

Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment

November 2023

Barnet Safer Communities Partnership

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1 Introduction and Summary

Under the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State within Chapter 1, Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (the PCSC Act). This Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) has been produced on behalf of Barnet's Community Safety Partnership to support organisations and authorities exercising functions in relation to the Serious Violence Duty 2023, to formulate a Serious Violence Strategy.

The SNA provides a comprehensive evidence-based analysis of the local profile, causes and contributing factors of serious violence. It is informed by information and feedback collated from specified authorities, local communities and organisations providing support in Barnet and, provides the basis from which solutions to reduce serious violence can built.

Serious Violence is defined by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) as: *'Any violence and exploitation affecting young people under the age of 25, domestic abuse, and sexual violence. Within the context of these types of violence, it encompasses homicide, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, personal robbery, threats to kill and violence against property caused during the commission of one of these offences. Domestic abuse is as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021'*.

1.1 Key findings:

- Males under the age of 25 are most affected by and involved in incidents of serious violence.
- Barnet's crime profile reports violence against the person, burglary, theft and robbery as the highest crime types in the borough; a similar profile is reported for 10 to 18-year-olds in the borough.
- Youth Justice Service (YJS) data shows a 63% increase in the number of 10 to 18-year-olds found in possession of a weapon in 2023 compared to reported data in 2022. The increase is relative to an increase in robbery offences.
- While YJS data indicates that drug-related offending among 10 to 18-year-olds is relatively low, the offending data from the Metropolitan Police reveals an 18% increase in drug-related offences.
- In 2023, there has been a 40% reduction in serious violence incidences in the community against a rise of violent incidents at public transport hubs and restaurants in the borough.
- In 2023, there has been a 43% reduction in the number of young people residing in Barnet being identified as suspects in incidents of violence in the community.
- Sexual assaults have increased by 89% since 2021; there is a correlation between deprivation and rates of violent crime and sexual offences; Barnet's overall figure for economic activity is 64.57%.
- There are very low rates of children and adults of Asian ethnicity in serious violence, child exploitation and missing data. A recent 9% increase in reported crime from those identifying as Asian may indicate an increase in awareness and trust.
- The number of young people excluded from school due to involvement in a serious violent crime has risen from 65 to 24, of which 69% were male and 12% have Special Education Needs (SEN) and/or have an Education, Health, Care Plan (EHCP).

1.2 Key recommendations:

1. Strengthen partnership working for a coordinated whole system approach to preventing and tackling violent offending in the borough.
2. Learn from and build on the successes of existing local projects and services that are targeted at preventing and reducing crime, violence, and exploitation.
3. Build on the early success of the “Clear Hold Build” approach to improve community safety and reduce crime and anti-social behaviours in areas with higher levels of violent offending.
4. Support the development of universal and standardised support that is place-based in local schools and communities, with a focus on:
 - Empowering parents and carers
 - Preventative education approaches
 - Pro-active and evidenced-informed support for 10 to 25-year-olds at the greatest risk of exploitation, offending and violence.
5. Development of targeted support aimed at reducing exploitation and offending in vulnerable groups including those aged 10-24 years with SEN and needs arising from neurodiverse conditions.
6. Pro-actively monitor and tackle disproportionately of over-represented groups who are affected by violence and build data into key performance indicators and evaluation of all services.
7. Effectively engage and coproduce solutions to local problems with local people
8. Support the development of victim support services for males as a high-risk group.
9. Monitor and proactively intervene to reduce the risk of exclusion from education (including children subject to ‘managed moves’), employment and training.
10. Develop a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing knife-enabled offending.
11. Align strategic priorities of the Combatting Drugs Partnership, Community Safety Strategy, Reducing Offending Partnership, Youth Justice Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls, Tackling Violence & Exploitation Strategy with the Serious Violence Strategy

2 Governance, Description of Place & Population

2.1 Governance

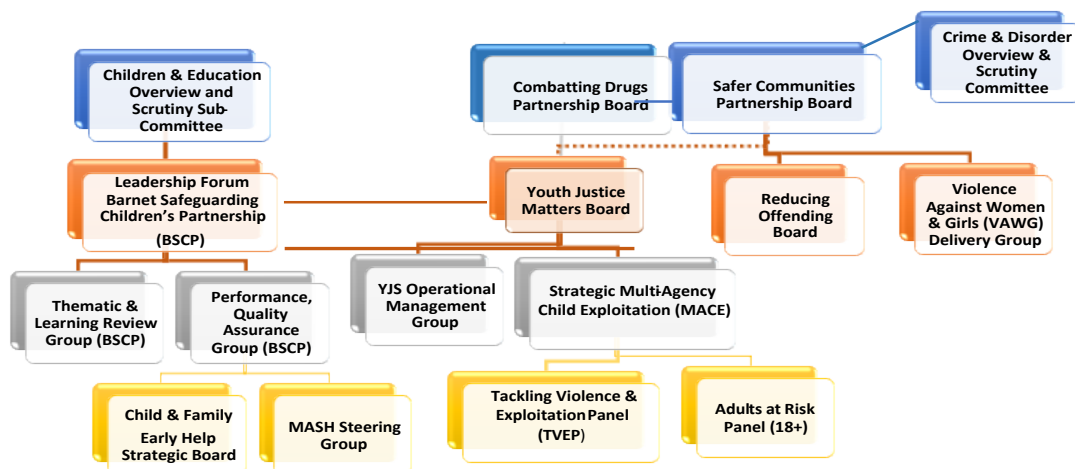
Under the newly elected Labour Administration in May 2022, Barnet developed a new corporate plan, the Corporate Plan 2023 commits the Council to be an organisation that “Cares for People, Our Places, and the Planet”¹



The Administration has introduced a cabinet system with overview and scrutiny committees these include Children and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a Crime & Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Fig 1. Governance & Board Interface Framework

Governance & Board Interface Framework



¹ [Barnet Corporate Plan 2023-26.pdf](#)

The serious violence strategy will straddle both committees and is intersectional with a number of other local strategies and plans, including Barnet's:

- Community Safety Strategy 2022 – 2027²
- Children and Young People's Plan 2023 – 2027³
- Youth Justice Plan 2023 – 2025⁴
- Child & Family Early Help Strategy 2023 – 2027⁵
- Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022 - 2025⁶
- SEND Strategy 2021 -2025⁷
- Combatting Drugs Partnership Delivery Plan⁸

2.2 Barnet's Population

Barnet is the second largest borough by population in London, home to over 389,000 people, 26,000 businesses, and 1,000 charities. Demographic data presented in Table 1 shows that 122,680 residents are aged under 25 years, accounting for 31% of the total population and this is expected to grow further into the next decade. Over 90 languages are spoken with 44% of residents born in another country. Barnet is home to London's largest Jewish community with 14.5% of residents self-identifying as Jewish, and 88% of residents say their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Currently, 43% of the population is not White and this diversity is also expected to continue to grow. Whilst seen as a relatively prosperous borough, there are pockets of deprivation, particularly concentrated in the west and south of the borough. Open source data is available here [JSNA – Borough Summary | Barnet Open Data](#)

2.2.1 Demographics

Indicator	2011	2021	% Change
Total Population	356,386	389,300	+9.2%
Gender			
Female	183,710 (51.5%)	183,710 (51.5%)	
Male	172,676 (48.5%)	188,400 (48.4%)	
Age			
0-19	90,464 (25.4%)	96,600 (24.8%)	+6.8%
20-24	20,670 (5.8%)	26,080 (6.7%)	+26.2%
25-74	221,542 (62.2%)	240,320 (61.7%)	

² [Powerpoint Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

³ <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/node/760>

⁴ [023750 BC3900 Youth Justice Plan 2023 Interactive HG5 -Final versionn for Web.pdf \(barnet.gov.uk\)](#)

⁵ [023478 - BC3611 - BARNET - New Child and Family Early Help Strategy - WEB 12.4.2023_0.pdf](#)

⁶ <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-and-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

⁷ https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/send_strategy_2021-2024_.pdf

⁸ [Appendix 3 Barnet CDPB Delivery Plan 2023.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

75+	23,709 (6.7%)	26,300 (6.8%)
Ethnicity		
White	228,553 (64.1%)	224,762 (57.7%)
Asian	65,918 (18.5%)	74,972 (19.3%)
Black	27,431 (7.7%)	30,651 (7.9%)
Multi	17,169 (4.8%)	20,889 (5.4%)
Other	17,315 (4.9%)	38,070 (9.8%)

Table 1. Barnet Demographic Data Census 2011 and 2021

2.2.2 Education

All schools in Barnet are good or outstanding. Progress of pupils between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (KS2) in all subjects is significantly better than the national average (top 10% in Reading and Maths in 2022), and attainment and progress of Children on a Child Protection Plan at KS2 was strong comparatively and in the top 20% of Local Authorities, 10% in some areas. Barnet's Progress 8 ranked Barnet the 7th best Local Authority in the country in 2 (out of 152 Local Authorities), and Barnet was in the top 10% nationally in both Progress 8 (7th) and Attainment 8 (9th) for disadvantaged pupils. The progression rate gap between Free School Meals (FSM) and non-FSM in Barnet is smaller than national. 98.5% of 16–17-year-olds in Barnet are in learning, and the progression rate of FSM students in Barnet post-16 is higher than non-FSM students nationally. Table 2 summarises the overall level of qualifications of residents of Barnet, with increases in take-up of apprenticeships and level 3 and level 4+ between 2011 and 2021.

Indicator	2011	2021	Change
No qualifications	43,883 (15.5%)	47,762 (15.4%)	-
Level 1	27,240 (9.7%)	21,302 (6.9%)	-
Level 2	34,028 (12.1%)	30,687 (9.9%)	-
Apprenticeship	3,778 (1.3%)	9,630 (3.1%)	+154.9%
Level 3	28,742 (10.2%)	38,541 (12.5%)	+34.1%
Level 4+	113,815 (40.3%)	151,642 (49%)	+33.2%
Other	30,716 (10.9%)	9,790 (3.2%)	-
Total	282,152 (100%)	309,354 (100%)	9.6%

Table 2. Barnet residents' education levels Census 2011 and 2021

Attendance in Barnet schools is 1% above national with the persistent absence rate below national and the severe persistent absence rate 0.7% below national. Children with a Child Protection Plan had good attendance and were ranked 6th nationally for overall attendance, 16th for unauthorised absence, 7th for authorised absence, and 6th for persistent absence. The fixed term exclusion rate in Barnet schools is 2.3% below national, and no Looked After Children, Children on Child Protection plans or Children in Need were permanently excluded in 2021/22. The suspension rate is comparatively low for Looked After Children (ranked 10th) and children on Child Protection Plans (ranked 15th).

2.2.3 Employment

Economic activity data shows an increase in economic inactivity overall due to an increase in the proportion of retirees in the overall population. Chart 1 shows the employment rates for residents compared to London and national averages and shows there are slightly higher rates of unemployment in Barnet (5.7%) than for the average across London (4.6%) and Great Britain (3.8%) and lower rates of economic activity and employment. A greater proportion of males than females are economically active, with males more likely than females to be self-employed and females with higher rates of employment (70.8%) than males (67.6%).

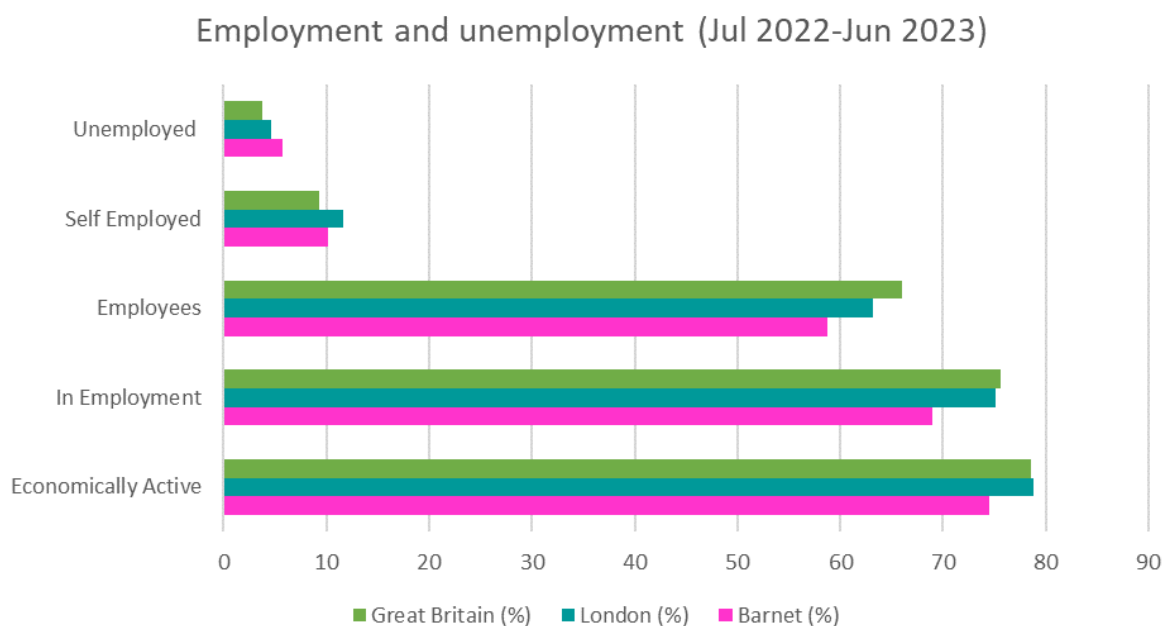


Chart 1. Barnet residents' employment comparative data ONS

2.2.4 Deprivation

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures show that in Barnet, 11.1% of the population was income-deprived in 2019. Of the 316 local authorities in England (excluding the Isles of Scilly), Barnet is ranked 149th most income deprived. In the least deprived neighbourhood in Barnet, 1.3% of people are estimated to be income deprived. In the most deprived neighbourhood, 33.2% of people are estimated to be income deprived. The gap between these

two is 31.9 percentage points in Barnet. Data in Table 3 shows that almost 14% of children aged 0-15 in Barnet are living in poverty, with 10.76% and 10.3% living in low-income families. Data from the 2021 census shows there is no link between economic inactivity and deprivation, with the Barnet overall figure for economic activity at 64.57%, 63.78% of the most deprived are economically active and 63.72% of the least deprived are economically active.

	Children aged 0-15 in absolute low-income families	Children aged 0-15 in relative low-income families	Children aged 0-15 in poverty	Households in Fuel Poverty	Overcrowded housing (Census 2021)
Barnet	10.76	10.30	13.95	10.37	14.29
Most Deprived	18.86	18.67	24.12	14.68	21.68
Above Average	11.27	10.40	15.38	12.01	18.75
Average	9.48	8.88	12.47	9.10	13.74
Below Average	7.66	7.46	7.95	8.21	9.47
Least Deprived	5.29	4.78	4.95	7.68	5.46

Table 3. Barnet residents' deprivation comparative data ONS

Chart 2 shows that there may, however, be a correlation between deprivation and rates of violent crime and sexual offences in the Borough.

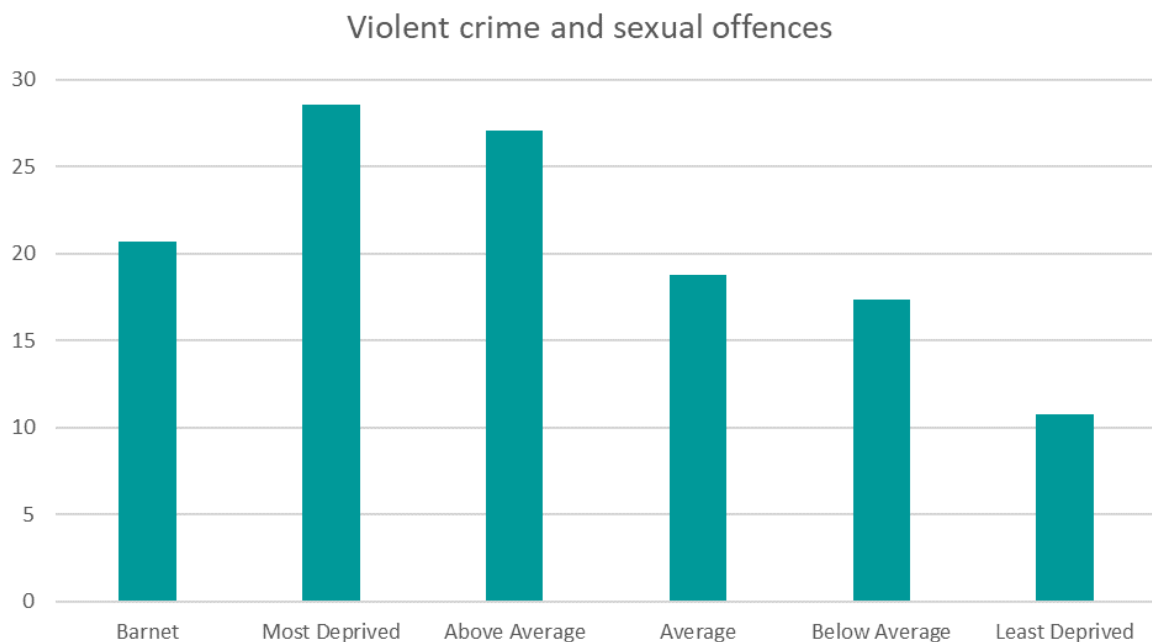


Chart 2. Barnet rates of violent crime and sexual offences by level of deprivation data ONS

3 Barnet's Violence Profile

Barnet's crime profile provides insights into violent offending including frequency, perpetrators and victims. This allows for the development of targeted strategies to create an even safer borough and environment for residents.

3.1 Serious Violence Crimes Overview

Table 4 displays the recorded offences by the Metropolitan Police in Barnet between January 2022 and July 2023. In Table 5, these figures are further segmented by quarters over the respective years. The increased numbers in Q1 and Q1 of 2022 are attributed to the easing of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the volume has continued to rise since 2022.

Year	Total No. of Offences
2022	15,454
2023 (YE July 2023)	17,272

Table 4. Number of recorded offences between January 2022 and July 2023, London Metropolitan Police Safestats.

Recorded offences between January 2022 to July 2023				
Year	Jan – Mar Q1	Apr-Jun Q2	Jul-Sep Q3	Oct-Dec Q4
2022	219	407	7349	7479
2023	7532	7441	2479 (up to July 2023)	Data not available

Table 5. Number of recorded offences between January 2022 and July 2023 across each quarter, London Metropolitan Police Safestats.

Offence Group	Barnet (Obtained via Met Data, Safestats)	London	England
Violence against the person	Data not available	244,954	1,974,664
Homicide	2	114	573
Violence with injury	1,235	78,384	540,855
Violence without injury	3,023	104,833	778,233
Sexual offences	34	24,853	181,252
Robbery	496	31,157	74,702
Theft offences*	5,680	1,963,174	7,585,439
Burglary *	1,054	109,892	525,082
Vehicle offences	2,144	107,445	388,055
Criminal damage & and arson	1,123	54,679	485,340
Drug offences	616	41,429	168,839
Possession of weapon offences	74	6,183	55,772
Total	15,481	2,522,143	10,784,142

*Theft and burglary offences are inclusive of bicycle/other theft, shoplifting, burglary, and residential and non-residential burglary.

Table 6. Number of recorded offences between January 2022 and year end June 2023, ONS.

Table 7 shows an increase in the number of incidents. Barnet, like several other boroughs witnessed an increase in violent crimes as the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic were lifted, which are likely contributed to by an increase in financial hardship, lack of access to key

services during the pandemic, an increase in drug and alcohol use, mental health needs and domestic abuse incidents. Further, some disruption to organised criminal groups activities creating new opportunities for territorial and business (sale and supply of illicit drugs) conflict.

Violent Crime Groups	No. of incidents in YE July 2023	No. of incidents in YE July 2022
Burglary/Robbery/Theft	7699	1195
Violence without injury	3023	416
Violence with injury	1253	226
Criminal Damage	1014	166
Arson	35	12
Sexual Assault/Rape	34	18
Possession of a firearm with offences	28	3
Possessions of an article with a blade or point	25	4
Possession of other weapon	17	4
Possession of firearm with intent	4	1
Homicide	2	0
Violent Disorder	2	0

Table 7. Overview of recorded violent crime offences between January 2022 and July 2023, London Metropolitan Police Safestats.

3.1.1 Drug Offences

Chart 3 illustrates a rise in the number of drug-related offences in April 2022, with a significant peak in June 2022. The increase can be attributed to the relaxation of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

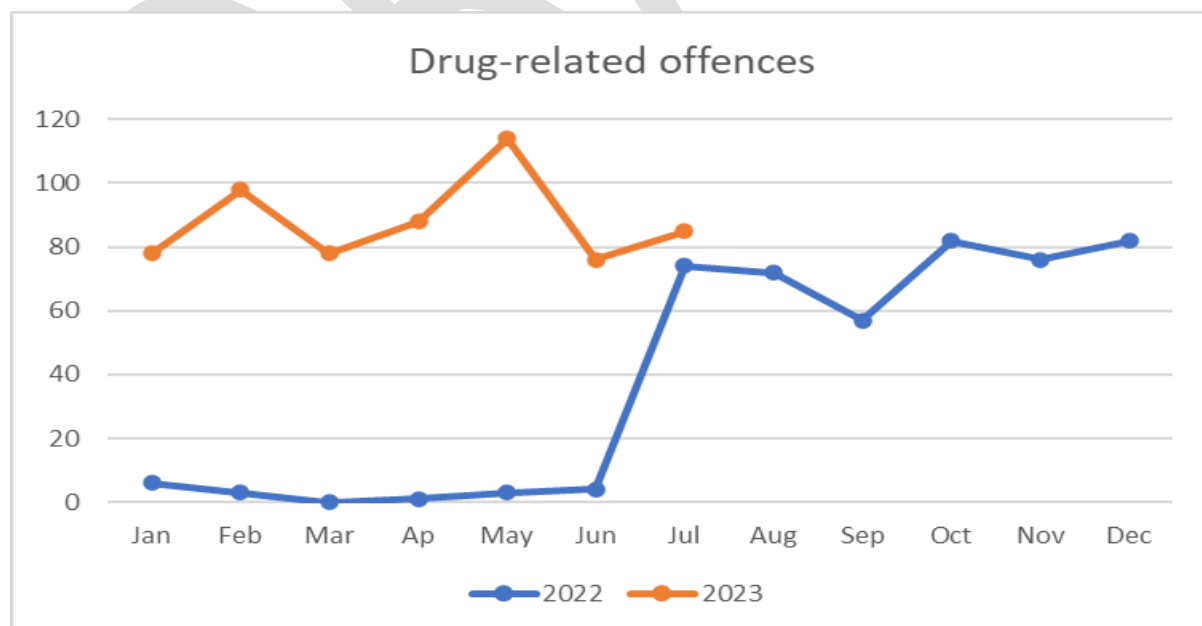


Chart 3. Total number of drug-related recorded offences, London Metropolitan Police Safestats 2023

Table 8 shows the number of drug offences in Barnet is generally lower than the London rate of offences per 1000 population in January 2023 the London rate is 4.8, in Barnet it is 2.4. As illustrated in the map below, the incidence varies across wards, with the west of the borough showing a higher volume of drug offences. The disproportionate crime rate can be directly affected by pro-active policing in high crime areas.

	Barnet	London
Drug offences per 1000 pop Feb 2022 – Jan 2023	2.4 1000 pop	4.8 per 1000 pop
Number of offences 12 months to Jan 2023 compared to previous 12 months to Jan 2022	Down 14.8%	Down 8.3%
January 2023 compared to December 2022	Down 2.7%	Up 26.8%

Table 8. Drug offences in London and Barnet, London Borough of Barnet Combatting Drugs Partnership Needs Assessment, 2023.

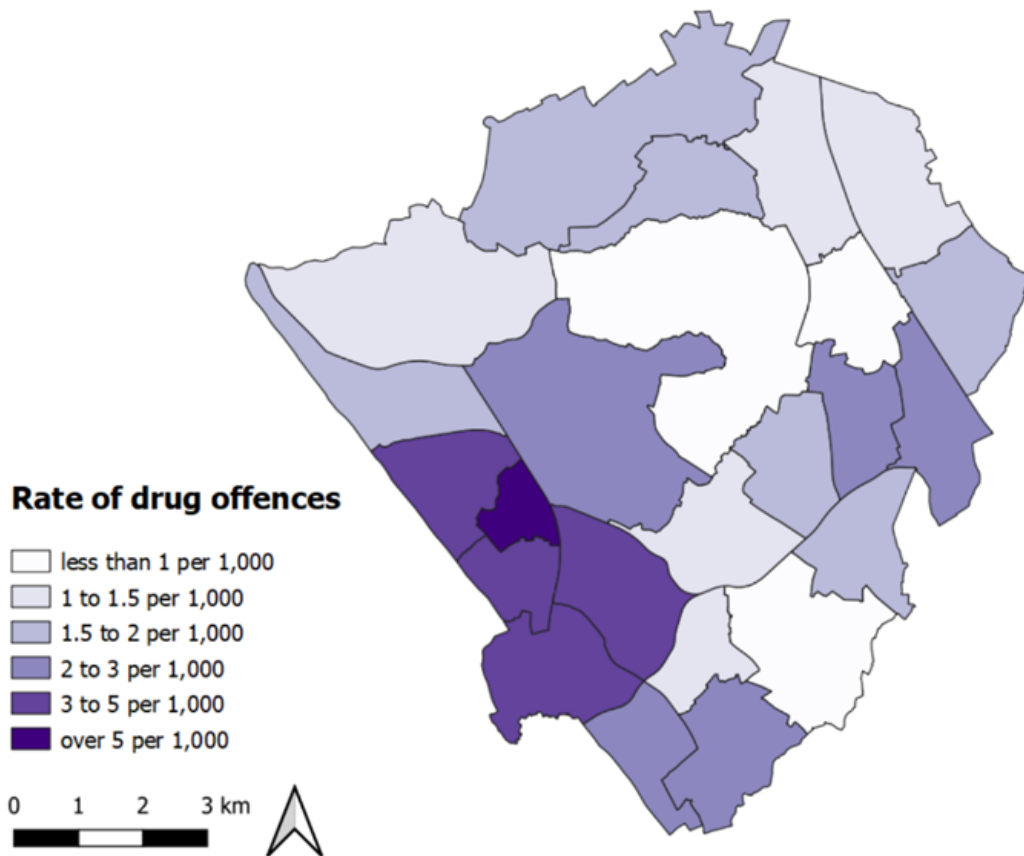


Figure 1. Heat map showing drug offences by ward, Combatting Drugs Partnership Needs Assessment 2023.

3.2 Serious Violence (Under 25s)

3.2.1 Offending Data

Table 9 indicates a greater occurrence of serious violence crimes among individuals under 25; nevertheless, it is important to note the presence of undisclosed data that cannot be accounted for.

Crime Group	YEAR									
	2022					2023				
	1-17 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-29 yrs	30-34 yrs	N/A	1-17 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-29 yrs	30-34 yrs	N/A
Arson and Criminal Damage	107	57	50	45	180	112	73	40	67	210
Burglary, Theft & Robbery Related	322	395	235	341	1826	406	437	318	420	2150
Violence Related	419	420	327	241	696	438	523	359	461	811
Possession of weapon	9	15	8	6	15	18	21	3	4	22
Drugs Related	30	139	60	50	120	38	162	88	56	235
TOTAL	887	1026	680	683	2837	1012	1216	808	1008	3428

Table 9. Breakdown of 0–34-year-olds serious violent crime offences from January 2022 and July 2023 London Metropolitan Police recorded suspect data, Safestats

There is a higher rate of serious violence offences amongst those under 25 years which can be attributed to a combination of factors i.e. higher prevalence of involvement in street gangs/group offending and/or exploitation/organised criminal groups.

Other contributing factors to offending are exposure to domestic abuse, adverse life experiences, mental health, socioeconomic disparities and access to education and employment.

3.2.2 Youth Justice Services

Youth Justice Services (YJS) works with children and young people who have committed an offence for which they have been charged. The service works with children aged between 10 and 17 years. YJS support children to make changes in their lives, so they do not reoffend or cause further harm to the community. This includes promoting restorative justice and working with victims.

Prevention, Diversion and Out-of-Court Disposals

When a child or young person commits an offence in some cases, it may be most appropriate to divert or triage them away from the criminal justice system and work with the individual, their family and victim through more informal ways to address their needs and prevent further offending.

In Barnet there are a range of preventative, diversionary and Out of Court Disposal interventions. The Engage programme provides a youth work intervention to children whilst in police detention enabling early diversion to positive activities. The Turnaround Programme, also offers a diversionary route from the criminal justice system through targeted youth support.

Out-of-court disposals (OOC) can be used for children and young people who have admitted to an offence, but it is not in the public interest to prosecute as it is not always appropriate for children/young people who commit a crime to be sent to court. It may be appropriate for the Police and Youth Justice Service to consider an Out of Court disposal (OOC).

OOC options include:

- No further action
- Triage or Community Resolution: (Triage or Community Resolution is an informal process that means a child or young person will not be prosecuted, given a community resolution or Triage. The child can be asked to go to Youth Justice Team appointments. Children or young people who get in trouble for the first time or less serious offences can be dealt with informally by the police. If a child or young person is interviewed and admits to doing something wrong, the police should always consider out-of-court disposals)
- Youth Caution: (Youth Cautions aim to provide a proportionate and effective resolution to offending and support the principle statutory aim of the youth justice system of preventing offending by children and young people)
- Youth Conditional Caution: (Youth Conditional Cautions are cautions conditions attached. If a child or young person does not keep to the conditions they could be prosecuted for the original offence)

In Barnet, OOCs are proven to be effective in providing holistic intervention and diversion for children in preventing entry into the criminal justice system. In 2022/23, 78 children received an OOC. A breakdown of intervention provided is outlined in the table below. This cohort is predominantly male 82%, which reflects a similar gender breakdown to probation. The peak age group of these individuals is 17 years old, with 16 years old being the next most represented group.

OOCD	Total
Triage	2
Youth Caution	4
Youth Conditional Caution	8
Turnaround	20
Criminal Behaviour Order	4
Total	38

Community	Total
Referral Order	24
Community Resolution Police Facilitated	1
Community Resolution - other agencies facilitated	2
Community Resolution with YOT Intervention	13
Total	40

Young people engaged in an OOCD receive a holistic approach that supports a wide range of needs and includes underlying causal factors to the incident taking place, as well as educative approaches that promote pro-social behaviour and positive activities.

YJS Offenders Demographics:

The data from YJS indicates that from 2021 to 2023 (ending in March), the majority of serious violence crimes were perpetrated by males (84%) with 51% aged 10-14; a detailed breakdown of the ethnicity data is also provided below.



Table 10 indicates an elevated percentage of robbery incidents within the 10–18-year group, aligning with the substantial burglary, theft and robbery offences presented in Table 7.

Serious Violence Offence	2020-2021				2021-2022				2022-2023			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Drugs	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Robbery	100	92	90	100	88	100	95	93	100	9	100	100
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	6%	%	%
Violence against the person	0%	8%	10%	0%	0%	0%	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Table 10. The proportional make-up of serious violence offences by offence group for 10–18-year-olds. London Borough of Barnet, Youth Justice Services, 2023.

The Metropolitan Police Safestats data, shows an increased prevalence of blades and knives used during serious violent crimes such as burglary, theft, and robberies. A higher rate of offenders employ blades/knives for threats rather than causing actual injuries. Understanding the perspective of young people regarding knife crimes indicates that, in many instances, the intent behind carrying a knife is not for usage but rather for protection. Nevertheless, in certain situations, incidents can unexpectedly escalate, leading to injuries and in some cases, fatalities.

Chart 5 illustrates a rising trend in the number of blades or knives carried by 10–18-year-olds in Barnet.

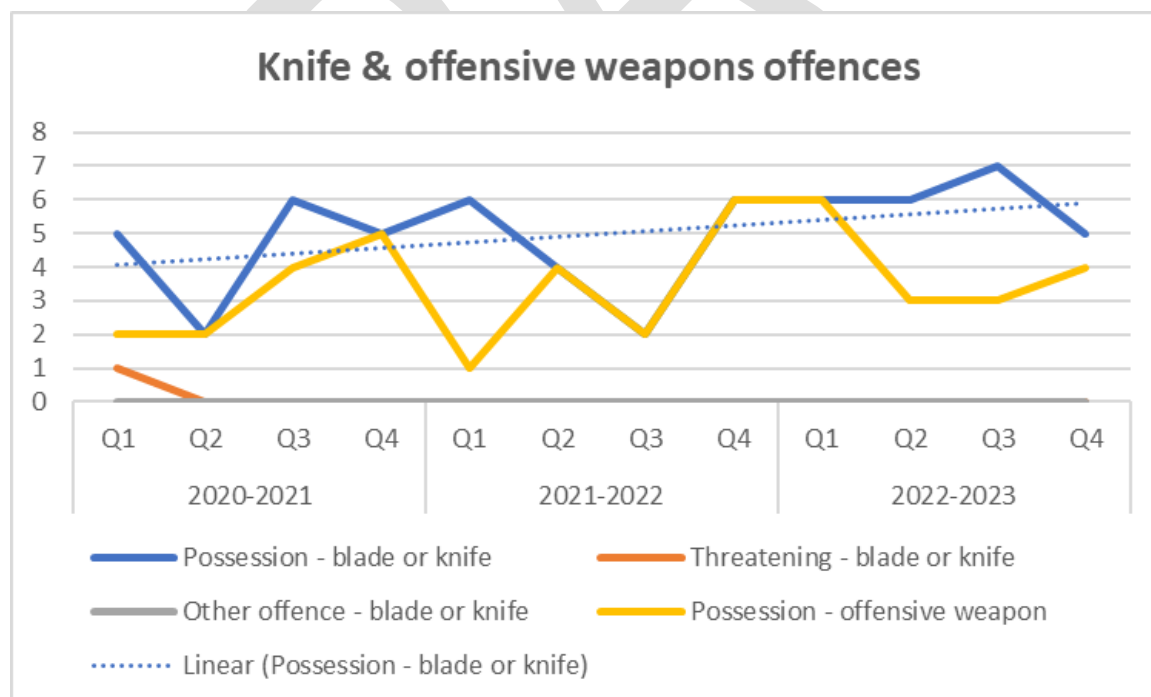


Chart 5. The number of knife and offensive weapon offences for 10–18-year-olds. London Borough of Barnet, Youth Justice Services, 2023.

3.2.3 Serious Incident Response Meetings

In Barnet we have made significant steps in understanding that to effectively safeguard and support young people we must consider the young person in context to their environment, surroundings, and local community. When serious incidents occur it not only impacts directly on the young person and their family but also on the local community and grassroots, youth provisions and community groups that the family are part of. A Serious Incident Response Meeting (SIRM) is arranged within 24 hours for all incidents of serious violence where the victim or suspect is under 25 years and is.

- A resident in Barnet
- Notification that the young person or adult has received an OSMAN notice from the police, even if violence has not occurred.
- The incident is linked to wider criminal or gang activity.
- The victim or suspect is known to Children’s Social Care Services including Onwards & Upwards), Child & Family Early Help Services or Youth Justice Services

A SIRM will be held for all incidents of serious violence where children are living in the victim or suspect household regardless of age.

If the victim and/or suspect is aged 19+ and does not meet any of the above criteria a SIRM will not be held, and the MASH will notify the chair of the Adults at Risk Panel

- SIRMs will be undertaken for all children who reside in Barnet up to the ages of 19 and up to 25 if they have care leaver status, open to the 0-25 service or if there are children under the age of 18 residing in the household.
- If the young person subject to the SIRM is open to children's social care the respective assistant head of service will be responsible for chairing the SIRM.
- Key contact list and invitees have been updated.

The SIRM data in Chart 6 shows spikes of violence occurring during May and August 2023, we believe that these incidents are more related to localised tensions rivals and disagreements between individuals and groups. Other factors which are more connected to incidents of violence include the nighttime economy and high-footfall areas including transport hubs.

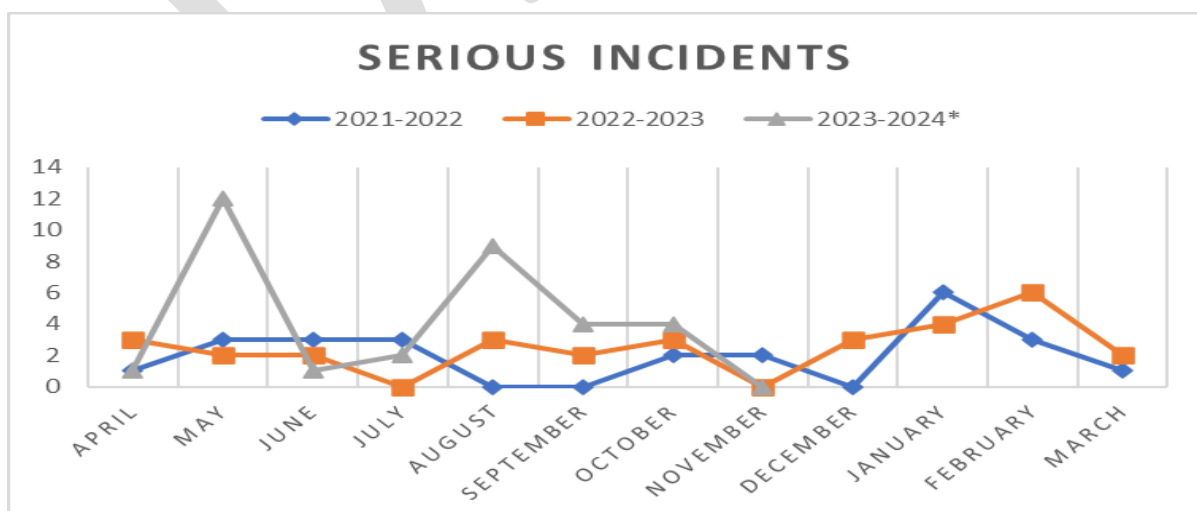


Chart 6. Number of serious incidents involving under 25s, London Borough of Barnet Serious Incident Reporting Meeting (SIRM) data, 2023.

Clear Hold Build:

“Clear Hold Build” is a localised targeted response to reduce crime and violence. The staged approach initially seeks to provide intense Policing in a specific area and to use a mixture of intelligence and high-visibility Police to “Clear” or arrest suspects of crime and violence.

The “Hold” phase seeks to develop partnership and community resources to maintain the local areas following the period of Policing and the Build Phase” is to ensure that all partners and the community have plans and are sustaining their local area.

The initial stage of this operation was undertaken from July to September 2023 and resulted in over 200 arrests, with just 20 of these being young people. Most arrests were not Barnet residents but adults and young people who reside in other London boroughs and counties. This has resulted in anecdotal information suggesting residents feel safer, and in addition, localised crime across various types has decreased.

This staged approach is leading to the development of localised partnership and community plan to maintain positive changes. These plans which include the local community, drug and alcohol services, Health, Social care and Community Safety are currently being developed.

Table 11, shows in the past 2.5 years, stabbings consistently emerged as the predominant form of violence, with knife crime statistics surging by 62% since 2021. The results align with the increasing pattern of knife and weapon offences documents by YJS, as indicated in chart 5.

Serious Violence Crimes	Number of Incidents		
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024 (Apr-Oct 23)
Shooting	3	2	2
Firearm Discharge	0	4	2
Attempted Stabbing	0	1	0
Stabbing	13	16	21
Assault	8	5	6
Assault with Vehicle	1	1	0
Kidnapping	1	2	2
Aggravated Burglary	2	1	0
Torture	0	1	0
Murder	3	1	2
Threats to Life	0	1	3

Table 11. Breakdown of the types of serious incidents involving under 25s, London Borough of Barnet’s Serious Incident Reporting Meeting (SIRM) data, 2023.

Since 2021, chart 7 shows a 40% reduction in serious incidents on public streets, contrasting with an increase in incidents occurring in parks and public open spaces during the same period.

These parks are situated in areas where authorities are already aware of drug dealing tensions and gang activity. Figure 2 displays the parks and greenspaces in Barnet where there has been an increase in the occurrences of these incidents.

In 2023, there is a greater diversity in the types of locations where incidents are happening such as public transport hubs and parks within Barnet.

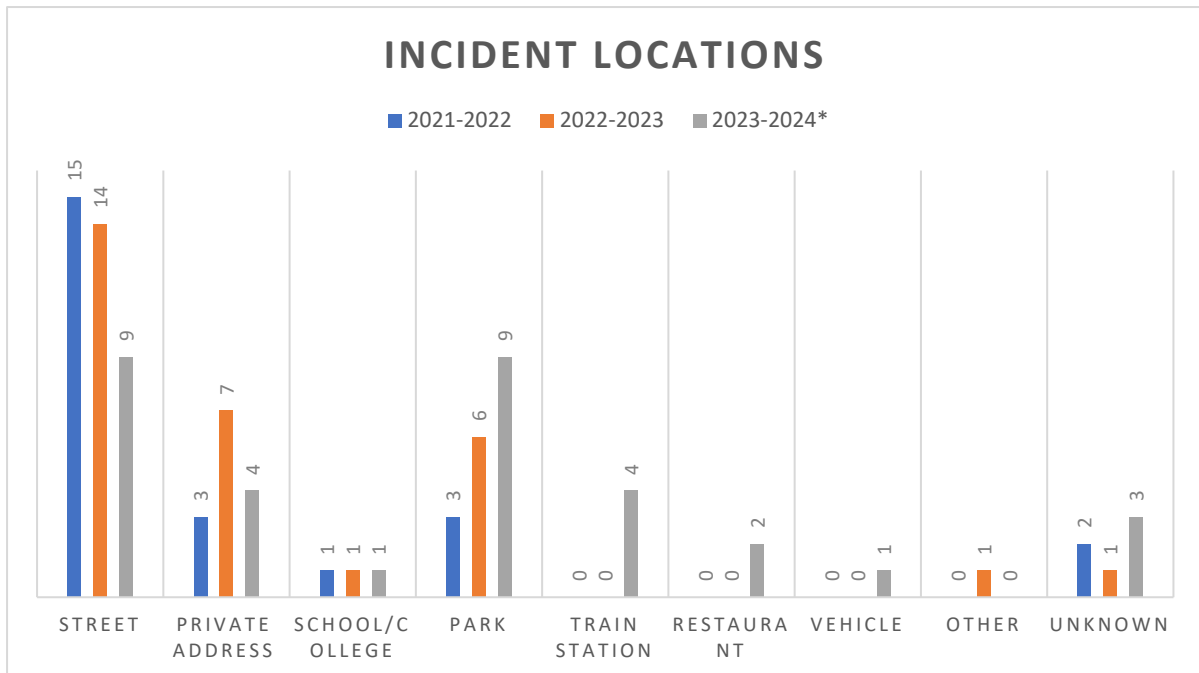


Chart 7. Serious violent crime locations. London Borough of Barnet Serious Incident Reporting Meeting (SIRMS) data.

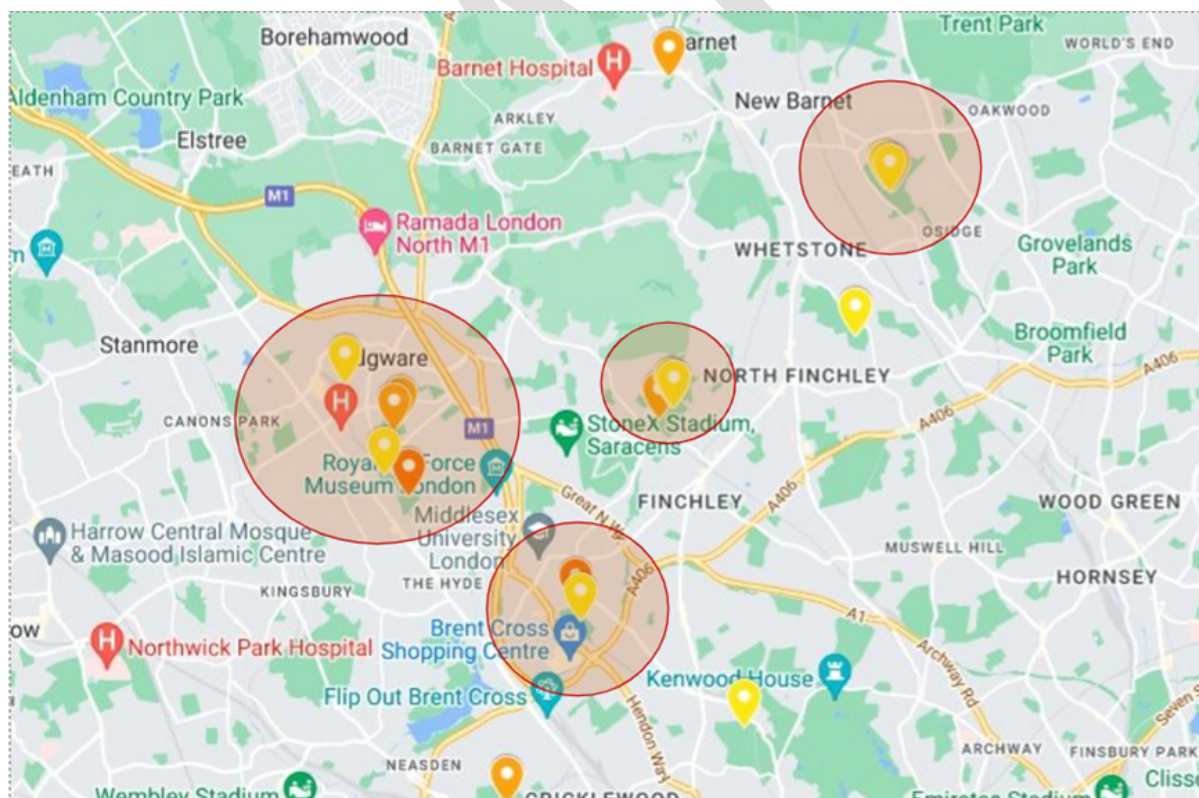


Figure 2. Barnet parks and greenspaces were identified as hotspots for serious violent crimes.

Young people are more likely to be a victim of serious violence offence than a suspect or perpetrator. Chart 8 shows a 43% reduction in the number of young people in Barnet being identified as suspects from 2021 to 2023.

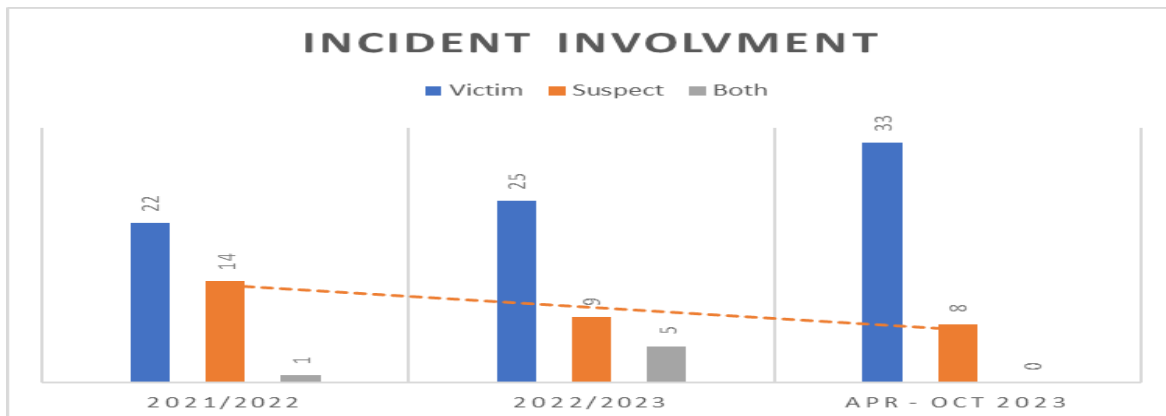


Chart 8. Breakdown of the number of young people by involvement in serious violent crimes. London Borough of Barnet Serious Incident Reporting Meeting (SIRMS) data.

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates significant findings regarding serious violent crimes, considering gender, age, and ethnicity among under 25s.

Gender

- From 2021 to 2023, females involved in serious violence incidents has increased from 8% to 15%.
- Many of these violent incidents are associated with various forms of criminal exploitation, and this reflects work around gender bias and recognising that females face similar risks of exploitation and physical harm as males.
- Throughout the period 2021 to 2023, only males are documented as being involved in multiple serious violence incidents within a 12 month period, suggesting a higher likelihood of repeat targeting and victimisation.
- Data indicates that males who were initially victims of incidents often end up being arrested for violent offences themselves.

Age

- In 2021 and 2022 the majority of the SIRM cohort were individuals over 18. 2023 marks the only period where those aged 18 and above no longer constitute the largest percentage of the SIRM cohort.
- This indicates the start of a potential trend towards a decrease in the overall average age of those involved in serious violent crimes in the borough.

Ethnicity

- Between 2021 and 2023 there has been a 24% decrease in the overall representation of young people identifying as black involved in serious incidents.
- Concurrently, the cohort identifying as white has seen a 16% increase over the same timeframe.
- Asian ethnicities consistently represent the smallest proportion of the cohort, a trend observed across Family Services where Asians are underrepresented in exploitation issues or as reported missing individuals. More recent, there has been a 9% increase in crimes reported which could indicate a growing trust of professionals from within the Asian community.

Figure 1. Summary of key demographic findings between 2021 to 2023, London Borough of Barnet, Serious Incident Reporting Meeting (SIRMS) data.

3.3 London Ambulance Service

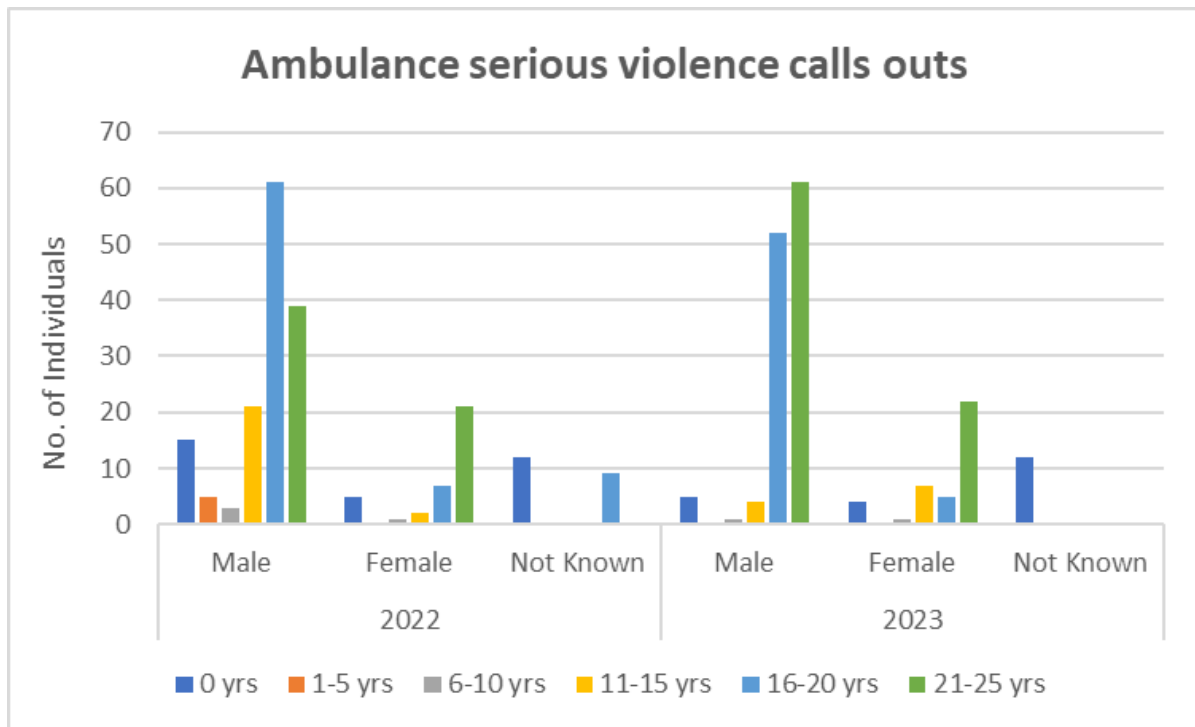


Chart 9. Number of serious violent crimes London Ambulance Services recorded call-outs based on gender, January 2022 to July 2023, Safestats

3.4 Education

In Barnet there are 130 schools, these are comprised the following, which also include faith, fee-paying, and independent schools.

Type of school	Number of schools
Nursery schools	4
Primary schools	90
Secondary schools	25
All-through schools	3
Special schools	6
Pupil Referral Unit	2

Each school provides their educative approaches and programmes to support pupils; pro-social behaviour and decision-making, healthy relationships and awareness of exploitation

and violence. If a school is particularly concerned about a young person they will refer them to Child and Family Early Help Services.

3.4.1 School Exclusions

The school exclusions data over the past two years shows that in the 2022-2023 academic year, **65** young individuals faced school exclusions, compared to **24** in 2021-2022. This rise is believed to be linked to the disruptions caused by the preceding COVID-19 pandemic, impacting the education of young people significantly and changes in reporting accuracy.

Key highlights from this cohort include:

2021-22 Academic Year	2022 – 23 Academic Year
N/A	22 exclusions for Assault, ABH, GBH or threats
7 Young People caught with a weapon (knife)	7 Young People caught with a weapon (knife)
N/A	10 young people were excluded for persistent disruptive behaviour
2 young people were excluded for dealing drugs/or drinking alcohol	1 young person was excluded for dealing drugs
15 were male 8 were Female	45 were Male 20 were Female
11 has a recorded EHCP or SEN	7 had a recorded EHCP, or SEN
Peak numbers of exclusions are in year 9 followed by year 8	Peak numbers of Exclusions are in Year 10 followed by Year 9
12 excluded young people received pupil premium	24 excluded young people received pupil premium

Exclusion of a child from school is often deemed as a last option. Schools in Barnet will have a range of approaches and pastoral support to avoid exclusion. However, there is often a 'zero tolerance' approach to both violence and weapons/drug possession. Although a child found involved in violence or weapons carrying will be reported to the Police, the exclusion process will fall outside of the Out of Court Disposal or Youth Justice Services, which seeks to provide a holistic approach to reducing the risk of further offending and to also support the child's additional needs.

For some children, exclusion represents a significant and critical moment, in which they can be exposed to increased extra-familial risk and harm that can lead to involvement in further violence.

For many young people who are at risk of exclusion, schools can arrange "managed moves" to other schools to break cycles of disruptive behaviour, currently, these are arrangements which are outside of the local authority and between individuals' schools and the young person's parents/carers.

Although there have been recent changes made to ensure that Barnet Education and Learning Services (BELS) are notified of young people who are at risk of exclusion, there are currently no universal or standardised approaches to support young people and schools at this stage to prevent exclusions.

Across both Barnet and London, knife crime and knife-related violence continue to be a leading issue reflected in both localised and national data from the Police.

Government statistics from 2020 indicate an increase in young people with identified learning needs or disabilities. Locally in Barnet, the number of primary school children who receive special educational needs support is almost 1000 more than children currently in secondary education. It has already been identified that there is a gap in a universal offer of educative support around violence and exploitation awareness.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and learning needs are a particularly vulnerable group who can be disproportionately involved in exploitation and violence. Over the next few years, secondary schools and the wider partnership in Barnet will face a greater number of children with SEN. This may present an increased challenge and complexity for all partners to provide preventative, protective, and impactful services to this vulnerable group.

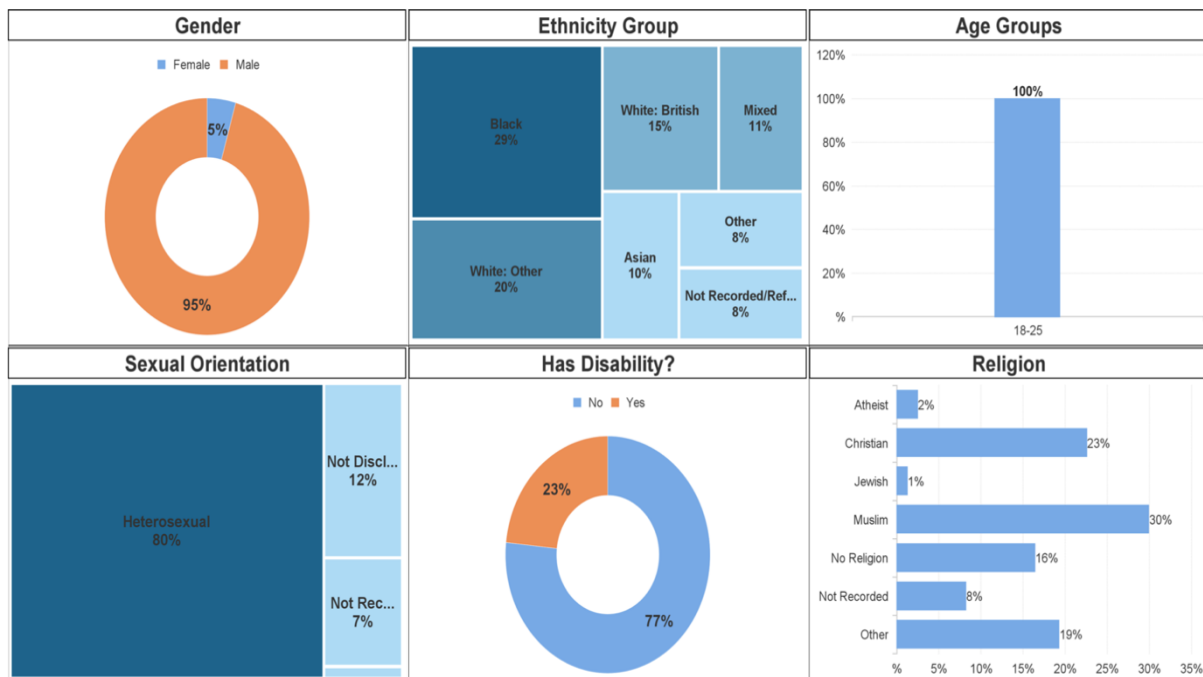
3.5 Probation

Probation services target convicted offenders who are no longer in prison and/or are doing a community sentence to reduce reoffending.

Crime Related to Serious Violence	Percentage of People on Probation
Sexual (adult)	2.46%
Robbery	6.56%
Drug import/export/production	11.07%
Drug Possession/Supply	20.90%
Violence	29.92%

At present in Barnet probation, 187 individuals are 18-25 years of age, of which 95% are male.

3.5.1 Probation Demographics



Services for serious violent offenders have seen a noticeable increase in the number of non-compliant individuals, with most incidents being gang-related. This includes an increase in knife and firearm offences and exploitation and exploitation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that as older gang members are incarcerated, younger individuals, who can be more reckless, are stepping into leadership roles, with conflicts becoming more relationship-based, unpredictable, and counterintuitive – internal, fluid, leading to frequent infighting and rapidly changing allegiances and no spatial trends.

Many of the cohorts have been exploited in the past and their serious violence journey has been a build-up from arrests for serious violence that do not lead to a conviction (they are convicted on lesser offences). There is also a distorted perception of violence among young people. This cohort appears to have a diminished understanding of the gravity of their actions, which may stem from desensitization brought about by previous or frequent exposure to violence in lived experience or social media platforms. This normalization of violence, combined with issues of emotional regulation and an inability to effectively communicate, often results in situations escalating rapidly.

A significant portion of these young individuals are care experienced. They often carry a range of complex issues, including trauma from adverse childhood experiences. Transitioning from youth to adult services poses a considerable challenge. The care package that they have become accustomed to in youth provision is no longer. Adult services have fewer provisions and are not suited for guiding 18–25-year-olds. For example, mental health services only deal with acute cases. To navigate successfully, one must be driven and proactive towards their rehabilitation. Especially considering the amount of multifaceted mental and emotional struggles this cohort faces, many are unprepared and/or daunted. This challenge is exacerbated when considering the rise in neurodiversity and learning disabilities, with many youth exhibiting disorders like autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit and hyperactive disorders.

Research has shown that criminogenic needs that are directly related to recidivism are: slow self-control, anti-social personality, anti-social values, criminal peers, substance abuse, and dysfunctional family. These fall under attitude, drug (use), relationship(s), and thinking and behaviour. When people on probation for violent, sexual, robbery, and/or drug-related crimes are examined for their criminogenic needs, attitude, education, training, employment, and lifestyle stand out as needs that, if met, may reduce recidivism.

Criminogenic Need	Violence	Sexual (adult)	Robbery	Drug import export production	Drug possession supply
Attitude	63%	67%	56%	59%	69%
Accommodation	14%	33%	19%	26%	20%
Drug	32%	17%	44%	11%	35%
<i>ETE</i>	41%	-	56%	56%	63%
Finance	21%	-	50%	52%	47%
<i>Lifestyle</i>	49%	50%	56%	56%	51%
Relationship	23%	50%	25%	15%	20%
Thinking & Behaviour	23%	50%	25%	15%	20%

Services and support that are offered to young adults on probation are determined by the presenting criminogenic needs and assessments that are undertaken by their probation workers. Many of the programs that are focused on supporting the reduction of youth/adult, domestic, or sexual violence are regionally provided and will form part of the order and expected engagement and compliance.

An area that has been identified that requires strengthening in terms of service delivery is to widen the breadth, offer, approaches and programmes to 18–25-year-olds, including a range of mentoring, educative and pro-social approaches. In the last two years, No1 Fitness Academy has provided mentoring and fitness qualifications to young adults who are under the Integrate Offender Management cohort. The building of trusted supportive relationships that contribute to building meaningful skills, and qualifications has proven successful and could be extended further, to focus on other presenting needs.

4 Community Voice

Members of the local community including young people, partners and professionals, and residents and local businesses were asked about their views on:

- Perceptions of violence and exploitation.
- Factors that contribute towards feelings of safety and risk.
- Priorities for the partnership and the council to deliver as a response to violence and exploitation.

Over 170 professionals working in Barnet participated in feedback sessions, and residents were invited to complete an online survey following ward walkarounds, resident ward meetings and an open day at the RAF. The results of the consultations show that the community feels that the top three factors that cause violence are the sale of illicit drugs, lack of youth provisions and the cost-of-living crisis and associated outcomes of deprivation. The most identified

influences for young people becoming involved in exploitation and serious violence were adverse childhood experiences, coming from disadvantaged households and neighbourhoods including high crime areas, and experiencing educational difficulties.

Approximately 50 young people participated in focus groups which were facilitated by trusted professionals across the partnership including statutory services and the voluntary sector. Young people agreed that the drug trade is the biggest contributing factor influencing violence alongside a lack of support services and social media. Coming from disadvantaged households and living in high-crime areas were the two main factors that young people saw influencing participation in serious violence, alongside adverse childhood experiences and educational difficulties. Differently from the adults, young people felt that having a positive perception of violence was also a significant contributing factor. Occupying spaces with people, being in a group and carrying a mobile phone were things that young people do to make themselves feel safe, and they reported that park patrols and CCTV added to their feelings of safety.

The consultation provided the opportunity for participants to suggest what they think should be done locally to tackle violence:

Policing & Security

- Increased police presence and patrols.
- More CCTV in key areas.
- Harsher sentencing for those who commit crime and carry weapons.
- Stop and search practices.
- Responding to reports of incidents promptly.
- Tackling crime hotspots.

Planning & Infrastructure

- Better lighting in areas to increase safety.
- Minimizing areas treated as assembly points by gangs and drug dealers.
- Planning hostels, children's homes, etc., evenly across areas and ensuring they are monitored.

Education

- Promote and adhere learning to evidence-based education practices.
- Adopt trauma-informed approach to discipline.
- Offer support within schools for struggling students.

Community Engagement

- Supporting residents and listening to their reports.
- Inclusion of community in decision-making.
- Education for community to spot signs of exploitation.
- Council sharing implemented actions and their outcomes.

Youth Support Services

- More activities for young people, including training, employment, education, and vocational opportunities.
- Addressing root causes like adverse or deprived settings.
- Mental health and SEN support for struggling kids and families.
- Youth workforce development.
- Empowerment and education for families to understand youth activities and risks.

There are some key challenges when it comes to delivering and managing services to reduce and prevent child exploitation and serious violence. Feedback suggested that we need to improve multi-agency collaboration so that the process of understanding, identifying, and tackling exploitation is strengthened. Respondents felt there needed to be a broader awareness in schools about exploitation risks and a more proactive rather than reactive approach and noted that limited capacity and delayed responses across the professional partnership inhibit timely interventions on mental health and socio-emotional support needs. In addition, accommodation for victims remains scarce. Finally, trust with young people can be built more effectively by professionals by thinking about the language that they use to communicate with young people and how this can improve their engagement with services.

5 Mapping Existing Services

In Barnet, there is a range of targeted and universal services that families and young people can access. These services provide both preventative and reactive approaches to violence. These are delivered by both Statutory and the Voluntary sector. At the time of analysis, we had identified 53 services, programmes, or projects that either worked within the field of youth or adult violence, domestic abuse or were services that target causal factors that could lead to incidents of violence occurring. The VCS sector is more transient in terms of provided interventions, due to inherent challenges with funding and capacity. Therefore, this service mapping must be understood to be time-sensitive in nature. The Service Mapping/directory can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Public Health and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) outline that an effective system to tackle localised violence and exploitation should contain a proportionate mixture of both preventative and reactive services, the balance of which should be agile and can change dependent on the presenting needs of its child and adult population. In Barnet, 66% of all services or programmes represent a preventative focus, and 64% of all services provide a focus on reactive response at the point of an incident or threshold being met. 36% of services, programmes or projects that operate in Barnet provide both a range of preventative and reactive services.

The Combatting Drugs Partnership is intrinsically interlinked by its focus on both drug addiction and drug-related offending, including 'County Lines' which is a key driver for serious violence. The Combatting Drugs Action Plan will need to overlay with the Serious Violence Strategy to ensure victims of cuckooing, exploitation and violent offending are protected whilst organised criminal groups and those perpetrating intimidation, violence and harm in communities are brought to justice.

Barnet's Community Safety Strategy 2022 – 2027, has three key priorities that underpin the development of a Serious Violence Strategy, these are:

- Priority 1: Tackling and Reducing Anti-social Behaviour
- Priority 2: Early Intervention and Prevention of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

Priority 3: Reducing Offending, including Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation (VVE), with a focus on acquisitive crime.

Barnet's Youth Justice Plan 2023-25 has seven strategic priorities that will cross into the Serious Violence Strategy, these are:

- Priority 1. Strategic & Operational Multi-Agency Leadership
- Priority 2. Education
- Priority 3. Over-representation of Black and Global Majority Ethnic background children
- Priority 4. Prevention & Diversion
- Priority 5. Serious violence and exploitation
- Priority 6. Resettlement & Transitional Safeguarding
- Priority 7. Restorative Justice (RJ) and Victims

Barnet's Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy has five strategic partnership objectives that will cross into the Serious Violence Strategy, these are:

- Partnership Objective 1: Early Intervention and Prevention of Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls
- Partnership Objective 2: Support all victims and survivors to report, access help and recover
- Partnership Objective 3: Pursue perpetrators and engage them in behaviour change interventions to eliminate harm to victims and their families
- Partnership Objective 4: Strengthen the partnership response to improve multiagency working and information sharing to deliver improved outcomes
- Partnership Objective 5: Working together for safer streets, community and public spaces

The existing strategies, plans and workstreams will need to cohesively join with the partnership plan for tackling serious violence. Local delivery is rich with a mix of internally funded and externally grant-funded programmes and wide range of community based and single agency provision. There are currently 30 statutory funded (including project-funded) or delivered services operating in the borough, 83% of these are focused on a reactive response, 50% of services and projects contain a preventative focus, and 36% of the total projects deliver both preventative and reactive focus.

It was found through the mapping the mechanism and model of intervention for many organisations will contain a mixed approach of mentoring, educative programmes, and psychologically informed conversations as a catalyst for reflection and behavioural change. Of the 53 identified services and programmes, 56% offer youth or young adult mentoring, 43% offer mental or emotional health support, and 43% provide a focus on information and educative approaches for either young persons, professionals, parents, or carers.

A Public Health approach suggests that incidents of violence can be avoided, and individuals can be diverted by adopting approaches that support changes in four domains:

Individual	Building skills that support social nonviolent safe behaviours
Relationships support	Parents and carers with skills to talk with young people, set boundaries, solve problems, and monitor their activities and relationships.
Community	<p>To use data to select, evaluate and commission effective approaches for prevention.</p> <p>Partner with groups, organisations, and services in prevention efforts.</p> <p>Improve and sustain safe environments and create spaces that strengthen social connections within communities.</p>
Societal	To challenge and change norms about the acceptance of violence, and to ensure effective intervention when it does occur.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), outlines the importance that although risk factors are characteristics linked with violence, they are not direct causes of youth violence, and it is the combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that contribute to the overall risk of youth violence occurring.

Further to this, The CDC highlights that there are a range of strategic and operational approaches that if utilised collectively can be effective in supporting the reduction of violence.

5.2 CDC Approaches that Support Preventing Youth Violence (CDC)

- Promoting Family Environments that support healthy development.
- Statutory Social Care and Early Help Services provide a range of group-based and individually tailored approaches that support parenting skills, and family relationships. Much of this work is underpinned by our Barnet Integrated Clinical Service and programme of systemic family therapy training that all operational staff can attend.

5.2.1 Parent champions

Funded by the Violence Reduction Unit, the Parent Champions seeks to build a network of parents who can raise awareness and provide peer education to other parents experiencing a range of challenges, such as accessing services, play, parenting skills, supporting positive relationships, and dealing with adolescents and the range of challenges that they may experience. The Project is very much supporting areas that the CDC suggests can reduce violence by ensuring varied parenting skills and family relationship programs. The Parenting Champions currently have 29 Parents who building their capacity to provide peer support and training to other parents. The current cohort is 40% located in the West of the borough and 60% in the East/Central locality.

5.2.2 Provide quality education in early life

Early Years services are well established in the Borough of Barnet and occupy easily accessible spaces throughout the borough, which are close to areas of increased local need and in easy reach of key transport links. Offering a varied range of universal support for young children and families, each Early Year hub works to engage and understand local needs and to provide a range of tailored support, groups, and positive activities.

In Barnet, there are 442 childcare providers which have a combined capacity of being able to provide care and early education to 11,296 children through a range of childminder, private, voluntary, and independent nurseries, with the majority receiving a good or outstanding Ofsted Grading for quality of care and education.

Early Years provision continues to focus on work that supports some of our most vulnerable children in their early years. The recognition of early intervention provided through children's centres, engagement of those on a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan and those accessing the free early years entitlement for two-year-olds (FEE2) and wider Early Years funding. The impact is measured utilising EHM Data, local Children's Centre Data, uptake of the Free Early Years Education for 2-year-olds, feedback from service users and case studies.

5.2.3 Connect youth to caring adults and activities

Service mapping identified seven universally accessible spaces that operate in Barnet as "youth drop-ins" which offer positive activities. In many of these spaces, professionals and volunteers can support young people with; pro-social behaviour, psychologically informed discussions, support around emotional and mental health needs, relationships and lived experiences, and internal resources to manage conflict. These are generally run by VCS organisations, although children and young people accessing these services can also be known to statutory services.

Many youth drop-ins are open to access by all young people despite where they may live, anecdotally we are aware that for some young people, crossing across wards and areas affects their sense of personal safety and can present a barrier to accessing the provision. Many of these provisions are primarily concentrated in the West of the borough and occupy spaces, where there is higher crime, deprivation, and localised need. This can present a challenge to accessibility.

REACH & Your Choice Programme REACH was established in 2017 as a wrap-around social work team that integrates Social Workers with Family Support Practitioners, Speech & Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Family Therapists. The team works with children at a high risk of gangs and exploitation using whole family approaches to reduce risk.

Since, 2021, Barnet has been participating in the Your Choice programme, a pan-London £10m 3-year pro-social Violence Reduction Programme. The phase 1 programme was launched and funded by the Home Office in December 2021, followed by a Youth Endowment Fund Pilot phase, 'The Young People Study' between April 2022 and January 2023. The programme has entered its third phase starting in February 2023 'Youth Endowment Fund Efficacy Trial' which will end in July 2024. The Programme is subject to a randomised control trial evaluation developed by the Anna Freud Centre and the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Barnet has participated in all three phases of the Your Choice Programme which has been delivered

through the REACH (Adolescents at Risk) Social Work Team and the Youth Justice Services. Practitioners have been trained in CBT approaches to engage young people, the training is overseen and delivered by the Youth Justice Clinical Manager, a clinical psychologist. In the pilot phase, 5 young people were selected for the programme; in the efficacy phase Barnet will identify up to 70 young people to participate in the study until 2024.

The Your Choice-trained practitioners work with young Londoners aged between 11 & 17 years at a medium/high risk of contextual harm, using psychologically informed, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) tools and techniques. The programme aims to empower young people by taking a public health approach to help break the cycle of violence and harm by providing tools and techniques which practitioners can employ to help a child keep themselves safe. The programme is testing whether making CBT techniques available to children most affected by violence, through enhancing the skills of practitioners who build therapeutic relationships with them, can lead to increased safety for these children.

5.2.4 MOPAC Project

In 2019 MOPAC started funding a diversionary intervention project in Barnet that operates from Canada Villa in East Central of the Borough. The project offers young people from the ages of 10-17 a 12-week programme of positive activities, to; engage, divert, and through developing trusted relationships model pro-social behaviours and healthy relationships. The project supports groups of young people whose situations and vulnerabilities could escalate into trajectories of youth violence.

Young people eligible for the program are required to meet any of the following criteria:

- Risk of school exclusion
- Risk of criminal exploitation
- Risk of child sexual exploitation

In the last year, **66** young people were referred to the scheme, with 75% of referrals being male.

5.2.5 Positive Activities Programmes

During both school holiday periods and during term time, the Council coordinated the Positive Activities Program, which seeks to provide safe spaces where young people can engage in a range of structured activities across the borough. The program coordinates a range of VCS, and community organisations as well as in-house staff and freelancers to deliver the programmes. During 2022, 2,471 young people accessed positive activities, of which 62.6% were males, and 37.4% were females. We saw an age breakdown of the following that accessed the service:

Part of the success around positive activities is the number of locations that deliver the program across the borough. 21 locations delivered sessions last year of those, 10 were in the west of the borough, eight in east central, and three in the south. We can see from violence incidents, School exclusions and needs mapping show that this is geographically proportionate to localised needs.

5.2.6 Targeted Services

Barnet benefits from a wealth of experience, expertise and community-led providers who are working closely with children, young people and adults affected by violence and crime in the

community. These organisations are place-based and have strong connections with local communities, as such are well placed to represent their views and needs. Young Barnet Foundation, Inclusion Barnet and a host of independent and faith providers are key to developing a local network of provision to underpin the strategic aims of the Safer Communities Partnership.

Of the 53 current services provided, five are targeted towards either a particular cohort or demographic characteristics such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, or religion. All the targeted services are VCS run, and set out to support the following:

- LGBTQ+ preventative sexual health services that provide mentoring and emotional and mental support.
- LGBTQ+ youth centre: providing holistic support focusing on experiences of domestic violence.
- Learning and physical disability preventative and reactive support for young people with learning difficulties around physical abuse, modern-day slavery and supporting living skills.
- Jewish girls providing holistic counselling and emotional and therapeutic support.
- Somali young people and parents holistic support but also focused on school exclusions, advocacy and interpreting services and young people and families affected by serious youth violence.

5.2.7 Females and Criminal Exploitation

Across the UK and within London, there is an increasing trend of young females being criminally exploited, carrying, and dealing drugs, and weapons and becoming involved in incidents of violence. The percentage and number of young females involved in Serious Incidents of Violence rose from 8% (2021) to 15% of the total cohort in 2023. Females represent a growing concern due to increases in offending, including violent offending. There are a small number of organisations in the borough, mainly VCFSE providers, working with girls in relation to relationships, exploitation but this requires development to include support to exit from criminal exploitation and violent offending.

5.3 Create Protective Community Environments

The Detached Engagement Project

Based on “out of office hours” Workers have been mobilised to meet young people and adults in their community spaces and to offer support to children and young people up to the age of 25 years who are ‘hard to reach’, vulnerable, or at risk in targeted areas. The aim is to identify risk factors relating to serious violence at an earlier stage to prevent and ensure appropriate and targeted responses via local interventions and provisions. Visible youth workers work in locations at peak times during the evenings including the weekends to encourage children and young people to access positive diversionary activities and to feedback on the lived experiences and general needs of young people to the council, which helps shape future services. Through this engagement, young people will be offered information and guidance in a range of subjects including employment skills, drugs and alcohol awareness, sexual health, healthy relationships, emotional wellbeing, and mental health.

Supporting Community Capacity

Through VRU Funding our Community Capacity Project was introduced and focuses on;

- Building stronger trust and collaboration between the local communities and agencies.
- Increased sustainability of community networks,
- Stronger community networks that have shared commitment to, understanding of, and vision for reducing violence,
- More inclusive decision-making between local stakeholders, statutory agencies, and communities, who are connected and are collectively leading programmes that are reducing violence,
- Greater capacity within community-led networks.

The Community Capacity Coordinator has delivered 12 interactive awareness-raising workshops and training sessions on exploitation, incidents of serious violence and understanding the challenges and barriers to CYP, parents/carers and professionals from both stat and non-statutory organisations reaching a total of 310 individuals. Community and partnership engagement has been conducted through several activities such as Ward Walks, Ward Panel meetings, Problem-solving Groups (with particular focus on high locations of concern Burnt Oak and Grahame Park Estate), Urban Gamez, Cuppa with a Copper, The Network, Inspiration ALL awards, A New MET for London, Early Help Advisory Board, Graham Park Children and Families Group, Barnet Together Conference, Charing Community Impact meetings, Pop Up Hub support for Victims and facilitated conversations about Community Conferencing.

The Community Capacity Coordinator has established strong relationships with local faith-based organisations which have opened opportunities for restorative sessions to take place between young people at a local school to address low-level ASB concerns. There has been positive engagement with young people which has opened discussions for future co-production and collaboration activities. The residents' associations are receptive to restorative conversations between local policing teams and residents to discuss criminal activities that are causing concerns.

Raising awareness and improving communication with local communities and agencies. Community Capacity Coordinator has attended over 15 community meetings, panels and advisory boards to raise the profile of the new role, aims and objectives. Providing resources and signposting to the Restorative Practice Co-Ordinator, Victims Hub, Early Help, Housing, and Community Safety Team and introducing the offer of Community conferences.

Joining three ward walks within the key areas highlighted within the proposal - Burnt Oak, Colindale, Hendon, Friern Barnet, and Edgware, connecting with residents, local business, SNT, CST, Councillors, building on the trusted relationships. The Tackling Violence Exploitation Strategy Engagement this quarter is evidence of the positive impact connecting with local communities has made. Our data on outputs has proved building community relationships has resulted in successful engagement. In addition, the Police support awareness raising through 'Operation Makesafe' which is targeted in key areas in Barnet to support businesses that could have exposure to exploitation and violence, which often remains hidden.

Victims Right Coordinator

The decommissioning of the Youth Victim Support Service in March 2022 led to a significant gap in victim services for children and young people. The development of a Victim Hub Coordinator role with London Crime Prevention Funding 2022 – 2025, ensures Barnet is ready to respond to the Victims Bill (2023) and will improve the experience of children who are victims of crime. through the (College of Policing 2016, indicates that children who are victims of violent offences often go on to become perpetrators of violent crime, this often starts with carrying a knife to protect themselves from further victimization. The Victims Hub Coordinator project is underpinned by three key objectives.

- To improve victim satisfaction and feelings of safety across the borough
- Victims receive better support from the Police and CJS including in online interaction.
- Increase the use of the Victims Code of Practice revised 2021

Since the Victims Hub commenced delivery in December 2022, it has triaged 127 referrals to Sep 2023. Leading to supporting the CDC-recommended approach of ‘treatment to lessen the harms of violence.’

Of the 127 referrals, 95% have been informed about their rights around the Victims Code of Practice and 89% have been supported with safety items for themselves or their homes. 65% of the victims that were referred to the hub were assisting with investigations, ensuring victims have support through the Criminal Justice Service; 67% of victims have been signposted to trauma services.

The Victims Hub has commissioned Calm Mediation for 1-year to work with up to 10 cases that require and meet the threshold for community/neighbour mediation and/or inter-familial conflict.

In the last year, the Victim Hub has established communication with 26 partner services, improving and increasing routes to referral routes and enabling tailored victim care pathways, Briefings and presentations have been delivered to a range of partner agencies on the Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) and to raise awareness of the service.

5.3.1 Intervene to lessen harms and prevent future risk

The London Crime Prevention Fund 2022-2025 has enabled a Restorative Justice Coordinator role to be created to support the development of restorative approaches. The role is delivering training to schools, partner agencies and community groups to build local capacity for restorative practice and restorative conferencing. Restorative approaches are evidenced to support the reduction of serious violence, UNICEF.

The project has the following key outcomes.

- Raise awareness of restorative approaches through training and networking.
- Establish referral routes for victims of crime.
- Collaborate with police and internal/external partners to improve awareness of victim rights (VCOP), facilitation of RJ Conferences and recording of interventions.

The RJ Coordinator has met with a range of key stakeholders and groups delivering services in Barnet. In the last year, there have been seven internal/external training events which is increasing awareness and interest in restorative approaches. Stakeholders have included police, Early Help, Preventing Exclusion Mentors; Residential Care Homes; Youth and VCFSE

organisations. The sessions have focused on raising awareness of Restorative Justice Conference Facilitation, conflict de-escalation and community building. Over 150 individuals attended in the reporting period.

Six schools have benefitted from training which has been individually tailored around their phase, context, and levels of prior experience with restorative approaches.

A restorative culture builds, nurtures and strengthens relationships so that they become resilient and resistant to challenge. In an education context, the investment in creating a culture where pro-social behaviour is explicitly recognised and rewarded, helps children and young people develop appropriate habits and virtues that enable them to make a positive contribution to society.

The development of the Community Impact focus of SIRM meetings has led to the first Restorative Community Engagement Meeting taking place in which approximately 40 residents, schools, ward councillors, police and community partners came together to share their experience following an incident of serious violence. The process allows for the impact of violence to be understood and actions to be congruent with expressed needs. The project has taken 8 referrals since starting in January 2023 which has led to residents receiving direct support through the Restorative Approaches coordinator and/or being informed of their rights under the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

5.4 Transitional and services 18-25

The rising trend in serious offences among the youth underscores the importance of this intervention, and timely action is imperative as when they enter adulthood, the availability of social support care needs, independent living skills, and behavioural and mental health services to aid their ability to cope, especially if they have been in care.

Over the last 18 months, there has been a significant move to strengthen transitional arrangements and support for young adults in the age groups 18-25. This is in congruence with best practice and research that highlights that vulnerability to both exploitation and incidents of violence does not stop at 18. Over half 56% of the total programs and projects which are provided or funded by statutory organisations work with young people up to the age of 25 and or adults (focused on Domestic Violence and Abuse, Victims' Rights).

To ensure that this work is coordinated Barnet Family Services assumed responsibility in 2021 for serious violence and integrated offender management which had previously been held by the Community Safety Team; this included the operational responsibility for the Adults at Risk Panel (ARP).

The community safety partnership's Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Reduction Plan 2022-24 and the Youth Justice Plan has developed some early planning to strengthen Transitional Safeguarding arrangements although this requires further whole system partnership working to achieve an effective and cohesive model of delivery. Coercion and control of exploited young people does not stop when they reach 18 years of age, and most victims of serious violence are in the 16-25 age range.

Referal	Referrals				Identify as		Age				Vulnerabilities			
	NPS	Leaving care	RAAP	TOM	Male	Female	18-25	26+	Youngest	Eldes t	Gang flagged	Form of vulnerability	Experiencing DA	NRM
16	25%	38%	6%	6%	94%	6%	94%	6%	18	28	81%	94%	10%	19%

The Tackling Adult Violence and Exploitation Coordinator regularly leads partnership awareness-raising events and workshops to share learning arising from themes discussed at ARP.

5.5 Integrated Offender Management

Statistics highlight the need for interventions that lessen reoffending, especially when the social support systems are inadequate, which is frequent for this demographic. To support the tailored, structured approach to helping these youths navigate their trauma and mental health issues into adulthood. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) framework stands out as a localised, holistic intervention. Embracing the principle of local solutions to local problems, IOM's approach ensures that local partners collaboratively decide on offender groups to target and prioritise.

Intensive mentoring support has proven to be effective in supporting the IOM cohort, this model needs to be considered for a wider cohort of 18-25 year olds who are not subject to IOM interventions.

6 Risk & Protective Factors for Serious Violence

In developing interventions for young people, it is crucial to consider the diverse influences and exposure to risk factors that contribute to shaping their behaviour. The impact of each risk factor varies based on the developmental stage and diverse social conditions of the young person. Offending rates show a strong correlation with various indicators of deprivation and poverty, particularly in areas where accessing food is challenging. Additionally, high absence rates from schools and low employment rates emerge as significant predictors of serious violent crimes. Social and economic disparities heighten frustration among disadvantaged youth, fostering an environment where violence becomes a common outlet. Implementing effective prevention measures requires addressing the fundamental social and economic inequalities contributing to serious youth violence.

6.1 Risk Factors

SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE

Factors associated with rates of victimisation and offending in London boroughs



Figure 3. Analytics on risk factors conducted by GLA City Intelligence and MOPAC. Understanding serious violence among young people in London 2021, London Datastore.

Risk Factors for Perpetration

Individual

- History of violent victimization
- Attention deficits, hyperactivity, or learning disorders
- History of early aggressive behavior
- Involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- Low IQ
- Poor behavioral control
- Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities
- High emotional distress
- History of treatment for emotional problems
- Antisocial beliefs and attitudes
- Exposure to violence and conflict in the family

Family

- Authoritarian childrearing attitudes
- Harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices
- Low parental involvement
- Low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers
- Low parental education and income
- Parental substance abuse or criminality
- Poor family functioning
- Poor monitoring and supervision of children

Peer and Social

- Association with delinquent peers
- Involvement in gangs
- Social rejection by peers
- Lack of involvement in conventional activities
- Poor academic performance
- Low commitment to school and school failure

Community

- Diminished economic opportunities
- High concentrations of poor residents
- High level of transiency
- High level of family disruption
- Low levels of community participation
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods

Figure 4. Risk factors associated with serious violence crimes, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.2020.

6.2 Protective Factors

Protective Factors for Perpetration

Protective factors may lessen the likelihood of youth violence victimization or perpetration. Identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors.

Individual

- Intolerant attitude toward deviance
- High IQ
- High grade point average (as an indicator of high academic achievement)
- High educational aspirations
- Positive social orientation
- Popularity acknowledged by peers
- Highly developed social skills/competencies
- Highly developed skills for realistic planning
- Religious beliefs

Family

- Connectedness to family or adults outside the family
- Ability to discuss problems with parents
- Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high
- Frequent shared activities with parents
- Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime, or when going to bed
- Involvement in social activities
- Parental/family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping)

Peer and Social

- Possession of affective relationships with those at school that are strong, close, and prosocially oriented
- Commitment to school (an investment in school and in doing well at school)
- Close relationships with non-deviant peers
- Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behavior
- Involvement in prosocial activities
- Exposure to school climates with the following characteristics:
 - Intensive supervision
 - Clear behavior rules
 - Firm disciplinary methods
 - Engagement of parents and teachers

Figure 5. Protective factors associated with serious violence crimes, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020.

Summary of activity and potential areas for development

Areas	Factors
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a range of universal drop-in and youth clubs which operate in Barnet. They are generally located in the West and East Central of the Borough, although these are located in areas of identified high need and vulnerability, this can present a challenge for those young people who are unable to access these areas through a range of reasons including familial economic inactivity, feelings of personal safety. Further, development around to ensure maximal accessibility may need to be considered.

Family

- The positive activities program is well engaged with throughout both term and school holidays. It is a strength that the program is accessed by many young people in a range of locations across the borough, these groups and programs can change year to year. It can be seen that the primary ages of PA, are generally younger cohorts than those receiving OOC.
- There are disproportionately higher numbers of males who are flagged for concerns around the risk of being involved in violence and exploitation. Young males also represent a higher group for school exclusions, YJS, OOC and Probation. This is disproportionate to the gender breakdown of Barnet demographics. There is work being undertaken strategically and operationally across the partnership around tackling disproportionality, this group needs to continue to be monitored to ensure that services are effective in reducing the representation of young males.
- We can see that a greater proportion of males are engaged in a range of positive activities. However, they represent a lower cohort for receiving Victims' Rights Services than that of females.
- Probation provides fixed programmes to those convicted of violent offences. However universal and preventative programs to divert adults at risk of becoming involved in violence, which include a range of mentoring and development of skills employment and qualification (Such as No1 Fitness academy) could be further developed.
- There are increasing numbers of children identified with SEN this may further impact a variety of factors that will increase local needs including; economic inactivity of families, deprivation, and vulnerability of young people being involved in violence.
- We can see a general increase in economic inactivity of families in Barnet, (from 'fingertips' government statistics,) families eligible for free school meals have also increased in the last year. Deprivation is connected to increasing incidents of crime, exploitation, and violence.
- Although developing through the parent champions, universal and standardised education and support for parents around issues that adolescents can experience including violence and weapons are currently being developed.
- Many information sources as to how to access services are electronic, which presents a range of barriers such as language, and access to the internet, increasing economic activity may also increase the number of families not knowing how to access support.

School

- According to local data, school exclusions were higher in the last academic year than in previous years, there appears to be a trend of increasing exclusion based on weapons, and incidents of violence occurring in schools. Exclusions represent a significant risk factor for a young person to become involved in Violence or Exploitation. There is a range of programs including “Turnaround”, Positive activities, and MOPAC, which are designed to support diversion.
- Further analysis is required to ensure that young people at risk of exclusion are receiving the above intervention at the very earliest stages.
- Restorative approaches and training in school are still developing and further work around a coordinated response to supporting young people who are at risk of exclusion needs to be further developed.
- There is currently a lack of universal standardised support to schools around preventative education to raise awareness of violence among young people in both primary and secondary school.
- The number of young people being identified with Special Educational Needs is increasing from previous years and the population in primary school is almost 1000 young people higher than currently in secondary school. This will present further complexity that may require not only a standardised educative response to all schools but also some increased targeted support for this vulnerable cohort.

Community

- According to 2021 census, in Barnet, the population of children and young people aged 0-17 is around 89,300. With the breakdown of age groups outlined below, it can be seen; that the 10-14 years age is currently larger in population than the current 15–19-year-olds. This means that local services will need to reflect the potential increase in demand for services to support adolescents for the next 10 years.
- The engagement of community capacity building is still developing, and to be embedded. This year saw a significant increase in consultation with resident groups and local people on emerging strategy development.
- 70% of statutory delivered services and projects tackling violence are funded through either internal or external, time-limited temporary funding streams, with most of the funding ending in 2025.
- Police crime statistics indicate an increasing number of violent offences occurring in Barnet in all age groups in 2022-2023 to the

	<p>previous year, with the biggest increase in the 18-24 age group. This places greater importance on coordinated preventative measures for young people under the age of 18.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police crime data shows higher rates of weapon offences for 0-17 and 18-24 age groups in 22/23 than the previous year. Indicating feelings of lack of safety in the Borough. However, this may also support better detection rates, and it is suggested that this includes those found with a weapon. • Drug offences over the last year have also increased in line with weapon offences, although it must be noted that drug offences are lower in Barnet compared to London.
Peer Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many services are working with individual young people and adults. Group work activity tends to be more focused in the VCS sector. However, we understand the contextual relationships that young people have with one another, and coordinated information from the partnership is effectively shared.

Figure 4. Protective factors associated with serious violence crimes, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.2020.