

Mental Health Awareness & Safeguarding Training (MAST)

Top Lines

- Mayor's £1.4m boost for mental health training to help young Londoners
- Around 8,000 of London's frontline professionals working with young people are being offered training in mental health support and safeguarding.
- The Mental Health and Safeguarding training (MAST) will give frontline professionals including teachers, police officers, council workers and health and social care workers unprecedented specialised training in understanding gang culture, identifying young people who are gang affiliated, providing them with support services, and knowing the right steps to take when they encounter a young person that may be an easy target for gang recruitment.
- Part of the Mayor's commitment to reducing gang-related crime and preventing young people from becoming involved in gang activity, MAST will be delivered by mental health practitioners, experts in safeguarding and Met Police professionals who deal with gang-related crime.
- The programme builds on the comprehensive measures MOPAC has already taken to fight gang-related crime in London. This includes setting up the Trident Gang Crime Command which, since February 2012, has made almost 1,300 arrests, seized 87 firearms and over £900,000 in cash, and funding 25 core gangs projects at a value of over £3m.
- MOPAC has also helped to fund a range of e-resources for professionals who complete the MAST programme including a discussion forum, advice from safeguarding experts, as well as real life case studies, academic papers, and useful tips.
- From next month, there will be a specialist safeguarding referral guide for every borough which has been developed with the help of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) across London. The e-hub can be viewed at <http://benjamintoddclients.co.uk/mastdev1/>
- MOPAC is working closely with the Met and a range of partners on this project which has been partly funded with £839,100 through a successful Home Office Innovation Fund bid.
- The programme consists of two days of training and will run until March 2016. It is available to anyone within the London Metropolitan area who has a role in dealing with young people.
- For more information and to register for the free training, visit www.masttraining.co.uk

Quotes

Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh said: "This programme is a key part of the Mayor's commitment to protect vulnerable young Londoners from having their lives damaged and derailed by gang crime. With specialised training for teachers, police officers, healthcare and social workers, we can empower frontline staff to identify and act on the signs of emotional trauma or mental health issues in the young people they come into contact with. Whether they are already involved in gangs or are at risk of victimisation by

gangs, we can ensure young people receive the support they need. I strongly encourage everyone who works with London's youngsters to take full advantage of this important opportunity."

Strategic Director at Catch22, Frances Flaxington said: "This training should have a real impact on how we understand and address gang and youth violence. This flexible and responsive new approach has the potential to address complex challenges before they escalate. The reality is that these are exceptionally vulnerable children and young people. They need specialist support services including strong relationships with people they trust. The MAST training will go a long way towards creating the multi-skilled frontline workforce we need to address gang involvement in our communities."

Chair of the Ealing Custody Panel, Jeannine Andre said: "The training was very interactive and proactive. It opened my eyes to the meaning of mental health and the importance of early diagnosis, especially in the young. Although there is a high number of young people who go through police custody, the percentage that we, as custody visitors, meet and talk to is small. The big benefit I feel overall in my role is that ninety per cent of detainees in custody are believed to have mental health issues and this training has helped me to understand mental health and to be more sensitive to the needs of detainees. It has also given me the knowledge to ask correct questions of the police."

Assistant Psychologist at HMYOI Feltham, Mental Health Team, Kumar Birch said: "The MAST training was well structured and engaging. Although many attendees had good working knowledge of mental health, it was extremely helpful to focus on the specific impact of gang dynamics. The discussions were useful in getting everyone to think about the number of factors that can increase young people's vulnerability to gang involvement. Overall the training raised awareness, inspired reflection on the ways to improve professional practice and provided a great opportunity to connect with others working within the young people network."

Background

What is MAST training?

MAST Training is about promoting the safety of young people in London, by making it easier for practitioners to take action to support young people when there are signs that they are suffering from mental health (MH) issues and emotional trauma (ET). The programme is funded by the Home Office Innovation Fund and funding finishes in March 2016

A particular focus is on the link between mental health, safeguarding, and the harm caused by gangs - both to gang members themselves and to vulnerable victims. Mental Health is core business for many organisations and a key goal is about reducing workload through effective action.

How long will the training take?

The training consists of two days of training, starting from March 2015 and to be completed by March 2016. The second day of training will take place approximately six months after the first day of training.

What are the benefits of this?

The training workshops will provide an opportunity for practitioners to network with staff in other agencies, promoting more effective working across organisations. In addition to promoting more effective safeguarding we intend to reduce levels of gang activity and decrease the risks to agencies of missing safeguarding opportunities, with the associated loss in public confidence.

The outcomes from this training will include:

- Ability to Identify MH/ET issues
- Understanding of Referral Pathways and key Contacts within the borough
- Ability to support a person with MH/ET
- Understanding the Referral Guide
- Understanding the relationship between MH, offending, safeguarding and gangs

Who can take part in the training?

MAST will provide joint agency training for front line practitioners working with young people, including Police, School Staff (primary, secondary and alternative provision), gang workers, YOS, secure estate, Health and third sector organisations. Training will be delivered by a training supplier, working with agencies that will benefit from the training. Within Schools we are asking for the release specifically of the School Designated Safeguarding lead and Safer Schools Officer

How will the training help?

A key element of the work is providing practitioners with additional resources, pathways and strategies to manage mental health issues when they have been identified. The intention is not to turn practitioners into clinicians, but to give them sufficient knowledge and confidence to act on the underlying problem, rather than the presenting problem.

A young person presenting as difficult, unreasonable or disruptive may actually be suffering from MH issues. Through MAST training staff will be better equipped to identify MH issues at an early stage, and provide an effective response. The result will be a safer environment, better safeguarded young people, and an improved learning environment for pupils. A preventative approach will ensure that young people are better supported before a crisis point is reached.