

# Advice to Parents and Carers on Gangs

## Helping Young People to Make the Right Choice



With increasing coverage in the news and prevalence of gangs in our communities, this leaflet gives a crash course into understanding and recognising when your child may be affected.

The vast majority of young people are not involved in gangs and want nothing to do with them. However, the behaviour of the small number of young people who are involved has a significant impact on communities, on their families and associates, as well as themselves. Children may not have to be in a gang to be affected or pressured by them. In this bulletin, we will help you to:

**1**

### KNOW THE SIGNS

How to recognise if your child is being pressured to be in, or is already part of, a gang.

**2**

### KNOW WHAT TO DO

Practical advice on how to open a discussion with your child and help.

**3**

### KNOW WHERE TO FIND HELP

Including national and local agencies.



#### Crimestoppers

A free confidential service to report crime anonymously.

**0800 555 111**



#### Family Lives

For advice on all aspects of parenting, 24/7.

**0808 800 2222**



#### UKYouth

Network of over voluntary organisations providing support to young people.

[www.ukyouth.org](http://www.ukyouth.org)

## Know The Signs:

Gangs leave a signs of their presence and your child may adopt some of these. Any sudden changes in your child should be discussed.

### Signs may include:

- Specific changes in dress style.
- Poor behaviour (both in attitude and use of violence)
- Talking differently (i.e. new slang or language with an aggressive undertone).
- Poor school results or skipping school.
- Unexplained injuries or sums of money or possessions.
- Staying out unusually late or increased secrecy around actions and whereabouts.

Gangs may also have a social media presence so know your child’s social media presence too.

Girls are equally at risk of gang influence but the signs can be harder to spot. There is an added risk of emotional, physical and sexual violence.



## Know What To Do:

- Talk to your child and listen.
- Know the network of friends around your child and their families.
- Work with other parents and their school to identify and tackle concerning behaviours.
- Help your child understand the consequences of violent and illegal behaviours.
- Monitor their use of the internet and social media.
- Try to find ways of discipling that avoid aggression; model resolving conflict without violence.

### KNOW THE LAW:

The law focuses on the criminal behaviour. If an offender is part of a group or gang, this can lead to a longer sentence.

- If your child’s actions or encouragement lead to a crime, they can be charged with the same offence as the main offender. This is called ‘joint enterprise’.
- It is illegal to carry a knife in a public place (including pocket knives with blades over 3 inches). **The sentence: up to 4 years.**
- It is illegal to carry firearms (including imitations). **The sentence (16-17 year olds): at least 3 years.**
- Both police and school staff have a right to search young people for weapons at school.