

Speaking Out Briefing No. 1

Knife, Gun and Gang Crime

Speaking Out is a partnership between the National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO) and the National Council of Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) to build a voice for the children and young people's voluntary and community sector across Government. The project will develop closer links between Government departments and the voluntary and community sector in delivering cross departmental plans such as *Every Child Matters* and the direct implementation of initiatives which affect children and young people.

The project aims to support children, young people and family voluntary and community organisations to better understanding the aims and impact on their users of a wider range of government policies and provide routes to influence them. We are funded by the Office of the Third Sector part of the Cabinet Office.

Who are these briefings for?

This series of briefings intends to provide members of both NCVYS and NCVCCO and other interested parties with background and analysis on specific policy items affecting the sector.

Other activities

In addition to these briefings we will be developing work streams around the policy themes which will include:

- web forums;
- seminars and events;
- establishing communities of interest amongst members and other organisations on specific policy themes linking them into email groups and bringing them together for small round table meetings with policy makers;
- making representations to Government; and
- linking with wider campaigns NCVYS & NCVCCO may be developing.



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1. Background

The aim of this briefing is to explore the connection between knife and gun crime and gang culture amongst some groups of young people. In recent years segments of the UK media have been keen to report the use of offensive weapons by children and young people as an increasingly common occurrence. The use of guns and knives, and the perceived growth of a 'gang' culture¹ that erodes the moral barriers to their use is a common theme amongst tabloid reporting on the issue. Media reporting, and the common perception encouraged by this – that knife and gun crime, and gang culture represent a single phenomenon of the growing criminalisation of youth – is that these issues can be countered by a single, usually punitive, response.

How big is the problem of knife and gun crime, and the gang culture associated with it? According to a 2005 Communities that Care survey of 11,400 children and young people's exposure to guns, knives and gang membership in London:

- One in ten young people surveyed reported that they have carried a knife in the previous 12 months and almost half claiming they could easily get hold of one
- One in 17 had carried some form of gun (including air guns and BB ball baring firing guns)
- One% said they had carried a real gun – six% had fired one
- A fifth of children claimed they could easily get hold of a replica gun but only eight% said they easily access a real gun
- Four% of young people surveyed considered themselves to be members of a gang with defined territories and names
- Almost a fifth of respondents said they would call their group of friends a gang, a third of which comprised of ten or more members²

A range of complex issues surround the growth in the use of guns and knives by young people under the age of 25, demanding a range of intervention and prevention responses. In many cases the issue of gang culture is tied up with poverty, deprivation and community cohesion, and is often related to criminal activities such as drug dealing – a cause of violence between gangs.

¹ Recent tabloid headlines include: '500,000 hoodies in gangs', The Sun, 26 May 2006, and 'Will we tame the Mad Dogs?', The Sun, 24 February 2007

² The Safer London Youth Survey, 2005 – Commissioned by Communities that Care, The survey of 11,400 young people aged 11-15 living in Inner London, was commissioned by the Government Office for London.

There is also the issue of defining what a gang is, which is problematic and can lead to any group of young people congregating together being labelled as a gang.

This briefing seeks to identify the different issues that face the voluntary and community sector in working with children and young people either involved with knife and gun crime, or at risk of becoming so. Section two identifies the legal restrictions on the carrying and ownership of knives and the situation regarding gun ownership, and provides information regarding the powers of law enforcement agencies in targeting gun and knife crime. Section three outlines the policy context as it has developed under the present Government. The focus in section three is to describe some of the ways in which Government has sought to prevent children and young people from viewing gang culture as attractive by providing mainstream opportunities for them. Section four provides an overview of the developing evidence base in this area. Finally, section five outlines some of the opportunities that are currently present for voluntary and community groups operating in this area of practice.

What is clear from the success of the practice interventions described in section four is the lack of a single response to the issue. Children and young people turn to knives and guns for a variety of different reasons, and not all are associated with gangs, or gang culture.

2. Policy Context

There is no single Government policy stream addressing the issue of gun and knife crime and gang culture. As a result of the current media spotlight on gang related shootings and knife attacks children and young people face the risk that social and political concerns are driving a punitive response to gangs which associates all forms of youth culture with recent negative headlines. Since 1997, Government policy towards a growing gang culture has focused on the social exclusion of young people who fall away from their communities, and gang activities effecting mainstream community interests have fallen under the rubric of interventions such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and curfews. The recent shift in social attitudes has solidified the link

between knife and gun crime to gang culture, despite the fact that knives and, to a lesser extent, guns have always been available to young people. Children and young people at risk of involvement with gangs now face the danger that gang membership will cease to be viewed as extreme anti-social behaviour demanding a social policy response but instead from the perspective of criminal law. If this happens it will signal the abandonment of an integrationist approach to marginalised young people on the edges of their communities.³

In working with communities since 1997 the Government response to youth gangs has been to give communities greater control of the public spaces which gangs inhabit through neighbourhood and community renewal strategies and, through the *Youth Matters* element of the Every Child Matters programme, to create opportunities for young people to participate in mainstream activities. In the former case *Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal*, (SEU, 1998) and *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal National Strategy Action Plan*, (ODPM, 2001) have both created mechanisms that strengthen local groups' ability to exercise control over the decisions of how public spaces were used and policed – *A New Commitment* emphasising the use of Local Strategic Partnerships to translate community needs into policy outcomes by enabling community groups to work with service providers on pressing local issues. The local government white paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (DCLG, 2006) takes the idea of empowering communities further by developing the parish council structure alongside a streamlined Community Calls for Action, strengthening the link between communities and their ward councillors.

Within children's policy the focus on combating gang culture has been concentrated on the social exclusion that makes membership seem a viable alternative to mainstream community participation. The green paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) proposes measures to provide marginalised children and young people with a chance to overcome barriers to social exclusion, offering educational support for parents and pupils, targeted interventions for children at risk of anti-social behaviour, and information sharing by children's services professionals to identify children of concern. *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (DfES, 2004), and *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005) both attempt to develop the framework for providing

³ Home Office gun crime summit, February 2007

opportunities to young people – Change for Children through the introduction of the five outcomes to determine the development and direction of children’s services and, in *Youth Matters* a range of proposals to encourage young people to engage in positive opportunities within their communities.

The *Respect Action Plan* (Home Office, 2006) proposes several measures to tackle some of the underlying reasons why gang membership is seen as an attractive alternative to mainstream activity by some young people. Many of the measures in the action plan address an authority deficit in these young people’s lives that makes it difficult for them to positively engage with the institutions, such as schools, that they regularly come into contact with. To address this deficit the action plan proposes legislation to allow parents, carers and teachers to control poor behaviour and encourage parents to take responsibility for their children’s conduct in the classroom. To ensure that children excluded from school do not fall out of the system local authorities will have a duty to identify children missing school, including alternative provision if they cannot return to mainstream education. Where parents are failing to help children develop values and behaviour that encourages engagement with education and their communities additional help through Children’s Centres and Extended Schools will be on offer, tackling parents who will not accept their responsibilities through parenting orders from a wider range of institutions.

In addition to incentivised programmes to engage young people the Government has funded a range of programmes to combat the need for children and young people to see weapon ownership as a way of gaining respect by their peers:

The Connected programme was launched in 2004 following a conference of community organisations, public bodies and activists working on the issue across Britain. A network of campaigners, community groups and professionals has been established. Regular meetings on the issue of gun crime take place with the Home Secretary and the network. A follow up conference was held in 2005 and a website www.connected.gov.uk was launched in the same year. Connected has held four rounds of funding distribution providing grants of up to £5000 to support small groups working on issues related to gun, knife and gang crime.

Over 200 projects have been funded through the programme. The funding has come from confiscated criminal assets.

Operation Trident, a Metropolitan Police initiative, targets gun crime in London's Black Caribbean community, attempting to build bridges with affected communities and breaking the silence and fears of reprisals that inhibit witnesses to gun related crime coming forward to give evidence. Anti-gun crime media campaigns using posters and radio have been delivered. Information relating to the work of Operation Trident is available from www.stoptheguns.org.

3. Findings from Research/Practice

The body of evidence surrounding gun and knife crime and the gang culture promoting their use addresses three separate themes: the extent of gun and knife crime; research into the extent of carrying knives amongst young people; and the push and pull factors influencing the decision for young people to join gangs. Despite the number of youths under 20 years old charged with a gun-related murder doubling, rising from 31 in 2003 to 76 in 2006, the reality remains children and young people are disproportionately the victims of violent crime rather than its perpetrators.⁴ Statistics from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey show that young people under the age of 16 are over five times more likely to be the victims of an assault than people aged 16 plus.⁵

Much of the social research into gun, knife and crime issues therefore focuses on countering the perception that children and young people are overly represented in violent crime statistics and social trends. Although there are common themes linking the use of guns and knives to young people, both their own experiences and the different treatment of firearms and knives in law show knife and gun carrying to be separate issues. According to the experiences of children and young people involved with guns and knives are carried for a number of different reasons, such as a feeling of protection and to gain either self-esteem or respect:⁶

⁴ Source – The Metropolitan Police <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/6338755.stm>

⁵ Home Office, Young People and Crime: Findings from the 2005 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey Debbie Wilson, Clare Sharp and Alison Patterson

⁶ Fear and Fashion: The use of knives and other weapons by young people. 2004. Lemos & Crane, Bridge House Estates Trust

“When you know that one person is carrying a knife, you feel unsafe, and if you see that person he might barge you and ‘cos you ain’t carrying nothing he might try and stab you”

(James, 16).⁷

“I started carrying it when I got bullied at school... You just feel like no-one likes you and they’re all against you, so you just feel like you are at the bottom and everyone else is at the top. The knife helped reverse that for a little while, sometimes you feel all big and hard”

(Chris).⁸

“There are a number of reasons why some young people do carry guns and knives. Some want to look like the bigger person in front of their friends... [s]ome people carry them because they are with a certain crowd of people”

(Kingsley, age 13).⁹

Comments on the experiences of children and young people exposed to knife and gun crime account for why the use of firearms as an offensive weapon is relatively rare, accounting for about one in every 250 crimes.¹⁰ Knives are obviously more readily available but there also seems to be an understanding amongst those around gun related violence of the seriousness of gun crime. Following the recent spate of shootings across London one 16 year old boy described a different reality behind the killing of one of the victims indicating that guns aren’t necessarily a part of the cycle of usual score settling:

“... What happened to Billy isn’t a local thing. They would have stabbed him. Shooting means somebody’s got serious beef.”

(Evening Standard, 16 February 2007).

Evidence to the Home Affairs Committee hearing on black people in the criminal justice system identified reasons why the discharging of firearms during street robberies remains relatively low, citing the hiring out of individual

⁷ <http://mayor.london.gov.uk/young-london/teens/guest-editor/fairbridge-reports/street-safety.jsp>

⁸ Account taken from BBC Newsround. See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4420000/newsid_4424600/4424614.stm

⁹ <http://mayor.london.gov.uk/young-london/teens/guest-editor/fairbridge-reports/street-safety.jsp>

¹⁰ Homicides, Firearm Offences and Intimate Violence 2005/2006 - Supplementary Volume 1 to Crime in England and Wales 2005/2006) Kathryn Coleman, Krista Jansson, Peter Kaiza and Emma Reed 02/07

guns as an increasingly popular practice because of the risks of being caught in possession.¹¹ Many hired guns are used to intimidate intended victims, since weapons considered 'dirty', meaning that they have actually been discharged, can both cost the person firing it more on return, and diminish its rental value on the street as it becomes traceable to other crimes.¹²

It is difficult to obtain an accurate picture of knife crime from research statistics, and therefore to accurately assess the level and seriousness of the problem. Not all knife carrying is illegal, and the law differs depending on the length of the blade. Researcher's questions on the issue commonly ask about incidences of knife carrying without distinguishing between cases where a knife has been carried just once or regularly, or whether it was carried with intent. The issue of reporting on knife crime is an important one because it masks the real extent of knife crime. A Youth Justice Board survey carried out in 2004 found that while a quarter of children in school had carried a penknife and nine% a flick knife in the 12 months before the survey only three % had ever used them offensively whilst a Guardian survey found that half of all head teachers had caught a pupil carrying a knife in the previous 12 months.¹³ What is clear is that as a proportion of children who carry, or have access to knives, relatively few use them in criminal acts. In London, a knife and gun crime hotspot, gun and knife enabled offences are relatively uncommon – during 2004/05 only five% of all recorded violent crime involved a knife.¹⁴

The experiences of children and young people show a strong link between the propensity to use knives and guns as offensive weapons and the need, through insecurity, safety concerns, or lack of other opportunities, to be drawn into gang culture. Gang membership has been the focus of a Metropolitan Police study following a number of gang related shootings in late 2006 and early 2007 which identified 169 gangs in London. A quarter of these had been involved in murder. In December 2006 a number of children and young people involved in the X-it programme (a programme in South London working with children and young people) gave evidence to the Home Affairs Committee's session on young black people and the criminal justice system. In response to questions about why young people became involved in gangs:

11 Corrected transcript of oral evidence. To be published as HC 181-iv

12 Evening Standard, 21 February 2007

13 'Knife Crime': Ineffective reactions to a distracting problems? A Review of Evidence and Policy. , August 2006, The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

14 MPS recorded crime and Povey, D (2004) Home Office

“Basically some people are not really raised with love or whatever, so the only place where they are going to find love is from the streets or from their friends. People say gangs this and gangs that, and that is when they get involved with the gangs.”

(Male respondent to Committee question)

Another respondent stated that:

“... Everyone has needs as humans. If you do not get it at home you will find it somewhere else, and the street is the next place.”¹⁵

4. Guns, Knives and The Law

There are several Acts relating to the sale, control, and carrying of knives. The Prevention of Crime Act 1953 sets out a definition of an ‘offensive weapon’ as:

“any article made or adapted for use to causing injury to the person, or intended by the person having it with him for such use”.

The Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959 prohibits the manufacture, sale or possession for sale or hire, of ‘flick knives’ and ‘gravity knives’, while section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 prohibits the possession in a public place of any article with a blade or point including:

“... a folding pocketknife if the cutting edge of its blade exceeds three inches”

The offence of carrying an offensive weapon carries a maximum sentence of four years imprisonment on indictment.¹⁶ Having a bladed article can result in two years imprisonment. Both of the above Acts extend specifically to school premises.

¹⁵ Home Affairs Committee Uncorrected Transcript of Oral Evidence. (HC 181-i) House of Commons (Note: neither witnesses nor Members have had the opportunity to correct the record. The transcript is not yet an approved formal record of these proceedings). See: www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/home_affairs_committee/young_black_people_andthe_criminal_justice_system.cfm.

¹⁶ Crown Prosecution Service www.cps.gov.uk/legal/section12/chapter_c.html

The Knives Act 1997 makes it an offence to market knives in a manner likely to encourage violent behaviour, or be employed as combat weapons. Despite the claim of many children and young people that they carry knives for their own protection guidance to prosecutors by the Crown Prosecution Service makes it clear that:

“As a general rule, subject to the sufficiency of evidence, it is not in the public interest for persons to go about armed with offensive weapons. This applies even though they may believe they may possibly be attacked. A prosecution will thus normally be in the public interest, even where the offender is vulnerable.”¹⁷

Guns in the UK can only be legally owned under license. The legislative framework governing the use of firearms in the UK is The Firearms Act 1968. The Firearms Act 1968 makes it an offence possess a firearm/dangerous air weapon or shotgun without a certificate (S.1, 2), dealing in firearms without registration (S.3) and possessing a prohibited weapon (S.5). The 1968 Act has been amended several times since enactment, most recently by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 relating to the carrying of certain firearms in a public place. The 2003 Act makes it an offence to carry in a public place without a ‘reasonable excuse’:

“a loaded shotgun; an air weapon (whether loaded or not); any other firearm (whether loaded or not) together with ammunition suitable for use in that firearm, or an imitation firearm”.

Under current sentencing rules people found to be carrying a gun and aged 21 or over could receive a maximum five year sentence. In February 2007 the Government proposed bringing the maximum age at which this could apply down to eighteen. In addition to the lowering of the age at which minimum prison terms apply the Government has proposed powers for the police to carry out surveillance on the homes of suspected gun holders, and a new offence of ‘using someone to mind a weapon’.

¹⁷ Crown Prosecution Service www.cps.gov.uk/legal/section12/chapter_c.html

5. Issues for Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Children and Youth Organisations

The issue of gang membership and the growing public association of young people with offensive weapons present both challenges and opportunities for VCS organisations working with children and young people.

There are currently a number of practice models based on both prevention and intervention where children are either involved with gangs, or at risk of becoming so. Practice shows that there are a number of issues that influence young people's decisions to join a gang. Many of the factors at work on young people's decision are addressed through a variety of practice models. Approaches to the issue are broadly split between prevention and intervention, seeking out children and young people at risk of becoming involved with gangs and working with them once they are involved – in the latter case usually through the youth justice system.

Kids Company sees much of its work focused on rebuilding the lives of children who lack parental support, providing the emotional and practical advice and guidance some children would otherwise not receive. It is a central theme of Kids Company's approach to gang issues that these are essentially damaged children who, because of their experiences of domestic and street violence, attach no value to their lives. Much of the work undertaken by Kids Company is based on rebuilding emotional responses in children, through art and other therapeutic activities. Many of the children and young people Kids Company work with have no positive relationships with adults:

“what they desperately need is strong adult support. They believe that adults are abusive, violent and unreliable. When you can show them that this isn't always the case, and that what has happened to them is not their fault, they will respond.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Quotation from Saga Magazine profile of Camilla Batmanghelidjh: www.saga.co.uk/magazine/people/public-figures/CamilaBatmanghelidjh.asp

Other schemes, such as Value Life helps young people rebuild trusting relationships and better themselves through value for life and self-respect, recognising that gangs offer a replacement family and school life. A common theme in practical work with gangs is rebuilding links between young people and their communities. The Aasha Gang Conflict Project encourages young people to engage positively with their community and at the same time attain accredited qualifications based on a Personal Development Profile for each person involved.

Building personal qualities such as self-esteem, respect and confidence is an ongoing process among some practitioners. The Y-Pac project in the east London borough of Newham for instance aims to develop these skills in young people by enhancing their communications skills; allowing young people to adopt new strategies for meeting their needs in a non-violent way.

6. Resources

The Connected website has information on other projects, youth-work resources and actively seeks groups to join its network.

You can find out more at: www.connected.gov.uk

Further information on the range of practice addressing gang membership amongst children and young people is available from the Mayor of London's website: www.london.gov.uk/gangs/index.jsp

The Bridge House Estates Trust is setting up a website to highlight the work it is funding following on from the Lemos and Crane report.

Further information can be sought at: www.bridgehousetrust.org.uk

The following list of reports were referred to in this paper and will provide further information on the issues highlighted:

Fear and Fashion – Lemos & Crane – 2004 (www.bridgehousetrust.org.uk)

Findings from the Safer London Youth Survey 2004 – Communities that Care – 2004 (www.communitiesthatcare.org.uk)

Rationalisation of current research on guns, gangs and other weapons – Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science UCL – 2005 (www.connected.gov.uk)

Connected-first Home Office Conference Report – Home Office – 2005 (www.connected.gov.uk)

Behind the Headlines - a Speaking Out seminar on knife, gun and gang crime held at Birmingham Voluntary Services Council on 29 June 2007 The Speaking Out project held its first policy seminar in Birmingham at the end of June 2007. 58 individuals (excluding speakers and staff) attended the seminar. The attendees represented 53 organisations working in the field with young people; from national agencies to local grass roots projects, the police and youth justice services. Many were from the West Midlands and Manchester areas. Feedback from participants was very positive with more than 100% of attendees stating that the event had met or exceeded their expectations.

Seminar speakers and presentations

The seminar was chaired by Jenny Rogers Chief Executive of Leap confronting violence and featured the following presentations:

- **Enver Solomon**, Deputy Director for the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies gave an overview of the research evidence in the area and demonstrated how the current policy direction, which has been primarily criminal justice focussed, will not alleviate the problem.
- **Carole Eniffer**, Head of the Gun and Knife Crime section of the Home Office's Violent Crime Unit detailed the Government's response.
- **Viv Ahmun**, Chief Officer of Involve, explored the experience of Involve in delivering services to young people in the midst of gang involvement and activity. He also stated that the situation regarding gang activity was not wide spread but would grow if a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue wasn't forthcoming from the authorities.
- **Anthony Read**, Coordinator of Increase the Peace a network of groups working in the Birmingham area, discussed issues of community cohesion and outlined some of the barriers faced by community groups working in this area and how statutory services for young people need to change to engage effectively with young people from an urban, multi-ethnic experience.
- **Andy Jukes**, Gangs Worker from Leap confronting violence, spoke about Leap's work and research with young people who are members of gangs.

Recommendations for policy makers

The presentations set the context for group discussions which focussed on what participants felt needed to be done to create an effective policy response. A range of suggestions were made but the following five were raised amongst more than one group and were also discussed in the question and answer sessions with the speakers:

- **Exit routes** - There needs to be clear routes out for young people who want to lead a life away from gang or criminal activity. Safe houses were raised as an option but further work needs to be done here. Many young people are coerced into such criminal activity and can't see a way out even if they want to get away from it. Research evidence supports this.
- **Funding** - Community interventions are struggling for resources and can only access short term funding streams consequently limiting their capacity and impact. Children's trusts need to start commissioning services from mainstream funds to support community based interventions with young people. This will require a major shift in culture.
- **Youth Services** - Linked to the previous point local authority youth services should be at the heart of interventions tackling the challenges of gangs and violence amongst young people. However feedback from the conference was that too often they are not impacting in these areas. Youth services need to change to reflect the challenges around them particularly in urban areas.
- **Earlier interventions** - Preventative programmes should begin in primary schools and effective programmes should be delivered with drug and sex and relationship education. Schools should be incentivised to stop excluding young people and provide extra resources within school to tackle the root causes of those at risk of exclusion. There needs to be a full overhaul of Pupil Referral Units which were seen as not providing adequate services to some of the most vulnerable young people. Schools need to be encouraged to address the issues and to work with communities.
- **More communications with young people and professionals** - Establish forums where young people can talk to professionals such as the police, teachers, social workers and youth workers to share their experiences of contact with these agencies and to work with them on integrated solutions to the problems.

• **Involve peers and parents from the community** - There needs to be recognition that peers within communities, who may have been involved in gang activity or the criminal justice system and changed their lives around, have a crucial role to play as community/youth workers and activists. This can be a cause for concern for statutory agencies such as the police but needs to be supported. Similar parallels exist in the drug services sector where many drugs workers have been former addicts. Parents have a crucial role to play and any interventions should develop methods of bringing them together to learn from each other and work together to open dialogues with their children and young people within the community.

• **Supporting staff** - Staff working with young people need training and development on working with young people caught up in this lifestyle. Young people could support such training and development.

Next Steps

The recommendations above provide a clear pointer towards the need for a holistic policy response to address these challenges. Through this event we brought together large, small, BME, faith-based voluntary and community organisations led by and working with victims of gun and knife crime, statutory authorities and policy focussed agencies together with the shared belief that more needs to be done.

To follow up this event Speaking Out has committed to take forward the following actions:

- Send this briefing with the feedback from the seminar incorporated to all the participants at the event and to a range of relevant policy makers.
- Set up the first policy group made up of participants from this seminar. The group will receive a monthly newsletter from September and will be kept informed and involved in our policy work in this area.
- Hold a small round table event by the end of the year involving some participants from the event, selected members from NCVYS and NCVCCO, representatives from relevant networks in the area and a range of policy representatives from relevant government departments.

- Hold a meeting with the All Party Parliamentary Group on youth affairs on the issue of knife, gun and gang crime in the autumn.
- Link up with established networks in the voluntary and community sector working in the area and with networks and groups working with young people to get their voices heard on the issue.

Through this event Speaking Out attempted to get behind the headlines and explore the issues as seen by primarily voluntary and community sector practitioners working on the ground on an issue that has received high levels of media attention this year. However throughout the recent tragic headlines the development of a social policy response that can address the causes of this violence has not emerged. In developing the holistic response that needs to happen, the role of voluntary and community organisations will be critical. Speaking Out will be pushing the agenda set by this seminar with policy makers in Government.