

# **SERIOUS and ORGANISED CRIME**

**An Interactive Toolkit**  
for Practitioners Working with Young People





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## DVD

The DVD within this pack consists of three videos:

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# 1

## Introduction

Serious and organised crime is a threat to UK national security and to our local communities. It's a world that vastly differs from the glamorous depictions in the media – in reality, it's more brutal, more violent and can be very difficult to escape from.

The government, law enforcement and partners are working together across the country to tackle this threat. A key element of this work is reaching out to the young people who may be at risk of falling into this dangerous world of organised crime when they are too young to fully understand the consequences.

Practitioners who work with young people play a vital role in helping to address the issues of serious and organised crime, whether they help young people to understand this world and therefore avoid being drawn in, or support young people who are already involved and want to get out.

### **Serious and organised crime toolkit**

This toolkit provides practitioners working with young people with information to help them:

- understand why young people get involved
- understand how organised criminals operate
- spot risks and identify when young people need support
- help young people at risk to access the support they need

The toolkit can be used as the basis for interactive sessions with young people, aged 11-18.

The toolkit is based on insight gathered from consultations with young people and practitioners who have had experience of serious and organised crime. It is a starting point, with the film 'Consequences' showing the impact of some aspects of serious and organised crime.

## Working in partnership

This material has been developed by the Home Office in partnership with the police, YMCA George Williams College, the National Crime Agency, Achieving for Children, Brook, Chaos Theory, Essex County Council, Harrow Youth Club Family, Newham Council, Navigator, Richmond Youth Enquiry Service, Shrewsbury House and Young People's Estate.

Partnerships are at the heart of the work to address serious and organised crime.

It is essential that all relevant agencies who are supporting a young person involved in serious and organised crime know what is happening and what interventions are taking place. This can prevent duplication and ensure the young person is not passed from pillar to post, having to repeat their story multiple times. The confidentiality aspects of information sharing are subject to the public interest disclosure test with some partners (for example those in Health) where consent may be waived to prevent a crime or where third parties may be at risk of serious harm. The Home Office is providing support to partners on information sharing approaches.



## 2



### How to use this toolkit

This toolkit includes a DVD, which contains three short films:

- The first is an introduction to serious and organised crime, aimed at practitioners. The film is approximately five minutes long.
- The second is an eight minute film called 'Consequences'. The content of this video is suitable for those young people aged 11+ who are at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime. The film is divided into three parts based around a monologue which is acted out by the main character Sean. This film contains explicit and strong language. It is worth noting that the film touches on adult themes so practitioners should consider whether this content is suitable for their group.
- The third film is a version of 'Consequences' with the strong language muted. Practitioners can decide which of the two versions of 'Consequences' is more appropriate for the young people attending their session.



# 3

## ‘Consequences’

### Overview

Sean, the main character in the film, is an actor and the story narrated is fictional. However the content conveyed is based on insights gathered from consultations with young people and practitioners who have had involvement and experience of serious and organised crime.

### Before the session

Read the toolkit and watch the film to familiarise yourself with the story and content. You might want to do some additional research to identify any high-profile local cases of serious and organised crime.

### The session

The film is designed to be watched in three parts with the facilitator stopping the film after each part to engage the group in interactive discussion and Q&As. However, there is also an option to play the film in one go and discuss the issues raised at the end.

### After the session

It is useful to make yourself available after the session to be able to talk individually with any young person who may find it difficult to talk in front of others.

Young people may share information during the discussion that raises safeguarding or disclosure issues. You should follow up on these issues where appropriate. If you're worried about a specific incident that was brought to your attention during the session, or you are concerned that a young person you are working with is at risk, then you should follow safeguarding procedures as set out by your organisation. Further information can be found in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2013)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281368/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281368/Working_together_to_safeguard_children.pdf)

# Interactive session plan

## Introduction

Introduce yourself to the group and set out what the group will achieve during the session.

## House rules and safeguarding issues

Discuss and agree some house rules for the session with the group. Ask for their suggestions and come to an agreed understanding for how the session will run.

### Guidelines could include:

- Listening to others when they are talking and respecting others' points of view
- Involving yourself actively in the session by participating and asking questions

**Safeguarding issues** - Make it clear that the discussion will remain confidential within the group, unless someone discloses information about a criminal offence they or another person were involved in, in which case you would have to contact the relevant authorities. Also, if it became apparent that someone was at risk, or potentially at risk from harm, you need to make it clear that you would have to contact the relevant authorities to ensure their safety.





## Discussion about serious and organised crime

Initiate an introductory discussion about serious and organised crime to ascertain what the group know about it. Some introductory questions could include:

- What do you think serious and organised crime is?
- What makes it different from other types of crime?
- Can you give any examples of serious and organised crime?

As well as suggested questions to guide the discussions around the content shown in the film, there are also prompts, pointers and further questions to support you as you lead the discussions.



## Part 1

**Objective for the session:** To gain an understanding of why some young people get involved in serious and organised crime, looking at the role of money and status, and exploitation by criminal groups.

### Suggested discussion questions and prompts:

#### 1. Why did Sean get involved with JC?

- There are a number of reasons why a young person may be drawn into serious and organised crime *as reflected in the diagram on page 32*. Use this diagram to explore and identify with the group the spectrum of issues that could draw a young person into organised crime.
- Looking specifically at Sean, is the draw for him financial gain so he could support his family? Or is it a result of the friends and associations he keeps (JC was Rez's brother)? Or both?

#### 2. What other choices do you think were available to Sean?

- Was staying on in school an option?

#### 3. Is JC looking out for Sean?

- Why is JC going out of his way to help Sean?

#### 4. Is JC taking advantage of anybody?

- Is JC using Sean and if so, how?
- Apart from Sean, is JC taking advantage of the girls around him and the other runners working for him?

#### 5. What risks are the girls facing?

- Could girls involved in serious and organised crime be exploited sexually?

## **6. Does missing school matter if you're earning money?**

- What are the short and long term implications of missing school?

## **7. What are the penalties for dealing Class A drugs?**

- Jail sentence and a criminal record. The maximum sentence for possession of a Class A drug with intent to supply to another is life or a fine or both. The court will decide how serious the offence and sentence is, and you can get a lower sentence if you plead guilty early in the process.
- What impact could this have on your future?

## **8. Who robbed Sean?**

- Could it have been JC and if so, why would JC set Sean up in this way?

## **9. How's Sean going to pay JC the £500 back? And what about the new drugs he gave him?**

- Will Sean have to continue selling drugs for JC?
- Given Sean's desperate situation, do you think he could get involved in other criminal activities?

## **10. What does the future look like for Sean?**

- Considering he's no longer in school, how does this affect his opportunities in the future?
- What do you think he'll do next?

## Part 2

**Objective for the session:** To understand the far-reaching consequences of risky 'on the spot' decisions, and the impact on family and friends of getting involved in serious and organised crime.

### Discussion points:

#### 1. Was Sean right to look after JC's gun?

- What are the dangers?
- How important a moment was this in their relationship?

#### 2. What happens if you're caught in possession of Class A drugs and guns when you're 17/18?

- Possession of Class A drugs: The maximum sentence for possession of a Class A drug is seven years in prison and a fine. The court will decide how serious the offence and sentence is, and you can get a lower sentence if you plead guilty early in the process.
- Possession of a gun: 16 and 17 year olds are subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 3 years and the case is handled by the Crown Court for trial, not the youth court. This is the case if you're under 18 at the time of sentencing and you will be detained in a youth offender institute. The sentencing could be longer if you're 18 and over at time of sentencing. If you're 18 at the time of the offence, you could be looking at a 5 year minimum sentence.

### **3. What do you think the police meant by “part of an on-going investigation” when they raided Sean’s flat?**

- Could the police have had intelligence that Sean was selling drugs?

### **4. If you’ve got a criminal record, what effect does that have on you when you’re older?**

- Give examples of scenarios or moments when you may be asked if you’ve got a criminal record. Looking for a job, looking to buy a home, or to get insurance for your car.

### **5. Why do you think Social Services took the younger kids into care?**

- With a gun and illegal drugs in the home, what risk does this pose to Sean’s younger siblings?

### **6. Is Sean making any money?**

- Although he gets his share from JC, let’s not forget he also owes JC £500.

### **7. Why do you think Sean’s younger brother got involved with JC?**

- With Sean having to pay JC back £500, did it now fall on Sean’s younger brother to support the family?
- Family and associates are two factors that can draw a young person into organised crime. Discuss the role these factors play in drawing a young person into serious and organised crime.

### **8. Why would JC kidnap someone?**

- Like the rape of the runner's sister, was this another way of JC sending a message to all his runners?

### **9. Why did he get Sean to babysit the kidnap victim?**

- Do you think JC asking Sean to babysit the kidnap victim was possibly his way of showing Sean what could happen to him if he stepped out of line, lied or kept money from him?

### **10. What does Sean mean by the people 'higher up' than JC?**

- This is a good opportunity to elaborate further about the structure of serious and organised crime. The hierarchy within organised crime is pyramid-like, with lots of people/runners at the bottom of the structure, taking lots of risk on a daily basis, (by selling drugs for example). These people are usually unaware of the structure and apart from their main contact, in Sean's case JC, they generally don't know who exactly is further up the pyramid. Nor do they know the spectrum of criminal activities taking place within the organised crime network, which ultimately they're now part of.

### **11. What does Sean's future look like now?**

- Consider the group's response to the same question after session 1 and build on how they see Sean's future now.
- What do you think he'll do next?

## Part 3

**Objective for the session:** To look at factors that can help people to get out of serious and organised crime and the long-term consequences of having a criminal record.

### Discussion points:

#### 1. Sean seemed to do a lot of work for not much money. Who was making the money?

- Is JC making the money? Or is it those above JC? Or both?

#### 2. Was Sean involved in serious and organised crime or was he just part of an urban street gang?

- Explore with the group what it is about Sean's situation that suggests this is serious and organised crime and not an urban street gang.

#### 3. What do you think the difference is between the two?

- The differences are primarily about the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control. However, urban gang members may engage in street drug dealing on behalf of organised criminals and some gangs aspire to and may become organised crime groups in their own right. Areas of high gang activity in the UK tend to be areas where organised criminals are most active.

#### 4. What could be the consequences for JC and those above him if they were caught?

- You may wish to list the various criminal activities JC has engaged in over the course of the film. These include: selling of illegal drugs, possession of a gun, orchestrating a kidnap, potentially being responsible for the death of Sean's younger brother, involvement or authorising the rape of a young girl.
- Could JC also be accused of coercing Sean into selling drugs?

## **5. Has Sean made the right choice?**

- As well as the fact that Sean is now financially independent, you may wish to explore what his choice also means for his future and that of his family.

## **6. Is it possible to stop dealing and still live in the same place?**

- Sean had to move to a new area and start afresh. Could he have stayed in the area with JC around?
- You may wish to start introducing the help and support on offer in your areas through youth workers and other services that can support a young person trying to leave a life of crime behind.

## **7. If you've got it in you to change your life, you can change it. Is that right?**

- Explore with the group what actions you can take to change your life.
- Who can support you?

## **8. What support did Curtis give Sean?**

- Discuss the support youth workers can offer a young person in need or at risk, and how a young person could get a youth worker if they needed one.



## **9. What other support is available to somebody who wants to leave this kind of lifestyle?**

- What local support services for 'at-risk' young people or young offenders exist in your area?
- What local support services for young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) exist in your area?
- Young people aged between 15 and 17 could be encouraged and supported to take part in the National Citizen Service (<http://www.ncsyes.co.uk/>).
- Young people aged 16+ could be supported to access information and apply for apprenticeships and traineeships via the Government's national apprenticeships website (<http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>).
- Young people can get help with the impact of crime from You & Co (<http://www.youandco.org.uk/>).

## **10. What did Curtis mean by putting his skills to better use?**

- Sean is good at selling and Curtis is encouraging him to apply his skills into something through which he can build a future.

## **11. What does Sean's future look like now?**

- Again, building on his experience so far, discuss his new venture and the importance of having something positive to aspire to.

## Final closing discussion

Wrap up the discussion by reiterating the final points:

- 1. What is serious and organised crime?**
- 2. What are some of the factors that draw people into it?**
- 3. What did you learn about the consequences/impacts of serious and organised crime?**
- 4. What else did the session make you think about?**

Remind the group that there are people and support services available if they're worried or would like to talk to someone further e.g. safer schools officers, teachers or youth workers. Provide a list of local support groups that they could contact if they wish.



# 4

## Issues raised by the film

These themes and questions can be used to stimulate further discussions with the group:

### Young people at risk

Young people that get involved with serious and organised crime are often vulnerable in some way. You may wish to discuss why some people might be coerced or intimidated into committing a crime. There are some who may be particularly susceptible to such pressure, for example those with family members involved in crime, young people in gangs, and people in financial difficulty. Discussions could also include the topic of peer pressure and how to seek positive role models and find people to get advice from.

#### Questions could include:

1. What sort of people are most at risk of becoming involved in serious and organised crime?
2. Why might it be attractive to some young people?

### Role of sexual exploitation and grooming

Some young people that get involved in serious and organised crime are being exploited and have been groomed. This may involve threats of physical or sexual violence, bullying and intimidation. Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Serious and organised crime groups sometimes use sexual exploitation to control victims or coerce vulnerable young people into becoming participants in criminal activity.

Questions could include:

1. What techniques might criminal groups use to coerce young people into getting involved in serious and organised crime?
2. Can you think of any examples where sex may be used?

**Organised crime networks**

Organised crime typically takes place within a network which involves a power imbalance. The network leaders at the top typically reap the highest rewards such as power, money and status, while the people at the bottom ‘on the road’ will carry high risk and low rewards – very often they are paid little in real terms for the work, yet are in danger of being arrested or threatened with violence from those higher up the chain if things go wrong. They have very little power, but will suffer real consequences if caught. They probably do not even know who they are ultimately working for.

Questions could include:

1. How much risk and what level of reward do you think Sean carried?
2. What does this tell us about his position in the organised crime network?



## Gangs

There are differences between organised crime groups and urban street gangs. The level of criminality, organisation, planning and control are in general higher among organised crime groups. But there are connections between the two. We know that in some local areas there are significant overlaps between street gangs and organised crime groups. Organised criminals may use street gang members as part of their supply chain, including drug dealing or transporting drugs around the country. Equally, street gangs may aspire to engage in organised criminal activity in order to increase financial rewards.

### Questions could include:

1. What is the difference between street gangs and organised crime groups?
2. How might gang members become caught up in organised crime?

## Significance of risky 'on the spot' decisions

Choices that may seem insignificant to young people at the time, for example accepting a gift from someone in a criminal group or borrowing a small amount of money, may then lead to life-changing consequences. Often, young people are flattered and provided with rewards at the start of their relationship with criminal groups. They then may use this to coerce them into staying silent or joining the group and young people can become entangled in a web of crime which is hard to get out of.

### Questions could include:

1. Can you think of any examples of risky 'on the spot' decisions?
2. What could the consequence of these decisions be?

## Consequences of getting involved

The immediate and long-term impact on young people and their families of getting involved in serious and organised crime can be severe. Crime groups can intimidate, corrupt and deprive some people of their security, prosperity and even identity. They also have a corrosive impact on the fabric and cohesion of communities. The abuse and exploitation of children can have a lifelong and devastating impact on victims.

### Questions could include:

1. From the film, what consequences did Sean's criminal activity have?
2. Are these consequences short or long-term?
3. Can you ever leave behind a life of serious and organised crime once you are involved?



# 5

## Consequences: full script

Please note that the script below contains strong language. The film is available in two versions, one which uses strong language and another version where the swearing is muted.

### Part 1

#### 1. BALCONY OUTSIDE MUM'S FLAT – DAY

SEAN, aged 19, comes out of the front door of a block of flats. He checks up and down the balcony, nervously. From inside, we hear an older woman's voice shouting after him.

SEAN: Mum I told you. I'll be back about 6.

MUM: Did you leave me any money?

SEAN: There's a tenner on the table.

MUM: You be careful.

SEAN: Yeah.

SEAN shuts the front door. He turns to camera.

SEAN: She's always like that. Worrying. Hardly surprising I s'pose. Ever since I was 13/14, going out on bikes. The same everywhere innit.

SEAN walks down the balcony, away from the flat, and makes his way to the lifts.

It was Rez's brother, JC, what started it, everyone knew him. Bang on - most of the time. Driving an X6, chain swinging, living the dream like. Used to buy us all doners. Just like 8 doners, Bam! Over 20 pound just like that.

Gave me his old iPhone once. Didn't want nothing for it. Just wanted me to run something the other side the manor. I knew what it was. I ain't stupid.

## 2. LIFT LOBBY – DAY

SEAN enters the lift lobby. He presses the button.

SEAN: I did a few more runs for him. No big deal. Easy. “You’re safe”. That’s what he said. That’s when I started on road proper. 10 pound, 10 pound, 10 pound, 10 pound. That was 40 pound right there. [\*\*\*\*] sight better than school. You don’t get 40 pound going to school do you? Not that it was my money to be spending. But I got my fair share.

The lift doesn’t arrive, SEAN exits frame

## 3. LIFT – DAY

SEAN: Course, I had to be careful. Some of them rival guys didn’t like it. “Heard you’re selling. What’s going on? Why don’t you get it off me?” But soon as I said I was with JC they didn’t do nothin’. It weren’t long ‘til I was on Qs and halves. Bit of MD and Ket. It was bless.

And it weren’t just me. JC held the line for a few of us. Even had some girls selling weed. (*pause*) Them boyz like them girls. Parties. Buying ‘em drinks. Sick. They flattered, Makin’ ‘em feel special. And they lookin’ down on us, coz they tingsing with some rude boy?

SEAN exits frame with a “[\*\*\*\*] that [\*\*\*\*]!” sort of grunt.





#### 4. GROUND FLOOR LOBBY AND FRONT DOOR – DAY

Before leaving the lift, SEAN checks the lobby area. It's just habit. Always looking over his shoulder. He makes his way across the entrance hall and out of the block of flats.

SEAN: We was robbed one night, with my mum in the flat. Scared her badly they did. Put a blade to the throat. A blade! Lucky she knew where it all was. Jacked the lot. *(pause)* It was like they knew I'd just had a drop off. JC came round that night. Not happy. But he was cool. "Don't worry bruv. You owe me 500 pound. Take this, we'll sort something out". Gave me new weed and MD to sell. Got me back out on road straight away.

Fade to black.

#### Part 2

#### 5. BLOCK OF FLATS – DAY

SEAN makes his way around the outside of the block.

SEAN: I saw JC's gun once. He showed it to me and Rez. He'd had a little altercation with the feds is what he called it, so he asked me to look after it. Just a few days. That's trust man. So i hid it under my mum's bed. Safer than my room innit.

SEAN stops.

Yeah right. Feds show up. "Part of an on-going investigation" thats what they called it, whatever that means. Anyway, they found the strap. The weed. The pills. All the cash. Took the lot. Left me facing time.



## 6. ESTATE – DAY

SEAN comes round the corner. Always looking around, checking.

SEAN: Family at risk, that's what they called us. Took my little brother and sister away, into foster care, two months before we got them back. Two months! Almost killed my mum that did.

SEAN turns another corner.

SEAN: She's stressed out from growing us up. Wouldn't leave the house. Lost her job. No money. We was totally [\*\*\*\*\*]. Housing threatening to kick us out. I'm still running, trying to pay back what I owe. Now my little brother Ty doing stuff for JC. Tryin' to be a big man.

## 7. ESTATE CAR PARK – DAY

SEAN crosses the car park.

SEAN: That was when I got a call from one of JC's boys. Little job for me. Babysitting. Nuthin' big. "Don't talk to him or nuthin'. Just keep an eye on him". (pause) He were one of JC's runners. You should have seen him. JC [\*\*\*\*\*] him up proper like. Strapped him to a chair. Naked. Completely starkers. No clothes on. Nuthin'. All night. Swear down. Idiot stole money off JC and tried lyin' about it. Now JC gotta explain that to the man above. He was seriously vexed. I ain't never seen JC like that.

But that is nothin' man. He got off lucky. Heard about one of JC's runners – they raped his sister in front of him. Real talk. No word of a lie. Proper raped his sister in front of him. Can you imagine if that was my little sister? That's gonna [\*\*\*\*] you up for life, innit.

SEAN gets in his car and drives off.

Fade to black.

## Part 3

### 8. CAR – DAY

SEAN talks sat in his car.

SEAN: Saw a thing on TV. One of them wildlife things. In Africa. Had this little deer. Little thing with horns. Thing ain't got no beef. Always looking around, shook like. Worried about getting eaten. Then the hyenas rock up. They the rude boyz out there. Higher up the food chain. Little deer made a run for it but it's no good. Them hyenas are hunters bruv. They chased him down. Ripped his throat out.

SEAN parks up.

JC's like the hyenas. We're the little deer, looking over our shoulder, worried about getting robbed or stabbed. *(pause)* You ever seen anyone get stabbed? I have. My little brother, Ty. Found him over the flats. Bled out in me arms. *(pause)* Owed JC money. That was it. End of. *(pause)* Couldn't look me mum in the face after that. Me, his older. Where was I?

### 9. HIGH STREET – DAY

SEAN gets out of the car. He opens the boot of the car. It's full of large cardboard boxes. He loads the boxes on a trolley and shuts the boot.

SEAN: I thought I was my own person, right. I was doing what I was doing, regardless. My mum were never around, in and out of hospital. My sister still in school, relying on me. Just me. I was 17 years old, heading for the gravestone or time, again. And I didn't care. It was Curtis, my youth worker, what made me see down the line. Told me what's what. No bull[\*\*\*\*]. Can't pay no bills if you're dead. Or in jail. Can't pay no bills with drug money. It ain't even yours!

SEAN heads off down the street with the boxes.

## 10. STREET MARKET – DAY

SEAN: I had to get out. Doing nonsense weren't getting me nowhere. I was just making money for someone else. JC. His boys. And them what's above him. Everyone but me. *(Pause)* Sometimes I didn't even have money to eat. It was Curtis, told me things could be different. That I could put my skills, selling stuff, to better use.

SEAN starts unpacking his boxes of stock *(Trainers)*

SEAN: I ain't saying it's been easy. It ain't. JC was vexed. Me not selling no more costing him money that's what he reckoned. How's he gonna explain that further up the line? It weren't safe no more. I had to get out, move ends. Move my mum. My sister. Leave everything. Only thing I had was a CRB. And that don't go away. Stays with you for life.

SEAN offers up some trainers.

SEAN: You know how much I make selling these? 20 pound, clear. Nothin' dodgy. I buy 'em on-line. Legit. Last Saturday I sold 10 pairs. That's 200 pound profit. One day. That's a bump I tell you. I used to put in a lot more work for less money when I was hitting the roads, right. And now my money's in the bank, not hidden under some mattress.

Gonna do the market weekends. Get myself a website. Curtis even helped me get into college. NVQ Business Admin. Gonna get some paperwork behind me. Back me up.

SEAN's mobile rings.

Now I can afford to take my girlfriend for a pizza without hurting my pocket.

SEAN answers his phone

Hello... Yeah... Yeah... About 6... Alright, bye.

He turns to camera, a little embarrassed.

My mum. Told you she worries... She's my mum innit.

# 6

## Understanding serious and organised crime

### What is serious and organised crime?

Serious and organised crime networks are highly complex, involving multiple layers with groups involved in a number of different criminal activities including:

- trafficking and dealing in drugs, people, weapons and counterfeit goods
- modern slavery
- sophisticated theft and robbery
- high value fraud
- money laundering and other forms of financial crime
- cyber crime

Organised crime is characterised by violence or the threat of violence, often against members of the network itself as a way to ensure discipline and loyalty, and by the use of bribery and corruption.

### What impact does it have?

Serious and organised crime has a corrosive impact, particularly in some of the UK's most deprived communities and also among people that are new to this country.

At a national level, serious and organised crime costs the UK at least £24 billion each year and is a threat to our national security. Many criminal networks are controlled by or have links to international groups.

The crimes committed can lead to loss of life and can deprive people and their families of their security, prosperity and aspirations for the future.

In some local areas, organised criminals may be regarded as role models, with this kudos helping to recruit young, impressionable people into the enterprise. In others, organised crime groups (sometimes together with street gangs) may intimidate people into silence.

## **Who is involved and where do young people fit in?**

Law enforcement agencies estimate that there are around 5,800 active groups operating in the UK, comprising of around 40,600 people.

Organised criminal enterprises are often large and well-structured, with individuals of varying seniority and influence carrying out the activities. Generally speaking, the people at the bottom of the chain, some of whom are young people, are instructed to carry out criminal activities to protect those further up the chain from getting their hands dirty.

The whole enterprise is a network, with those higher up the chain manipulating, exploiting and threatening those beneath them. Vulnerable young people and adults are often 'groomed' into criminal gangs, sometimes being promised or 'rewarded' with gifts for carrying out criminal tasks. They then become trapped, are exploited and in many cases violence is used to ensure they toe the line.

## Who is at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime?

So-called 'lieutenants' or mid-ranking group members tend to look out for individuals in their community that could be of use to the enterprise. This might be a professional, such as a lawyer or accountant, or someone with certain technical skills.

In the case of young people, the key is vulnerability. Organised criminals are predatory, seeking out weaknesses on which they can prey to coerce young people into undertaking whatever task or service suits their current needs.

There is no set pattern for who is at risk; indeed any young person could be targeted, but there are certain types of young people that can be identified as being at particular risk including those who are excluded from school; those living in poverty or who are unemployed; those with troubled family backgrounds or with family members involved in or on the fringes of organised crime; those with substance abuse issues; and those already in the Criminal Justice System. School holiday periods, particularly the post GCSE break, is an additional contributing factor for many young people, with organised crime stepping into the gap left by school.

Being able to spot who is at risk and helping them to access early support is vital. For information on assessing young people at risk, see section 7 on page 32.



# 7

## Assessing young people at risk

Academic research and information from law enforcement has identified a number of factors that may put people at greater risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime.

### Factors to assess the risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime



This illustration shows that risk factors are structured around four categories:

- Criminology – offending patterns and trends;
- Ability – specialist skills, access or professional positions;
- Networks – access to criminal associates through family, peer or professional networks; and
- Identity – upbringing and lifestyle factors.

For further information about identifying risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime, please see "Individuals at risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime – a Prevent Guide", Home Office, March 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individuals-at-risk-of-being-drawn-into-serious-and-organised-crime-a-prevent-guide>



# 8

## Case studies: Young people involved in serious and organised crime<sup>2</sup>

### Simon

Simon appears to have been drawn into an organised crime group from an early age. He grew up in a disruptive household (his mother was an alcoholic) in an area where an organised crime group was operating. By his teenage years, Simon was involved in anti-social behaviour and street crime as part of a gang. He became part of the local organised crime group by taking over from a previous member who had been arrested. Simon's criminal activities escalated to importing drugs. Early prolific offending, gang involvement and a troubled family background all appear to be important factors in Simon's pathway to organised crime. He was convicted of importing and supplying drugs and money laundering.

### Daniel

Daniel lived in an area with high levels of crime, substance misuse and low employment. He associated with an urban street gang which contributed to his expulsion from secondary school. Daniel's criminality escalated to vehicle theft and he was subsequently arrested. His older brother had previously been arrested for drugs offences and there were concerns that Daniel was following the same path of criminality. Through the Troubled Families programme, a key worker began working with Daniel and his family to address his offending behaviour whilst supporting his parents to put boundaries in place and improve their parenting techniques. Daniel and his family subsequently moved out of the area, with help from their local registered landlord and this enabled Daniel to make connections with more positive peers. His whole family is feeling the benefits of the intensive support they received and Daniel is now attending school full-time with significant improvements in his behaviour.

<sup>2</sup>Source: "Individuals at risk of being drawn into Serious and Organised Crime – a Prevent Guide", Home Office, March 2015  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individuals-at-risk-of-being-drawn-into-serious-and-organised-crime-a-prevent-guide>

## **Paige**

A young mother with financial difficulties had been arrested for selling cannabis to family members. She was given a Conditional Caution with the requirement to attend an educational and rehabilitative Victim Awareness Course led by the charity Victim Support. The course helped Paige realise the consequences attached to offending behaviour, the impact this has on victims, the wider community, and her family. The intervention challenged Paige's 'pro-criminal' attitudes, which has reduced the risk of her reoffending and progressing to organised crime.

# 9

## Further Information

- **Home Office Prevent Guide:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individuals-at-risk-of-being-drawn-into-serious-and-organised-crime-a-prevent-guide>
- **The National Crime Agency** is a crime-fighting agency with national and international reach, and the mandate and powers to work in partnership with other law enforcement organisations to bring the full weight of the law to bear in cutting serious and organised crime:  
<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/>  
**Email:** communication@nca.x.gsi.gov.uk  
**Telephone:** 0370 496 7622
- **The NCA's CEOP Command** (formerly the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) works with child protection partners across the UK and overseas to identify the main threats to children and coordinates activity against these threats to bring offenders to account. <http://ceop.police.uk/>  
**Telephone:** +44 (0)870 000 3344
- **Crimestoppers** - if anyone in the group is worried about a specific incident and wants to talk to someone about it, they can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or visit: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>
- **ChildLine** is not just for children, and provides confidential help and advice for those up to and including 18 year olds. You can contact the freephone helpline: 0800 1111 or visit: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- **Talk to Frank** is a confidential helpline for anyone in the UK concerned about drug use. You can call 0300 123 6600 or text questions to 82111 or email [frank@talktofrank.com](mailto:frank@talktofrank.com)

- **MENTOR UK** is a charitable organisation who develop resources to help educators advise young people on substance misuse. <http://www.mentoruk.org.uk/>
- **You & Co**  
You & Co is Victim Support's youth programme that helps young people cope with the impact and effects of crime. You do not have to report the crime to the police to get support from them. [www.youandco.org.uk](http://www.youandco.org.uk)
- **Victim Support**  
Get free help and advice if you've been a victim of crime. Victim Support is a charity that offers:
  - emotional support, e.g. coping with the after-effects of crime
  - practical help, e.g. getting locks changed or help filling in forms for insurance and compensation
  - advice on dealing with the police
  - information and support if you go to court as a witness

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0845 30 30 900



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