

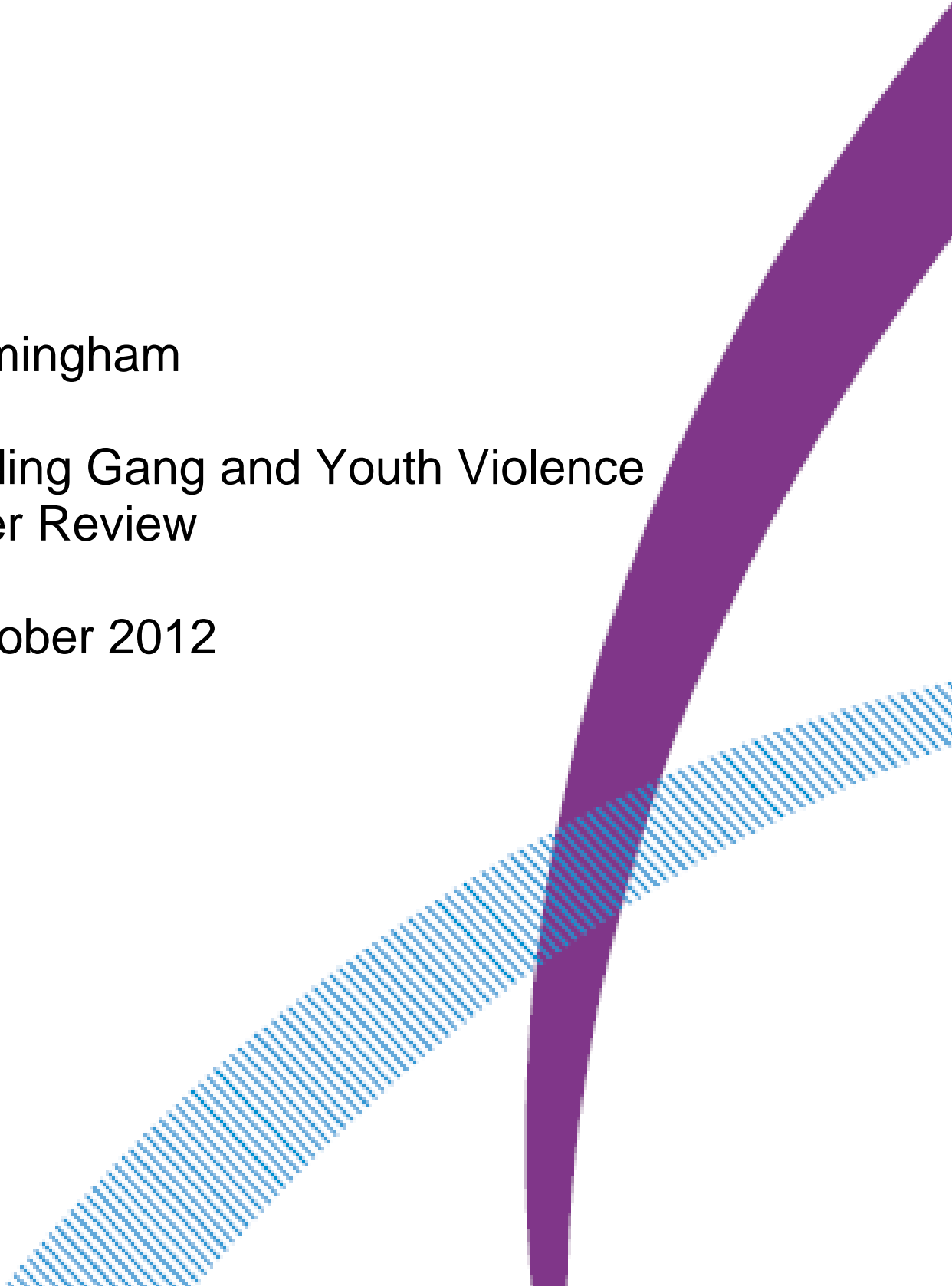
PROTECT



Birmingham

Ending Gang and Youth Violence  
Peer Review

October 2012



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the Home Office Ending Gang and Youth Violence (EGYV) initiative, 29 areas have initially been identified and subsequently invited to participate in a programme of guided reviews designed to assist them with ensuring their partnerships have effective structures and responses in place to contribute to the shared aim of Ending Gang and Youth Violence.

These areas have been selected based on identified levels of gang activity and serious youth violence, in accordance with the Dying to Belong<sup>1</sup> and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of a gang, namely:

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who;

- (1) See themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, and
- (2) Engage in a range of criminal activity and violence

They may also have any or all of the following features:

- (3) Identify with or lay claim over territory
- (4) Have some form of identifying structural feature
- (5) Are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.

- 1.2 The Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team have worked with the Local Government Association to develop an ending gang and youth violence peer review model with an innovative community dimension. The model has been designed to help areas assess the robustness of their structures and processes in tackling this issue.

## 2. Key overall strengths

- 2.1 The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership benefits from holding and articulating a strong vision on ending gang and youth violence by the council, police, political leaders and community members and a good understanding of the principal strengths and challenges in addressing the gangs and youth violence agenda. This honesty and understanding bodes well for the future. Birmingham has long-standing, well-developed and firm foundations in place. For example:

- **High level commitment to and engagement in ending gang and youth violence by strategic leaders across the city.**
- **Strong vision, governance and accountability arrangements across the community safety partnership, the Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence Executive Board and delivery groups.**
- **The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence (BRGV) Executive Group have a clear understanding of their principal strengths and challenges in addressing the ending gang and youth violence agenda.**
- **Well established Multi-Agency Gang Unit (MAGU).**
- **Community engagement with West Midlands Police and partner agencies on the ending gang and youth violence agenda.**

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<sup>1</sup> “Dying To Belong”, Centre for Social Justice, 2009

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- **An open and transparent commissioning process that included voluntary sector and community representatives on the Commissioning Panel.**
- **Commissioning and delivery arrangements are gender specific.**

### 3. Summary of recommendations

- 3.1 Further develop the use of the Family Common Assessment Framework (FCAF) with regard to young people at risk of engagement in gang and youth violence activities.
- 3.2 Following the meeting of the Department for Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus and partners within the peer review – Jobcentre Plus to continue further exchange with the community safety partnership and development work to build on the engagement with local employers.
- 3.3 Build strategic links between the BRGV and the new Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 3.4 Build on the police gang problem profile by incorporating data from a range of partnership organisations.
- 3.5 Schools, health and voluntary sector organisations could contribute to an improved understanding and picture of current gangs, emerging gangs, gang tensions and other emerging issues by sharing aggregate data where appropriate e.g. the use of knives and gang-related sexual offences.
- 3.6 Map and analyse gang offenders and crimes including mapping of gang-associated women and girls utilising partnership data.
- 3.7 The BRGV Executive to consider the outcomes of the academic research currently underway on why young people join gangs in Birmingham.
- 3.8 Maintain the open and transparent commissioning process through 'Find It In Birmingham' local procurement website.
- 3.9 Build on the approach to resettlement of gang offenders by conducting a comprehensive mapping exercise to determine the nature and scope of need.
- 3.10 Further develop a range of effective engagement processes i.e. community forum/consortia that include voluntary, community, faith and grassroots groups.
- 3.11 The following recommendations are referenced within the cross-government report on ending gang and youth violence. Readers may wish to consider the below within the context of their local partnership strategy.
  - Map all of the different agencies that offer interventions with violent gang members and their families in the local area.

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- Map the symptoms of local gang or youth violence problems using partner and local council data to inform better understanding of the drivers (e.g. school exclusion data; accident and emergency [A&E] admissions data).
- Review procedures for identifying high risk gang offenders and potential victims to improve management of risk, threat and harm.
- Promote the roll-out of multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH). (Within the Birmingham context, MAGU [Multi-Agency Gangs Unit] fulfils this function and has been in operation for a number of years.)
- Produce a problem profile on gang and youth violence informed by all partner data to inform understanding of the drivers of gang and youth violence e.g. school exclusion data.
- Encourage the use of multi-agency reviews after every gang homicide to better inform the drivers of gang and youth violence and levers to mitigate risk through a serious case review or a multi-agency Gold Group.

### 4. Background to the peer review

- 4.1 The ending gang and youth violence peer review was developed by the Home Office EGYV team working with the Local Government Association as a 'critical friend' challenged by peers against the peer review benchmark, which is based upon the seven principles of ending gang and youth violence.

The peer review benchmark focuses on:

- Strong local leadership
- Mapping the problem
- Responding in partnership
- Assessment and referral
- Targeted and effective interventions
- Criminal Justice and breaking the cycle
- Mobilising communities

- 4.2 The peer review team consisted of:

- Karen Williams, EGYV Peer Review Manager, Home Office
- Viv Ahmun, Consultant, London, Independent Adviser to the Home Office
- Jennifer Blake, Consultant, London, Independent Adviser to the Home Office
- Tim Champion, Metropolitan Police Service, Independent Adviser to the Home Office
- Jenny Duggan, Islington Borough Council, Independent Adviser to the Home Office
- Yaser Mir, Community Engagement Consultant, Stoke on Trent, Independent Adviser to the Home Office
- Graham Robb, Consultant, Independent Adviser to the Home Office

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- Dave Walker, Nottingham City Council, Independent Adviser to the Home Office
- Jude Williams, Consultant, London, Independent Adviser to the Home Office

4.3 The programme for the on-site phase of the review was organised in advance and included a variety of activities designed to enable members of the team to meet and talk to a cross-section of partners. The team undertook a range of activities, including (but not limited to):

- Discussions with members of Birmingham Community Safety Partnership and stakeholders from the statutory and voluntary sectors
- Visit to MAGU
- Review of supporting documentation
- Tour around the city

4.4 The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership suggested the peer review team undertake an extensive three-day community engagement exercise, which was unique to the peer review approach. This helped to set the context for the peer review by visiting and listening to the good practice and engagement work by the community members and organisations with families and young people from across the city designed to get a rounded sense of the specific issues facing local people in relation to the ending gang and youth violence programme. The team would like to extend their thanks to the following communities, organisations and young people of Birmingham for sharing their time, expertise and hopes for the future which informed the ending gang and youth violence peer review with the city: AA Basketball, Bangladeshi Youth Forum, Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid, Birmingham Race Action Partnership, City United, (named) community representatives, Community Vision, Continental Star Football Club, Local Leagues, Lozells Community Initiative, LX Consultancy, Midland Heart, Positive Futures, Precious Trust, Sparkbrook Community Against Crime Association, St Mary's Convent, The Centre for Conflict Transformation, Recre8 Now, 7E Youth Academy, Urban Devotion Birmingham, YMCA and Yungstas.

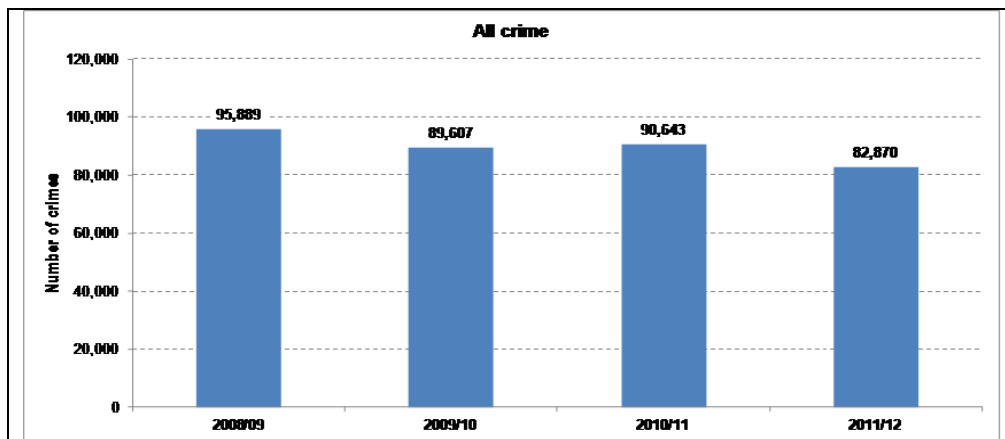
4.5 The team was appreciative of the support provided by the partners, engagement by Birmingham's young people and community members and would like to thank everyone they met during the process. Thank you also for the way in which officers organised logistical support in the build up to, and during, the team's visit, the time given, contribution and transparency, especially Jan Kimber, Richard Moore, the EGYV single points of contact (SPOCs) and Hasan Wazir, the Project Manager.

## 5. National and local context

5.1 The disturbances of August 2011 were the catalyst for the Government to accelerate work around serious youth violence and gangs. Whilst gang members did not play a central role in orchestrating the disorder, they were involved, and the disturbances brought issues of serious youth violence to the forefront of public consciousness.

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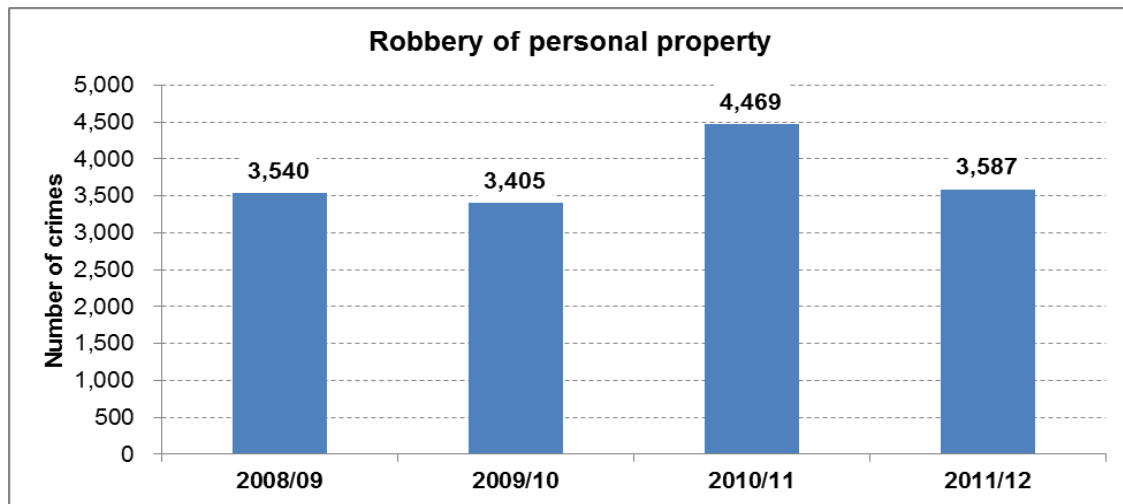
- 5.2 Since the disturbances, a group of senior Ministers, led by the Home Secretary, has met regularly to discuss the problem of youth violence and gangs, and the cross-government *Ending Gang and Youth Violence* report, published in November 2011, sets out a series of national actions to tackle this problem. The central message of the cross-government report is that gang and youth violence is not a problem that can be solved by enforcement alone. Every agency needs to be encouraged and facilitated to join up and share information, resources and accountability.
- 5.3 The *Ending Gang and Youth Violence* Report set out the Government's plans to reprioritise £10 million of Home Office investment in early intervention work in 2012-13 to support areas "most affected by gangs and youth violence". Twenty nine areas were identified with allocations based on the size of each local authority area population of 10 to 24 year olds. Birmingham was allocated £1.285 million.
- 5.4 Locally, the Birmingham position statement provided to the peer review gives the local context of Birmingham, showing that it is the largest local authority by population in England and Wales with an estimated population of 1,073,000 as at the Census date (2011). There is an estimated increase of 96,000 people compared to the Census estimate of 2001, an increase of 9.8%, higher than the rate for England and Wales (7%), West Midlands Region (6.3%) and the West Midlands Metropolitan area (7.1%). Of the eight Core Cities, Birmingham has the fourth highest increase in population.
- 5.5 Total crime counts for those offences reported to the Home Office by West Midlands Police for the time period shown below depict:



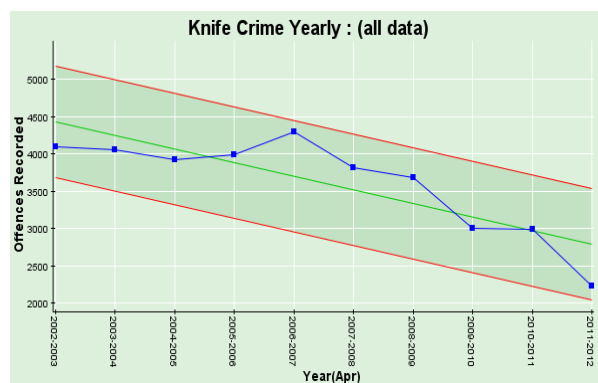
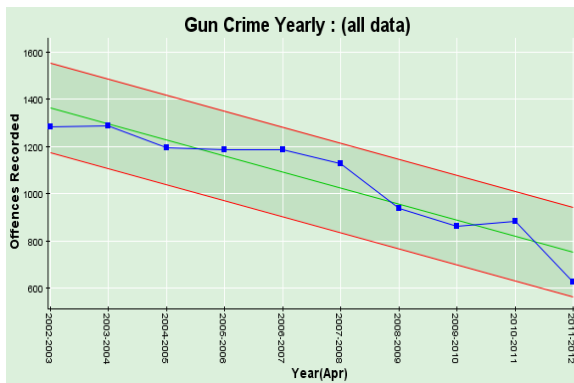
And published data for most serious violence for the same time period:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
<b>Attempted murder</b>	43	43	41	40	<b>167</b>
<b>Causing Death by Aggravated Vehicle Taking</b>	3	2	3	0	<b>8</b>
<b>Causing Death by Dangerous/Careless/Inconsiderate Driving</b>	4	4	3	3	<b>14</b>
<b>Child destruction</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Inflicting GBH without intent</b>	778	733	704	527	<b>2,742</b>
<b>Homicide</b>	29	15	20	19	<b>83</b>
<b>Wounding or other act endangering life</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>3,014</b>

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The following data is taken from the Birmingham Position Statement provided by the BRGV Executive for the Peer Review which details the West Midlands Police Force data on gun crime and knife crime shows:



## 6. Performance against the benchmark

### 6.1 Strong local leadership

#### Strengths

##### 6.1.1 There is a strong commitment, engagement and vision across the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) and the BRGV Executive Group, which is a sub-group of the BCSP.

Work to tackle gangs has had a substantial cross-agency history in Birmingham, which provided a structure within which the EGYV programme could develop. This work has been shaped by a strong commitment, engagement and vision by the strategic leaders for the EGYV work across the city. For example Birmingham City Council, Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust and West Midlands Police have shown long-term commitment to resourcing the development of the reducing gang violence strategy and this has, in turn, led to clear organisational structures, commissioning and operational delivery.



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It is evident that this commitment has been welcomed by community representatives who feel they can engage with a commitment to 'drive out the harm caused by gang violence'.

### **6.1.2 Reducing gang and youth violence is a cross-party issue for the city.**

The development of the EGYV programme has been helped by the fact that this is not an issue of local party political contention and so this offers a greater chance of continuity. There is a clear strategic set of priorities agreed by Birmingham's elected members and community safety partners which include, for example, an inclusive economy, safeguarding children and local people being safer across the city.

### **6.1.3 Strategic membership of the community safety partnership is strong.**

There is real strength in the strategic membership – not only from police, city council and community safety partners and the strategic links with the Violence against Women Board, but with community representation showing a genuine commitment to include diverse voices from within the city. As an example of the strength of the shared leadership, Birmingham City Council housing partners are represented on and link to both Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), safeguarding and the youth offending service (YOS). This matrix of connections by partners is also seen in links between EGYV and the work of the preventing violent extremism strategy. The Birmingham Young People's Parliament has also been engaged by partners in discussions about specific aspects of the EGYV programme.

## **Areas for improvement**

### **6.1.5 Broader membership.**

Representation of the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) would provide a wider and more inclusive voluntary and community representation within the BRGV partnership and aid the articulation of their views and contributions to the agenda. Likewise, the Jobcentre Plus employment meeting with partner agencies, as part of the peer review, showed a clear wish to be involved with the community safety partnership's work to reduce gang and youth violence. The peer review recommends building on this early promising work agreed throughout the peer review.

### **6.1.6 Clearly articulate safeguarding and vulnerability aspects of gang and youth violence within the Family Common Assessment Framework and early years work.**

It is self-evident that placing the EGYV work in a context of enforcement is a vital part of the strategy. It is also clear that describing the strategy in terms of safeguarding young people and addressing the myriad of vulnerabilities which young people exhibit is a powerful way to galvanise community and agency support for the EGYV work. For example, the development of the Family Common Assessment Framework (FCAF) and the promotion of this within early years work and schools will provide a powerful way of identifying and then working with young people at risk of engagement in gang and youth violence.

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### 6.1.7 Consider how to embed a sustainable approach to addressing gang and youth violence that is responsive to changing needs

The EGYV programme is a one year funded programme and fits within the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership's well-established Reducing Gang Violence remit. The recognition that reducing the impact of gang and youth violence is a long-term goal is well understood in Birmingham. The partners spoke of the need to consider how the strands of work that started under EGYV will continue post March 2013.

The dynamic nature of gang and youth violence is well known in Birmingham, driven partly by the nature of the local gang culture and community based triggers to youth violence. Some of the issues are, however, driven by demographic changes to specific communities e.g. newly arrived communities. This requires the BRGV partners to be ready to respond to these changes in a proactive manner by identifying and responding to newly developing risks in specific communities. Birmingham City Council's Multi-Agency Welfare Reform Working Group is a good example of Birmingham partners proactively engaging with communities to address the impact of these changes.

## 6.2 Mapping the problem

### Strengths

#### 6.2.1 There is a gang problem profile, a performance analyst within the community safety partnership and a gang analyst in West Midlands Police.

The BRGV Executive Group has produced a gang profile that maps the gang problem. This includes some A&E data, violent crime data, and recognition of the fluidity of urban street gangs and organised crime groups across the city. There is also an overlay of gangs, priority areas and poverty using the indices of multiple deprivation. An analyst sits within the community safety partnership and undertakes an analysis of violence performance data for partnership meetings. It is positive to have a dedicated performance analyst within the partnership and a gang analyst within the police force.

#### 6.2.2 Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence meetings structure.

Across the partnership, at both strategic and tactical level, there is an awareness of the need to share information, correctly identify the right cohort of offenders to monitor progress and track their offending patterns, which will help agencies understand the impact of specific interventions and improve the programmes that can reduce gang violence. The BRGV structure includes an Executive Group, Tactical Group along with the MAGU, and provides an opportunity to map gang-related activity as well as providing referral pathways. The Gang Shared Priority Forum (SPF) and Urban Street Gang Youth Panel feed into the MAGU.

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### 6.2.3 Identification and prioritisation of gang offenders.

The identification and mapping of violent gang offenders is key to understanding and tackling gang related violence. In Birmingham gang offenders are rated as high, medium and low risk. Use is made of a comprehensive database called Blue Star to identify urban street gangs based on criteria of crime and intelligence. This should enable prioritisation, with enforcement tasked through the gun and gangs tasking meeting, and other interventions or diversions through the MAGU. The four local policing units have also started to flag gang crimes on the Police National Computer (PNC). This is emerging good practice that will enable a better understanding of the problem.

#### Areas for improvement

### 6.2.4 Further mapping and analysis of the gang problem using police and partner information, including gang flags on the PNC for gang offenders and gang crimes.

The gang profile is currently police driven and needs to incorporate partner information. Aggregate A&E data is shared, but this is performance data which needs analysis to interpret the information. There is a need to map the potential risk factors for gang and youth violence using aggregate council and partner data e.g. school exclusion data, mental health data.

As mentioned previously, there is a police analyst who maps the gangs problem. This could be further enhanced using all partner information and then providing regular partnership briefings for BRGV meetings to provide information/intelligence from across the partnership on gang activity.

### 6.2.5 Increased information and data sharing and feedback to partners, including the voluntary sector.

Although MAGU is multi-agency and there are strong links between police and probation, several interviewees commented that schools, health and voluntary sector could have a greater role in sharing information to enable a clearer picture of current gangs, emerging gangs, gang tensions, and any other emerging issues e.g. increased use of knives and gang-related sexual offences. Another point raised during the interviews was that, when partners provide information, there is often no feedback on the way that information has been used. Experience has shown that this kind of feedback could greatly enhance the quality and regularity of the information provided.

### 6.2.6 Mapping gang-associated women and girls

Mapping gang-associated women and girls is important in terms of understanding the risks presented to them, and offering appropriate interventions. Although there are several commissioned projects that specifically support women associated with gangs, identification and referral pathways need to be strengthened.

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## 6.3 Responding in partnership

### Strengths

#### 6.3.1 **Birmingham has a well-established, co-located Multi-Agency Gangs Unit.**

The MAGU is central to Birmingham's partnership approach to the ending gang and youth violence agenda. The MAGU is well-established and has a profile within statutory, third sector and communities across the city. The team is multi-disciplinary in nature comprising of police, probation, YOS, youth diversion and children's social care staff. In addition, the EGYV funding will increase capacity by the inclusion of staff from housing and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and links with education. The increased capacity and specialism present a real opportunity for the work of the MAGU.

The MAGU is based at Handsworth police station, an area of the city that has traditionally suffered from high levels of gang activity and associated issues. Despite the fact that MAGU is well established (2007), the peer review team was pleased to hear that the team were continually looking to develop new ways of working.

This model of good practice ensures an operational approach to tackling the gang/violence issue with one referral route for young people/vulnerable adults identified as involved in or on the cusp of gang activity. The MAGU also enables cases to be assessed and reviewed under one umbrella so the most appropriate interventions can be put in place to support gang members.

#### 6.3.2 **Good links with HM Prison Birmingham and Werrington Youth Offending Institute (YOI).**

Strong working relationships and sharing of information were identified between the BRGV partnership and HMP Birmingham and Werrington YOI at both a strategic and operational level. Representatives from the two institutions attend the executive group and tactical meetings and there is a clear process in place for the two-way sharing of information between the prison service and Community Safety Partnership when a gang member either receives a custodial sentence or is released back into the community.

#### 6.3.3 **Strong working relationship with neighbourhood policing teams.**

The neighbourhood policing teams have developed strong working relationships across the city with partner agencies including local voluntary/community organisations.

For example, one local neighbourhood policing team has been praised by Sparkbrook Community Against Crime Association (SCACA) for its proactive work in building strong links with the Somali residents living in the Sparkbrook area, including local businesses. The pupil referral units in Birmingham have also highlighted excellent information sharing with the neighbourhood policing teams regarding young people attending their educational centres who are gang affiliated and/or at risk of being the victim of gang-related violence.

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## Areas for improvement

### 6.3.4 Information and intelligence sharing.

Partner agencies spoke of the desire to share information, across the partnership, and both aggregate and personal in a consistent manner and welcomed the new legal toolkits currently under development by Birmingham Community Safety Partnership which may assist in this area of activity.

### 6.3.5 The Health and Wellbeing Board.

Interviewees spoke of how engagement with the new Health and Wellbeing Board would assist in the approach to reducing gang and youth violence. An emphasis on the safeguarding and vulnerability aspects of this agenda for individuals, families, neighbours and communities, as well as the city wide safety issues, could help partners on the Health and Wellbeing Board identify each of their organisational contributions and roles in relation to the reducing gang and youth violence agenda.

It could also ensure inclusion of gangs and youth violence in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Broadening of this health sector engagement through the Health and Wellbeing Board on key areas of overlapping interest and having one subgroup supporting both Health and Wellbeing Board and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership would support joined up solutions to data sharing, strategic planning, commissioning and delivery of effective interventions on a range of community safety issues.

## 6.4 Assessment and referral

### Strengths

#### 6.4.1 Strong commitment by partner agencies to the use of the FCAF for the whole family.

The FCAF identifies issues around the whole family's needs rather than those of a single child or young person. The FCAF was discussed by interviewees as a potentially positive way of addressing gang and youth violence issues as it identifies the wrap-around-services for the family. If recommendations that flow from the FCAF are put in place, wider provision will be used to address the complexity of violence within the family and wider settings.

There is a strong drive and commitment by services within the children young people and families directorate, Think Family (the programme name for the Troubled Families initiative in Birmingham), Jobcentre Plus, the youth offending service and the voluntary sector to this approach, including a commitment to data sharing around gang and youth violence issues.

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### **6.4.2 Use of the national Pre-CAF assessment includes the reducing gang and youth violence agenda.**

The YOS and the wider partnership are using the national Pre-Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to promote and encourage referrals in relation to the reducing gang and youth violence agenda. The Pre-CAF is shorter than the traditional CAF and is assessed within MAGU, which checks across all the relevant partner agencies to ensure that all relevant information is known. Referrals are then discussed at the reducing gang violence panel where decisions are made as to the most suitable way forward. In the event that the individual is referred to a voluntary sector provider, that organisation will then complete an assessment of the individual's needs and, within five days, an intervention plan is drawn up. The timescales and payment schedule for voluntary sector organisations to complete the assessment and draw up the proposed intervention plan are specified within the contracts they have been awarded.

### **6.4.3 Schools police panels in all areas of the city.**

These meetings are problem solving discussions between police, schools and partners on current issues affecting the school community in an area. They are structured around secondary school clusters and the meetings are generally held six times a year (every half term). Topics discussed include, for example, weapons, anti-social behaviour, drugs and intimidation. Whilst the panels are not confined to the reducing gang and youth violence agenda, it is a well known and trusted structured that is embedded across the city and operates using mainstream resources that supports city-wide community safety partnership working and, as such, is seen as good practice.

According to the local Birmingham Evaluation Report of 2011/12, 67% of city secondary schools attend these panels. Interviewees in the peer review discussed how the schools police panels demonstrate that information flows from police to schools and vice versa and have resulted in many assessments, referrals and interventions. This approach could be further enhanced with more involvement from primary schools in areas where there is evidence of young children being at risk of gang or youth violence.

### **6.4.4 The use of Schools Help and Reporting Page (SHARP).**

The SHARP initiative operates in the majority of secondary schools and provides a confidential reporting mechanism for young people's use across a raft of issues including those relating to gang and youth violence and weapons.

The reports are managed within individual schools and where appropriate will trigger a referral to another agency. The system also provides schools with a platform to deliver appropriate messages to reduce risk of harm in the widest sense. It also signposts young people to sources of personal support they can access themselves.

A further benefit is that other agencies are able to use this platform to communicate key themes e.g. issues in relation to weapon carrying.

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Some interviewers also highlighted other short-term programmes focused specifically on gang and youth violence issues operating in schools as valuable including 'Watch Over Me', 'Guns and Knives Take Lives' and 'My Life, My Choice'.

### **Areas for improvement**

#### **6.4.5 Assessment tool.**

The West Birmingham YOS has developed an assessment tool from a safeguarding perspective to enable them to identify the potential risk to young people attending YOS premises for appointments. This should be reviewed to establish whether there is merit in using the assessment tool across the city and amongst other partners. The tool is highlighted as an area for improvement, as it is believed it could easily be developed for partner agencies to also assist in joint risk assessments where appropriate.

#### **6.4.6 A partnership problem profile and joint needs assessment.**

In preparation for the peer review a problem profile was provided by West Midlands Police to the team, which focussed almost exclusively on police data. Analysis from the wider partnership perspective with an emphasis on the reducing gang and youth violence issues would be of benefit to the strategic planning and the partnership moving forward. This could then form part of a joint needs assessment in relation to the reducing gang and youth violence agenda.

### **6.5 Targeted and effective interventions**

#### **Strengths**

#### **6.5.1 Gender specific commissioning, training and service provision.**

Gender specific training has been commissioned to facilitate the implementation of gender-proofing of services, thus increasing the development of women-friendly and women-centric services. There are some innovative projects in relation to prevention of sexual exploitation resulting from the recent commissioning process which could enhance the new 2013-2015 Violence Against Women Strategy. For example, of the five pieces of gender-specific work detailed below, the training and capacity building programme commissioned could ensure that the Partnership is in a much better position to gender-proof future strategies, policies and services especially in relation to the prevention and targeting of serious youth violence.

There is also a collaborative project that will allow Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid to develop expertise and knowledge transfer across services. This work links into the Local Services Directorate's Housing Gang Related Activity Policy.

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### 6.5.2 Gender specific work on gang and youth violence – girls and young women’s programme.

The community safety partnership focus on girls and young women when addressing gang and youth violence in Birmingham is commendable. The commissioning of five gender specific EGYV projects for women with dedicated funding demonstrates this commitment. The girls and young women projects commissioned are:

- Theatre production and workshop for young women in year 10
- Mentor support programme for young women in year 10
- Intensive one-to-one support for young women from the age of 10
- Education and awareness raising amongst frontline agencies in relation to young women and gangs
- Empowerment Interventions for young women from the age of 10.

### 6.5.3 Interventions focused on the needs of individuals and families, with access to a range of community based programmes.

Good practice and work was highlighted through the peer review process in a wide range of programmes, including:

- The mental health team, led by the director of psychology, which trains community members and mentors working with people at risk in therapeutic approaches.
- Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid - theatre performance in relation to girls in gangs and associated workshops
- The Centre for Conflict Transformation (TCFCT) - targeted work and input to reduce looked after children in gangs
- Community Vision - specialist intensive support programme for young people and their families
- City United - intensive support programme for young people, adult resettlement programme and intensive intervention programme for young Asian men
- Local Leagues - intensive intervention programme for young Somali men
- AA Basketball - male empowerment 8 week training programme (4 courses)
- Recre8Now - male empowerment 8 week training programme
- 7E Youth Centre - community patrols of public transport routes and interchange points in city centre and night time economy community patrols.

The above are examples only and not intended to be a definitive picture of the service provision across the city.

### 6.5.4 Housing injunctions.

Housing injunctions were identified as good practice in targeting gang-related offending in Birmingham. Whilst injunctions focused primarily on the individual they could also have an impact on the behaviour of the wider family, which was another key strength. The council’s use of civil legislation had been an effective use of the legal system, with a high success rate at court.



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Injunctions are regularly used as an alternative and earlier intervention than eviction. This has had the beneficial impact of controlling problematic behaviour at an earlier point.

Birmingham City Council's Legal Services has provided awareness raising sessions to the Police on civil legislation relating to gang issues. This should become a regular input and part of annual training plans.

### **6.5.5 Legal toolkits.**

The community safety partnership has commissioned the production of legal toolkits contextualised for different departments within the local authority e.g. YOS, housing, children, young people and families and for partner agencies such as West Midlands Police and Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust. These will have specific applicability to interventions targeted at people involved or associated with gangs. The toolkits are being produced in association with neighbouring local authority areas, in particular those that are part of the ending gang and youth violence initiative.

### **Areas for improvement**

#### **6.5.6 Early interventions and prevention work with younger people in gangs.**

Birmingham partners have identified a need to do more work to understand the reasons why young people join gangs and get an in-depth understanding of pathways into gang-related activity. The academic research currently underway in North West Birmingham should assist in this area. The research findings will also be of use in future workforce training on contemporary gang issues and improve communication in the field. For example a language barrier between young people and professionals was highlighted in relation to the latest slang words, trends and social networks.

### **6.6 Criminal justice and breaking the cycle**

#### **Strengths**

#### **6.6.1 Work with non-statutory as well as statutory offenders.**

The probation trust and youth offending service work with both statutory and non-statutory offenders when and where appropriate i.e. including those individuals who are not mandated by a court to engage in supervised provision. Gang members are assessed and where appropriate, prioritised for referral to services providing pathways out of offending.

#### **6.6.2 Gang-related housing protocols.**

As part of the reducing gang and youth violence a series of protocols are being developed relating to the housing of those put at risk because of gang activity and offenders who as part of a their pathway out of offending require alternative housing provision away from their local neighbourhood. The development of these protocols is being led by Birmingham City Council but in conjunction with the other local authorities in the region and registered social landlords. Core elements within the protocols will also inform the council's allocations policy which is being reviewed at present.

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As part of the policy review a scheme similar to the London Safe and Secure approach is being developed.

### 6.6.3 Service provision for ex-offenders.

There is a range of provision for ex-offenders across the city in relation to gang and youth violence.

For example:

- The organisation 'Young Men at Risk' is commissioned to work with offenders returning to the community whilst its bolt-on service, 'Dorcas', helps young offenders access employment and housing and works with offenders up to one year prior to release.
- The FCAF training with prison staff will support the 'Fathers Programme for Prisoners'.
- 'City United' is a key partner which provides a service that delivers mentoring via a cognitive behaviour therapy-led approach to high risk young people associated with gangs with a view to moving them away from negative peer influences.

The above are examples only and not intended to be a definitive picture of service provision across the city. The community safety partnership could further enhance the access to services by producing a list of provision.

### Areas for improvement

#### 6.6.4 Aftercare.

While the range of provision detailed throughout the peer review was highlighted partners thought that there was potential for a more efficient needs-led commissioning of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) which contributes to pathways out of offending. For example, securing co-ordinated prisons aftercare and resettlement for gang members with targeted and coordinated interventions available to those returning to the community.

#### 6.6.5 Resettlement.

A comprehensive mapping exercise to determine the nature and scope of need would further assist the partners understand how the ex-offender cohort could be engaged and offered pathways out of gang involvement and offending. More needs to be done to expand the range of 'wraparound' services to support rehabilitation and promote desistance. Fundamental to this is the availability of housing and employment, training and education services.

## PROTECT

### 6.7 Mobilising communities

#### Strengths

##### 6.7.1 The police and community engagement.

The police in Birmingham have made impressive advances in relation to community engagement but recognise that there is still more to be done in building relationships with young people. The community organisations, which members of the peer review team visited, spoke of how they see the police as a 'partner' in addressing gang and youth violence. Many of the groups talked about the positive working relationship they have with the police, the community representatives stating that local officers were invaluable in building trust and maintaining good relationships.

##### 6.7.2 The fire service and community engagement.

A number of community members also spoke briefly of the fire service in Birmingham and the 'Aurora' project. This is a 10 month-long intensive programme for 13-18 year olds in the criminal justice system and those excluded from school or who are looked after young people, teaching them a range of basic life skills. MAGU utilises these services and refers young people on to the course.

##### 6.7.3 Community engagement with the community safety partnership.

Members of the peer review team met with a wide range of community groups and representatives who highlighted the good practice and work they are doing within communities; how they share learning and engage with young people, gang members and the wider community. They expressed a genuine wish to work together in order to more effectively meet the needs of young people and their families affected by violent crime.

They acknowledged that, if they were going to provide genuinely effective services for their communities, they would need to work alongside other community groups, the police and all partners within the community safety partnership. There is community representation at tactical meetings of the BRGV group which is felt to be beneficial as they know their communities, their young people and are aware when tension is building under the surface. Participation in these meetings enables concerns to be fed into statutory agencies.

##### 6.7.4 The community safety partnership understands the changing nature of the gang landscape.

Much of the historical thinking around gangs was based on the prevalence and impact of two main predominantly black African Caribbean gangs in the North West part of the city. Over the last four years the landscape has changed significantly, in terms of the ethnic make-up of gangs, the numbers involved and their nature and complexity. More intervention work is now being done around the varied picture of gangs, reflecting the pattern across of the city.

# PROTECT

## Areas for improvement

### **6.7.5 Community engagement and feedback with the community safety partnership and solutions to ending gang and youth violence.**

The communities spoke of how sophisticated the city leaders need to be regarding building relationships and engagement with all communities affected by gang and youth violence. They also spoke about how, collectively, representatives from the community should not just attend key meetings but also need to feed back what is discussed and agreed to the communities they represent.

Community members also spoke of more work being needed to increase community resilience, capacity building and encourage consortia by the community safety partnership partners with community members/organisations and people who are ultimately best placed to work on the frontline on reducing gang and youth violence.

Although there is a series of road-shows across the city, a youth parliament, neighbourhood tasking groups, key individual networks and community faith leaders; community organisations and some strategic partners spoke of needing a community forum on gang and youth violence so that they could come together to share practice and community intelligence and any tensions they are aware of to further feed into the broader community safety partnership agenda.

### **6.7.6 Further develop links and relationships with key local individuals and groups.**

Community members would also welcome more consistency in relationships with key individuals in statutory agencies at local and strategic levels to build and maintain trust and understanding.

They also discussed whether there is a full range of service provision across the city or whether there are gaps. Some of the community members spoke of the very real awareness of the current economic climate and how, by partners developing the above community forum, conversations could take place on developing community and partnership consortia that would potentially give an even more effective way of working to access mainstream funding and finances from outside the city.

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## 7. Good practice

7.1 Good practice is identified throughout the report exemplified through the strengths discussed, for example:

- Addressing gang and youth violence is a priority for the community safety partnership and associated voluntary and community members.
- The MAGU with co-located agency representation.
- The SHARP reporting mechanism in secondary schools.
- Aurora project engaging with MAGU and excluded young people.
- Gender specific commissioning and service provision.
  
- The school police panels.
- Use of housing injunctions.

In addition to the strengths identified throughout the report, there are many other examples of good practice discussed throughout the peer review. For example:

- Midland Heart Housing Association's 'Back on Track' apprenticeship programme provided wrap around support. Of the 24 young offenders referred, 21 were offered jobs. Further research is underway to identify fallout at each stage from recruitment to employment.
- Each Jobcentre has a Think Family link officer (Troubled Families initiative).
- Careers Company does Year 6 personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in schools to promote career routes for vulnerable groups.
- Safeguarding training on ending gang and youth violence.
- Good analysis/understanding of the social impact on crime as a result of financial constraints.
- The community safety partnership communications team use a wide range of marketing materials – including key fobs with quick response code design – to promote discrete EGYV messages.
- The community safety partnership produced pocket-size maps showing help points and taxi ranks in the city centre, which also include MAGU contact details.
- The council housing service has worked with other major cities e.g. Manchester and London in developing housing protocols.
- Mapping crimes onto housing ownership to decide use of anti-social behaviour (ASB)/housing injunctions.
- The Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust has a specific postholder leading ending gang and youth violence work. The Trust has organised 12 seminars in local communities run by clinicians regarding mental health issues and youth violence.

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## 8. Key recommendations

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence team can assist with taking forward the following recommendations including sharing good practice from other peer review areas.

- 8.1 Further develop the use of the FCAF with regard to young people at risk of engagement in gang and youth violence activities.
- 8.2 Following the meeting of the Department for Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus and partners within the peer review – Jobcentre Plus to continue further exchange with the community safety partnership and development work to build on the engagement with local employers.
- 8.3 Build strategic links between the BRGV and the new Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 8.4 Build on the police gang problem profile by building in wider partnership data.
- 8.5 Schools, health and voluntary sector organisations could contribute to an improved understanding and picture of current gangs, emerging gangs, gang tensions and other emerging issues by sharing data where appropriate e.g. the use of knives and gang-related sexual offences.
- 8.6 Map and analyse gang offenders and crimes including mapping of gang-associated women and girls utilising partnership data.
- 8.7 The BRGV Executive to consider the outcomes of the academic research currently underway on why young people join gangs in Birmingham.
- 8.8 Maintain the open and transparent commissioning process through 'Find It In Birmingham' local procurement website.
- 8.9 Build on the approach to resettlement of gang offenders by conducting a comprehensive mapping exercise to determine the nature and scope of need.
- 8.10 Further develop a range of effective engagement processes i.e. community forum/consortia that include voluntary, community, faith and grassroots groups.

## 9. Conclusion and next steps

- 9.1 The team found many examples of good practice in Birmingham and welcomes your support in detailing these so that they can be captured and publicised on the Local Government Association Knowledge Hub (<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk>) for the benefit of other areas.
- 9.2 The EGYV team has developed the Gang and Youth Violence Special Interest Group on the Knowledge Hub to store and share effective practice. This site can also be used to view current good practice from other areas and key stakeholders in gang and youth violence.

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- 9.3 The Home Office EGYV team will support the on-going work and has identified Karen Williams from the Home Office core team as the designated single point of contact (SPOC) for Birmingham. The response of the partnership to the findings of the review will be the subject of further follow up.
- 9.4 Further support from the Home Office EGYV peer review team is available with regards to possible workshops and individual support to implement the recommendations from peer review members.

# PROTECT

## APPENDIX

### Glossary of terms

A&E	Accident and Emergency
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BCSP	Birmingham Community Safety Partnership
BRGV	Birmingham Reducing Gang Violence
BVSC	Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
EGYV	Ending Gang and Youth Violence
FCAF	Family Common Assessment Framework
HMP	Her Majesty's Prison
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
MAGU	Multi-Agency Gang Unit
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic education
PNC	Police National Computer
SCACA	Sparkbrook Community Against Crime Association
SHARP	Schools Help and Reporting Page
SPF	Shared Priority Forum
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
YOI	Youth Offending Institution
YOS	Youth Offending Service