

Report of the Hammersmith and Fulham Youth Task Force

taking action to keep young people safe

May 2008

Foreword by William Atkinson and Dawn Lewis

The murder of Kodjo Yenga in Hammersmith Grove on 14th March 2007 generated widespread anger and soul searching across all sections of the community. As a consequence a number of concerned residents held a public meeting to express their sadness at Kodjo's untimely death and consider practical measures for improving community safety.

The Youth Task Force was convened to consider a number of key questions:

- The number of young people involved in gang activity and official responses to criminal activity.
- Effective ways of engaging with young people who are on the fringe of criminal activity.
- Effective ways of improving the safety of all residents, especially the young.
- Effective ways of re-assuring the wider community.
- Recognising the success and positive contribution of young people.
- Strong recommendation about effective action.

We would like to thank all members of the group for their expertise and insight into what is clearly a national and international problem.

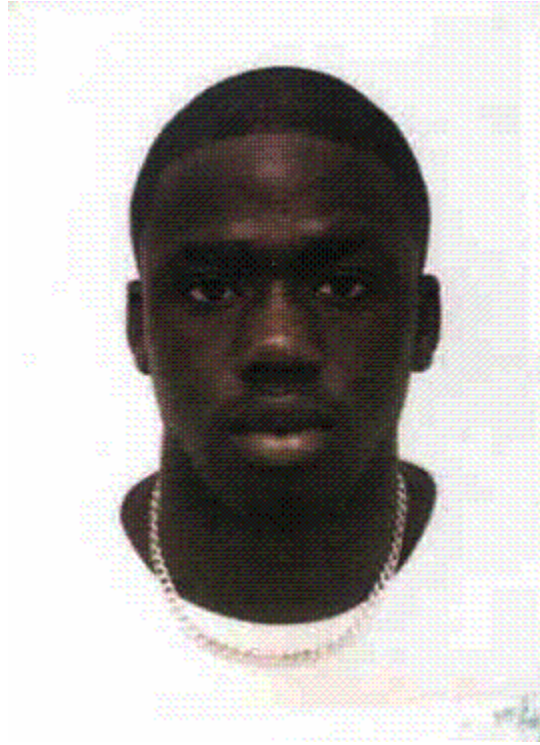
In May 2008 two young people were found guilty of Kodjo's murder and were given life sentences. Three other young people were found guilty of manslaughter and received custodial sentences of 10 years.



William Atkinson
Chair, Youth Task Force



Dawn Lewis
Community Representative



This report is dedicated to the memory of Kodjo Yenga

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1 Introduction

The murder of 16 year old Kodjo Yenga in Hammersmith on 14 March 2007 was a personal tragedy for his family and friends. For the community at large, it brought the tragic consequences of youth violence across London close to home. It challenged the organisations charged with keeping young people safe in Hammersmith & Fulham to consider whether enough was being done to prevent such violence and to keep young people safe.

Following a community meeting called by Dawn Lewis as a concerned local mother and resident determined to see action on this issue, a task force was established. It was chaired by William Atkinson, head teacher of Phoenix High School and also joined by Dawn Lewis. In addition, it brought together senior officers from the police and the council, practitioners who work with young people and a representative of the Metropolitan Police Authority. The composition of the task force meant that it was able to tap into the views and experiences of young people themselves.

The membership, terms of reference and ways of working of the Hammersmith and Fulham Youth Task Force are set out in Appendix 1. Key elements of the terms of reference were to –

- identify the key areas of work which need to be undertaken to improve the safety and security of young people in the borough
- look at current practice in relation to best practice.

As members of the task force, we met between May 2007 and February 2008. This report sets out the approach we took to the work, our findings and our recommendations. We felt it important to start with a picture of young people in Hammersmith and Fulham, to put the problem of gangs into perspective.

2 Young people in Hammersmith and Fulham

2.1 Doing well

Young people in Hammersmith and Fulham are doing remarkably well in school. The latest exam results (2007) were the best achieved in the borough with strong improvement against previous years.

A January 2008 report to H&F councillors states: 'The 2007 school performance at all levels is generally very encouraging and represents a great deal of hard, focused work on the part of the schools and the LA. Pupils in the borough are making year on year improvements. The improvements at secondary level are particularly impressive'.

At Key Sage 4, 65.8% of pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A-C, up from the previous year and above the target that was set. When English and Maths are included, the figure is 56.2%, an improvement of over 7% from the previous year.

The national percentage of A level pass grades at A–E in H &F is 98.2% (1.3% above provisional national figures) and for A level pass grades at A–C it is 79.5% (6.7% above the national figures).

Ofsted inspections of the nine secondary schools in the borough (five are community schools including one for age 16-19, three are voluntary aided and one is a city academy) confirm this picture, with Phoenix High, William Morris Sixth Form, the London Oratory and Sacred Heart High rated as outstanding, Hurlingham and Chelsea, Henry Compton and Lady Margaret rated as good and Fulham Cross and Burlington Danes rated as satisfactory.

Life is not all about school or college for young people, and there are plenty of other areas which demonstrate positive achievements and young people's engagement in their communities. Examples include –

- Over one thousand young people from schools and youth projects take part in the elections for the Hammersmith & Fulham member for the UK Youth Parliament
- The Borough Youth Forum which supports the Deputy and Member of the UK Youth Parliament
- Recent Duke of Edinburgh achievement awards
- Saturday School Awards
- The safety projects initiated by young people and recognised by the SNAC scheme
- Young People talent showcases
- Participation in the H&F festival 2007

Young people were extensively involved in the borough's children's and young people's plan – currently being revised - and put forward many positive suggestions for improving services and aspects of life in the borough that matter to them.

2.2 How do young people feel about their lives in H&F?

While there is no comprehensive survey of attitudes or experiences of young people, there are indications from an Ofsted survey of a number of secondary schools in the borough in 2007. The limited numbers need to be borne in mind.

Overall, the pupils surveyed felt healthy (83% compared to 86% nationally); 64% felt safe in their local area and 84% in their schools (compared to 74% and 85% nationally) while 36% felt unsafe in their local area (compared to 25% nationally).

76% thought their local areas were good places to live, and 11% thought they were poor places. Asked what would improve their local areas, 67% said less litter, 64% said less crime/safer and 59% said better activities for children and young people.

65% had voted in school, class or year elections, and 16% had been on a school council in the last year.

2.3 The small numbers involved in crime

There are 10,800 young people aged between 13 and 19 in the borough. As everywhere in London they are from a diverse range of backgrounds.

It is clearly difficult to estimate the number of young people involved in gangs. Currently we have identified 60 young people involved in gang activity in one part of the borough and we are continuing this work across the borough.

We know the number of first time young offenders (those receiving reprimands, final warnings and convictions in court for any offence) between April and November was 174.

Even without accurate figures on gang membership, it is safe to conclude that the proportion of young people involved in crime is small, and of those involved in serious knife or gun crime even smaller.

In terms of trends on crime, there was a fall of 17% in youth crime in the borough last year (September 2006 to October 2007), with all types falling except drug-related offences which showed a significant increase, and violence against the person which showed a 1% increase (equating to two offences more than in previous year).

Violent crime in London generally is falling from 2006, with murder down by 7% in 2007 and knife crime by 13%.

Of course, even against a backdrop of the vast majority of young people in the borough behaving well, and the actual amount of violent crime being less than our perceptions of the problem, the fact remains that gangs and violence by a few can have a profound effect on all young people in terms of concerns for their safety.

3 Our approach to the task and key messages

We were determined to move with a sense of urgency to examine whether the police, the council, schools and others can do more to prevent youth violence and crime, whether we can work together better, and what we can learn from good practice elsewhere. We set high expectations for the police, the council and

others to shift priorities where necessary in order to identify resources and to find solutions.

At the same time, our starting point was not that youth crime and gangs are taking over our communities or young people. On the contrary, the murder of Kodjo Yenga was shocking precisely because such tragedies are rare in Hammersmith and Fulham (even if concern over the numbers of knife and gun related murders of teenagers across London and other cities is growing). The community can be reassured that the vast majority of young people in the borough are well behaved and are doing well at school and in their other pursuits.

In examining existing services and good practice from elsewhere, we looked for evidence of what works – but we also felt that sometimes we have to take a considered risk and experiment with new things that have not yet been proven.

Our key messages about youth violence are:

- The number of young people involved in crime and knife and other violence is small but their activities have very significant effects on young people and the wider community
- The police, council, schools and others need to continue to work together
- Excellent and timely intelligence is necessary to identify the small number of youths who are involved or at risk of getting involved in gangs and violence
- We need to intervene early with enforcement and prevention measures and community-based support, diversion, and positive activities
- Ongoing, high quality and non-adversarial engagement with all young people is crucial.

This focus on those at risk, on early intervention and prevention is in line with experience and good practice from elsewhere and London-wide strategies. It also reflects common sense.

Our more detailed considerations and recommendations are presented below under a number of headings.

4 Our findings and recommendations

4.1 The nature of the problem

4.1.1 Youth violence and gangs are significant problems but confined to a small number of young people

Nationally and in London, the number of teenagers killed by other young people over the last 18 months gives rise to understandable concern among communities. Action to tackle this has become a priority for the Metropolitan

Police. But the numbers of young people involved in this level of violence remain small.

In our work we noted the concern over and media attention to gangs. We were very clear that we need to distinguish between gangs which involve criminal behaviour and potential violence, and groups of young people who spend time and 'hang out' together.

We have already indicated above that the overwhelming majority of the 10,800 13 to 19 year olds in Hammersmith & Fulham are behaving and doing well. 60 young gang members are known to the police and other agencies at present. Although the process of identifying gang members across the whole borough is not complete it is clear that the proportion involved in gang activity is tiny.

Overall youth crime in the borough reduced by 17% last year (September 2006 to October 2007), with only a small increase in violence against the person offences (2 offences more than in the previous period) although there was a significant increase in drug-related crime.

Recommendation 1

In our communications we need to help the community to view gangs and youth violence in the context of the large majority of local young people who are behaving well and not involved in crime. We also need to find further opportunities to reinforce positive behaviour among young people.

4.1.2 *The solutions to youth crime and violence are complex*

The reasons why some young people get drawn into crime and violence reflect a range of social and individual factors, and there is no simple solution or quick fix that we can be put in place. Experience of those dealing with the issue (in H&F and elsewhere) suggests that the problem has to be tackled on many fronts, and over time. Solutions need to involve –

- enforcement (dealing with offending and re-offending in the most effective ways)
- intelligence (knowing the young people who are involved in gangs or at risk, building trust and information flows between the community and the police and other agencies)
- prevention (early intervention, diversion and support)
- engaging young people in dialogue and encouraging positive behaviours.

Recommendation 2

Agencies need to collaborate effectively and maintain a balance between intelligence, early intervention, diversion, support, engagement and enforcement.

We identified specific approaches that should be maintained and developed as part of this mix in H&F - see below.

4.2 Strengthening our responses to gangs and violence

Partnership working and a range of initiatives are already in operation in the borough, but we need to do more. The most important method we need to build up locally is what is known as a risk based approach: ways to identify and target interventions and support at young people on the margins of gangs already or at risk of involvement.

We also see the need for action to reduce rivalries between young people in relation to their patch or territory, and to increase the positive involvement of men and fathers in the community in relation to young people.

These conclusions are reflected in our recommendations for specific initiatives below.

4.2.1 Early identification and intervention

The Metropolitan Police has developed a model for the prevention of violent crime based on identifying and 'managing' those likely to commit offences. It is called the Risk Assessment Management Process (RAMP) method, and is also referred to as case or offender management. In the context of youth crime and gangs, it involves identifying people in or 'near' gangs and visiting them at home, to communicate the message they are known, to involve parents, to assess circumstances and support needed, and to refer young people and families to appropriate services.

The principles behind this approach are being adapted in H&F to try to reach young people already involved in gangs. A key part is played by home visits carried out by teams of experienced safer neighbourhood police and youth offending service officers. A similar offender management model and visits were implemented in relation to some of the young people on remand following the murder of Kodjo Yenga.

Some 60 young people involved in gangs have been identified in the borough to date. So far (March 2008) 20 have been visited as part of this new approach. Early feedback is positive but this is a sensitive intervention, and staff need to be well trained and the approach developed as it progresses. The lack of police and youth offending service staff who can devote time to this approach is a problem that needs to be resolved.

The task force supports this innovative partnership model although we recognise it needs further development and evaluation.

Recommendation 3

The police and council services should fully implement a model of early intervention based on case management and home visits aimed at young people at risk of becoming involved in crime and violence. Appropriate resources should be identified.

4.2.2 A new Street Outreach Service

The task force identified the need for dedicated, flexible teams of staff to achieve our aims of better intelligence and engagement, early intervention and offering support and reassurance on the ground. Working times including out of hours and shifts responding to particular needs, and the deployment of police and youth officers working together, have to reflect the patterns of young people's behaviours.

The idea for a Street Outreach Service (SOS) was generated by the police and the council's children's services department in response to this identified need. The proposal addresses a current shortfall in capacity on the ground to deliver new approaches such as the case management model described above and in dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and youth crime more effectively.

The way SOS is envisaged also responds to feedback from young people themselves, about police visibility, better engagement between young people and the police and use of stop and search (if carried out with courtesy and integrity).

The proposal is for three dedicated teams each comprising a police officer and a youth worker. In time, a community-based volunteer might be recruited to join each team.

The focus is on engagement and relationship-building rather than enforcement, and teams are intended to play a key role in referring young people to services and activities, and supporting exit from gang membership.

Teams could be deployed on an area basis as individual teams (in Hammersmith, Fulham and Shepherd's Bush) or work as a single unit across the borough, concentrating on hotspots (for example, conflict over territory) or on individuals.

Piloting an SOS service for two years would cost in the region of £440,000 and an application for (part) external funding from a charity is already underway.

We are clear that the SOS service will need to be fully evaluated and have measurable objectives which can be drawn from indicators such as –

- Number of SOS referrals and interventions

- Offending behaviour by individuals before/after SOS interventions
- Offending patterns in specific localities before/after SOS interventions
- Qualitative feedback from young people, offenders, residents

Recommendation 4

A joint Street Outreach Service should be created on a two year pilot basis, to increase our capacity for early interventions and engagement with young people. Funding should be identified from external sources, the police and council.

4.2.3 Borough Youth Office of the Metropolitan Police

The police in H&F provide school liaison officers who operate within schools. They contribute to the curriculum and education activities rather than simply visiting to deliver messages about crime and safety. The way of working allows police officers to build up relationships, trust and respect with young people, in a non-confrontational way. It is seen as breaking down barriers particularly with young people from Black and minority ethnic communities. The service is provided by one sergeant and two PCs and also leads on projects regarding young citizens, truancy and personal safety.

We believe engaging with schools, and reassurance for pupils and parents are important. These officers play a valuable role and the service should be maintained. Extending the role of these officers to be part of engagement and diversion activities out of school and out of hours should be considered.

Recommendation 5

The police school liaison service should be maintained and extension of resources and operations should be considered.

4.2.4 Fathers and sons

The task force identified the importance of bonding with fathers and other male role models for boys at risk of becoming involved in crime or gangs. While there are mentoring and other schemes to develop role models, there are no specific initiatives or services to build the relationships between boys and their fathers.

A proposal was developed by a member of the task force, for a residential weekend programme designed to provide a communication platform for young men and fathers to build positive relationships. The proposal is for weekends at a country centre for 'lads and dads', incorporating outdoor activities, swimming, other sports, team building, potential visits to the theatre etc and a general widening of horizons as well as targeted work to support bonding and better relationships.

An organisation running such facilities (the Children's Country Holiday Fund) has been identified but there may be others to consider as well, and practicalities such as numbers and costs will need to be explored further.

Residential could involve a group of about 10 or 12 fathers (or other significant male adults) and 10 or 12 boys in the first instance (numbers depend on the age range of the boys). Participants would be identified through schools or the early intervention panel led by the youth offending service. Both routes could be tested, and we need to encourage active engagement and avoid boys and fathers 'being done to'.

While there is a perception that Black boys suffer disproportionately from absent fathers or difficult relationships, this scheme should target any family that could benefit.

The costs for running two residential weekends on a pilot basis including evaluation would be in the region of £10,000 although this requires further scoping.

The task force supports piloting this residential scheme with two weekends in the first instance. We are clear it would need to be backed up by services and ongoing support afterwards. Volunteers to help run the scheme also need to be identified.

Given the need to link to ongoing services, and the lack of readily identified sources of funding from the statutory agencies in the current year, we believe the children's services department should take this proposal forward and on identifying and commissioning a voluntary organisation to take this forward including raising funds.

Recommendation 6

Children's services should take forward two pilot residential weekends for fathers and sons aimed at building relationships and supporting positive behaviours, through commissioning a voluntary organisation in the borough.

4.2.5 Current activity

There are already many initiatives, services and projects in the borough which aim to promote safety for young people and to reduce crime and violence.

The police are leading local action on intelligence, prevention and enforcement under *Operation Curb* which is the Metropolitan Police strategy to reduce the number of murder victims under 20 and weapon-enabled crimes committed by people under 20 in London. Operation Curb groups together a range of activity to ensure there is progress, coordination and regular reporting.

Operation Campville is the specific police response to the murder of Kodjo Yenga – see under 5 below.

The council's Youth Offending Service (YOS) plays a key role in intelligence and working with those at risk as well as already involved in gangs or crime. YOS support people charged with offences and also work with groups of young people for example on anger management, the Turnaround scheme which is aimed at young robbers, and Positive Futures designed to support ambitions and constructive choices. YOS is currently developing an intergenerational project which would look at gangs, neighbourhood rivalries and youth culture in the borough over the last 50 years.

The youth service provides and supports more general activities for children and young people in the borough, including youth clubs and youth workers, play, sports, cultural activities, summer and holiday schemes, often through funding voluntary and community groups. It supports forums for engaging young people such as the Borough Youth Forum.

Specific current initiatives in the borough to highlight include –

- SNAC (Safer Neighbourhoods Annual Challenge) which is an annual programme by the police involving young people putting forward ideas and projects to promote safety, awards, fun activities, and engagement. It has been run for two years already and plans are underway for 2008. It has attracted sponsorship and good levels of participation.
- Borough events as part of the London Week of Peace including engagement and focus group discussions with young people on their views on gangs, crime, and safety.
- Performances like the interactive play 'Slash' which toured schools and was rated as positive by participants
- Projects such as Kicks (using football to engage young people) or Young Citizens in schools
- PAYP (Positive Activities for Young People) which included workshops in summer 2007 on street safety, crime and consequences and weapons, and also carried out a survey/discussion groups of 45 young people aged 13-17.

Many of these schemes can demonstrate a track record of effectiveness. The range of activity fits into our aim of promoting safety for young people all fronts and using a variety of methods.

Recommendations 7

Current services and projects which are proven to be effective in promoting safety should be maintained, in parallel with new initiatives.

4.3 Wider context and learning from good practice

4.3.1 Good Practice

The task force commissioned a report on good practice in keeping young people safe. Many of the projects looked at – in London and elsewhere - were along similar lines to ones in place or proposed for H&F. Not all initiatives have been evaluated so it is difficult to assess their effectiveness.

Two models that stand out are the X-it project in Lambeth which works intensively with young people at risk of or under pressure to join gangs, and is regarded as best practice, and the Merton Gang Intervention Partnership (a finalist in the MPA London Problem Solving Awards last year) which focused on 20 young people using home visits and photographic evidence.

The 'Fear and Fashion' programme followed on from a research project and now sponsors four pilot projects in 'knife' hotspots in London which will run for five years and will be regularly evaluated. We believe that we should track these and other developments and continue to learn from them.

Task force members brought their own knowledge and ideas to the table, including for example the Voyage Programme run by the Black Police Association, or increasing attention to working with faith groups to reach young people.

4.3.2 The Voyage programme

The director of Voyage presented their work with Black and minority ethnic young people (largely but not exclusively boys) to a meeting of the task force. The main programme is 'Young leaders for safer cities' which has just been accredited for a BTEC qualification and a GCSE. The one year programme focuses on year 9 and 10 students and includes a week's residential, face to face and online mentoring, leadership development and teaching support and contact with similar projects in South Africa, the US and Jamaica. The aim is to tackle both the attainment and criminal justice agendas. Peer motivation plays an important role in low drop out rates and good results.

Other activities include workshops or tailored programmes in particular schools or groups of schools, or boroughs including youth engagement through pizza evenings. There is a core staff and activities are delivered by Black Police Association volunteers and teaching volunteers.

The task force agreed that H&F should maintain contact with the programme, through the Borough Commander and to explore ways of using it in specific schools or more widely.

4.3.3 London-wide initiatives

There are strategic bodies and partnerships in London that address issues of youth crime, gangs and violence and reflect national policy and Home Office initiatives. These include the London Community Safety Partnership and the London Youth Crime Prevention Board (LYCPB). Members of the task force attended several relevant meetings and we reviewed documents about what is happening at this London-wide level.

Youth engagement generally and the Youth Voice initiative are particularly strong themes being developed by the LYCPB. It is also campaigning for the National Crime Survey to include under-16s so that progress in reducing crime experienced by this age group can be tracked.

The Metropolitan Police is exploring a US concept of targeting effort and resources on 'million dollar blocks' (ie housing blocks or estates where crime and other problems are concentrated to the extent of costing the state a million dollars). Leaving aside the US language, it is not dissimilar from local attempts to deal holistically with problems of worklessness, low qualifications, the informal economy, anti social behaviour, crime etc in neighbourhoods or on estates. We may find opportunities to link early intervention on youth violence to such area-based working in the borough.

We were reassured that our thinking on solutions based on intelligence, early intervention and engagement of young people are in line with what the London-wide agencies are promoting.

Recommendation 8

The Steering Group overseeing the Youth Commission needs to ensure that agencies in the borough continue to engage with others in the capital and elsewhere and to learn from best practice. It should explore using the Voyage programme in particular in schools and more generally.

4.4 Measuring success

The police and partner organisations on the H&F Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership already monitor crime and performance against targets in considerable detail. This includes overall levels of youth crime (see the reference to the 17 per cent fall last year under 3.1.1 above), analyses of the types of crime, and the number of 'first time entrants' ie young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system for the first time.

Operation Curb (the London-wide police response to serious youth violence) has targets for reducing the number of young victims of crime and weapon enabled crime committed by under 20s.

In addition to these overall measures, we need to ensure that we have ways of testing whether existing and new services and projects are effective. For example, the proposal for SOS has identified measures which can be used to evaluate it, and we should apply this to other projects and services as well.

Given the key aim of the task force is to make young people feel safe, we recommend a representative survey to establish a 'baseline' or starting point of how safe they feel now and to be able to monitor this in future years. A regular survey by Ofsted (TellUs questionnaire) is not very detailed and only captures young people in a few schools in the borough.

Such a survey could be done in concert with other boroughs, so that over time there would be information on the trend in H&F, and comparisons with other places.

Recommendation 9

The Steering Group for the Youth Commission research programmes should ensure that measures of success and evaluation are integral to any new project. Representative surveys should be considered as a key tool to assess how safe young people feel in the borough now and in the future.

4.5 Building on partnership working and improving information

We found that the police, council services, voluntary agencies and others are active and committed to tackling the problem of youth violence, and work together well. As already described, a wide range of services is in place including voluntary and community sector provision.

The sharing of information between different agencies can always be improved. In addition, the sign-posting of services, facilities and advice and the general communication with young people, their carers and parents, with schools and with the community at large can be improved.

To a significant extent, better communication should be addressed through the mapping of all services for young people in H&F which is currently in progress and will result in a website that makes it easy and interesting for young people to access what they need or want.

The task force also recognised that more could be done in the areas of engaging young people in community life and in decision-making.

Recommendation 10

Partnership working should continue to be strengthened. The mapping of all relevant services and the planned new website should be a tool to improve communication for young people and the community, and also serve to identify any gaps that need to be addressed.

4.6 Taking the work forward

We are pleased to report our findings and recommendations to the Children's and Young People Partnership Board and to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

We hope that our work has also informed the events aimed at young people as part of the Crime Summit in the borough on 8 March 2008. We are keen for our findings to be used to engage young people, parents, schools and community organisations in further debate and in development of solutions.

Some of the actions we commend are underway now but other proposals will need to be taken forward by the Steering Group which will oversee the research and outcomes to be commissioned as the H&F Youth Commission, and we hope they will find our work a helpful basis for the 'staying safe' strand of the young people's agenda.

Recommendation 11

Action to keep young people safe and to reduce youth crime and violence need to be high on the agenda of the Youth Commission Steering Group.

5 Action in direct response to the murder of Kodjo Yenga

The setting up of the H&F Youth Task Force was a direct result of the community concern generated by the murder. Dawn Lewis, a member of the community, convened a meeting at the Emerald Centre attended by the local MP and a councillor, the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), community groups and senior the police and council officers. The task force was set up as a result and Dawn Lewis as a community representative and Cindy Butts from the MPA became members.

The task force looked at future ways to keep young people safe but it also co-ordinated immediate responses to the murder, as outlined below.

Operation Campville: this is the name of the police response to the murder, including the investigation, arrests and charges and wider action.

11 young people were arrested in connection with the murder, six were charged with murder, and two further young people with violent disorder. The trial began in February 2008 and continued until May.

The life of the 11 young people arrested were profiled from the age of 10, to try and understand and learn lessons from any patterns that emerge. A new approach of home visits to the young people on remand was implemented.

Victims of gang violence were also visited.

The 'M' group in the children's services department: the council set up this groups to draw together their responsibilities in relation to the young people charged with the murder, as well as work of the Youth Offending Service with other young people involved in gangs or at risk.

Reassurance to the community, schools and others: police and council worked together to provide reassurance and to field questions from schools, parents and young people in the aftermath of the murder, and on preparing information and guidance materials. Visits and meetings were offered to schools.

6 Next steps

Our findings show that a wide range of tactics is needed to improve the safety of our young people.

Solutions will not be instant. For some young people and their families, there will be long journeys towards more positive lives, away from gangs and violence.

A Youth Commission is being set up in the borough to undertake further research to enable the development of strategies relating to young people in H&F in a holistic way. In our view, it is right to look at young people in the round, including education and other ways of achieving, preparing for the world of work and economic success, enjoyment and participation in society.

It is our role to put forward a strong message that feeling safe is a bottom line that underpins all the other aspirations for young people. Young people's safety will be one of the five key themes that the Youth Commission will focus on and we are confident that the police, the council and others in the borough will continue to work together to reduce violent youth crime and its effects.

We hope we have met our remit and hand on to the Youth Commission and to the crime and children and young people's s partnerships in the borough recommendations, insights and work in progress that will provide solutions on the ground.

Contact for further information on the work of the H&F Youth Task Force:

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Appendix 1: About the Hammersmith and Fulham Youth Task Force

The H&F Youth Task force was set up in April 2007 and designed to look at current services and interventions, and to identify and co-ordinate further urgent and concerted action to ensure young people can feel safe in the borough.

Members of the task force brought together a wide range of perspectives and experience. The core members were –

William Atkinson, Chair	Head Teacher Phoenix High School
Sgt Gordon Barlow MBE	Schools Liaison Officer, H&F Police
Cindy Butts	Metropolitan Police Authority
Andrew Christie	Director Children's Services, H&F Council
Ali Dizaei	Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police
Tony Doherty	Operations Manager, Youth Service, H&F Council
Mark Green	Principal Community Safety Officer, H&F Council
Jo Kendal	Head of Youth Services, H&F Council
Dawn Lewis	Community Representative, local resident and mother who was instrumental in calling for action
James Reilly	Director of Community Services, H&F Council
Gill Sewell	Assistant Director Children's Services H&F Council
John Sutherland	Superintendent H&F Police (moved to another post but continued as active member of task force)
Heather Valentine	Borough Commander at the start of the Task Force
Elaine van Orden	Chief Inspector H&F Police (replaced John Sutherland)
Richard Vernon	Head of Community Safety Unit, H&F Council
Larry Wright	Head Youth Offending Service, H&F Council

Other council and police staff attended meetings or supplied information as and when required.

The terms of reference agreed for the task force were –

- To identify the key areas of work which need to be undertaken to improve the safety and security of young people in Hammersmith and Fulham.
- To take into account the views of young people themselves, parents and carers, and the wider community
- To oversee and prioritise a programme of work, with defined leads, timescales, milestones and agreed processes for reporting outcomes, across the borough.
- To consider the work already on-going or in place across the borough, by statutory agencies, partners, the voluntary sector and others and make recommendations if that work needs to be supplemented or re-focused in light of considering new priorities.
- To provide regular progress reports to the CDRP partnership, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Children's Partnership Board.

Our remit also included the following ways of working –

- Provide reassurance to parents and young people
- Look at current practice in relation to best practice
- Assess the role of statutory stakeholders and schools
- Engage all sections of the community including residents, voluntary groups, residents associations etc

Early on, task force members identified more specific objectives –

- To change the experiences of Hammersmith and Fulham young people by improving their safety and reducing their fear of crime
- To increase the positive involvement of men and fathers in the community in relation to young people
- To reduce rivalries in relation to territories and gang affiliation
- To make sure that young people consider Hammersmith and Fulham to be a safer place by March 09

Meetings

The task force met seven times as follows: 2 and 25 May, 6 July, 26 September and 2 November 2007 and 25 January and 29 February 2008. In addition, a steering group met twice in May and June 2007 to ensure sufficient progress was being made. A sub-group also met a number of times to develop specific proposals for the future.

Appendix 2: List of reports and other evidence considered by the H&F Youth Task Force

This appendix lists documents, key meetings and other forms of evidence or information that were considered by the task force

Most of the reports are available from Mark Green, H&F Council Community Safety Team email mark.green@lbhf.gov.uk tel 020 8753 2459.

Background to the setting up of the task force

Community meeting at Emerald Centre on 22 March 2007 convened by Dawn Lewis and attended by the local MP, the lead councillor for crime and Anti Social Behaviour, and by representatives from the police, the council, the Metropolitan Police Authority and community groups.

Proposal from the (then) Borough Commander for a 'borough co-ordinating group to consider the response to the death of Kodjo Yenga' 28 March 2007

Meeting of head teachers of secondary schools in the borough, chaired by the director of children's services and the Borough Commander and others, to discuss the immediate aftermath of the murder, the need for reassurance and sensitivity and longer term responses including the idea for the task force.

Facts, figures and other evidence including views of young people

Report on crime reduction performance over the two year period from October 2005 to September 2007 and reasons behind the trends which show a 17per cent reduction in crime involving young people but a sharp increase in drug related crime and a small increase in violence against the person. Prepared for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership December 2007

Ofsted TellUs2 questionnaire summary sheet November 2007. Results from a survey carried out in spring 2007 with pupils from a selection of schools in the borough (part of a national programme and therefore offering comparable results). Survey questions cover pupils' views on the range of 'Every child matters outcomes including their feelings of safety.

Note on outcomes of workshops with young people as part of the Peace Week 2007 activities, carried out by Impact (Community Action for Safer Streets).

Existing initiatives in the borough

Evaluation report on 'Slash', a theatre based programme by the Big Fish theatre Company, to raise awareness and facilitate discussion on knife crime, gang culture and Anti Social Behaviour. The programme ran in the borough in 2005 and was funded again by the police for 2007.

The task force had access to a wide range of information on what different agencies and services are doing that relate to youth violence and crime. This includes for example, reports on work on anti-social behaviour on estates in the borough (November 2007).

Good practice from elsewhere

Mapping services aimed at young people's safety in London boroughs and UK. Report on a wide range of activities underway elsewhere, prepared for the task force May 2007

The X-IT programme in Lambeth – submission to the Home Affairs Committee Inquiry into Young Black People and the Criminal Justice System August 2006 Description and evaluation of this programme working with young people at risk of or under pressure to join gangs. Regarded as best practice.

London-wide initiatives

Police, council and other partners in H&F are involved in various London wide partnerships and forums dealing with crime and in particular youth crime.

The two most relevant ones are:

The London Community Safety Partnership which brings together high level representation from the Metropolitan Police, the GLA and others. It has a number of sub-groups and work strands on youth crime, knife and gun crime etc. It also agreed the setting up of the London Youth Crime Prevention Board (see below)

The London Youth Crime Prevention Board (LYCPB)

This Board was set up following a youth crime summit in May 2007. It is chaired by Lord Victor Adebawale and brings together councillors and officers from a number of London boroughs, the Metropolitan Police Service and Authority, the GLA, the Government Office for London and the Youth Justice Board, among others.

The H&F Youth Task Force considered the reflections of these London-wide bodies as presented in minutes and other documents. A member of the task force is also a member of the LYCPB.

Proposals for projects and initiatives to the task force

Joint paper from police and council children's services and supporting two existing schemes(Safer Neighbourhoods Annual Challenge or SNAC, and Youth diversion), and four new projects (A Youth Summit, Training in engaging with young people, a major new Street Outreach Service SOS and for youth workers attached to custody suites at police stations. October 2007

Further developed and costed proposal for the Street Outreach Services (SOS) January 2008.

'Dads and Lads Weekend Proposal' for piloting a residential weekend aimed at building better relationships between fathers and sons.

Progress reports from the police and the council

H&F Council's children's services department and the police provided initial reports on their responses to the murder of Kodjo Yenga and on relevant activities and services aimed at young people in the borough.

There were several update reports from the police and a report on Operation Curb, covering a programme of activities including reassurance, engagement and diversion, intelligence and prevention, investigation and enforcement.

Youth Commission

The task force received updates on the plans for setting up the LBHF Youth Commission and a written report in January 2008 indicating several options for the shape of the commission were still under consideration.