU Team Manager will convene a strategy meeting for children. Adult services will do this for a vulnerable adult. If risks are identified a referral to be made for Statutory Social Work intervention. The Strategy Meeting will be recorded on MiCARE.
  - **NO**

- **Statutory involvement required?**
  - **YES**
    - An area social Worker will undertake an assessment for a child and a strategy meeting will determine the steps to be taken to protect a vulnerable adult. If further assessment and intervention is required a safeguarding plan will be coordinated though the Child In Need, Child Protection or Vulnerable Adults Process.
    - The IGMU Social Worker will act as Advisory on all gang related concerns, attend meetings and undertake joint visits with the Area Social Worker.
  - **NO**

**Referral to be made to the IGMU for prevention work or to a Vulnerable Adults Conference/advocacy project or other early intervention approach.**

Referral will be discussed at the Manchester Safeguarding Gangs Group and signposted accordingly.
A Lead Professional will be identified to coordinate early intervention services for children/young people.
For example, The IGMU Prevention worker, 8 till Late, School or other involved agencies.

In undertaking the work risks are identified, referral for Statutory Social Work intervention for adults or children.

**Risks Identified?**
- **YES**