

<b>Title:</b>	Youth Work Approaches to Violence, Gangs and Exploitation
<b>Level:</b>	4
<b>Credit value:</b>	5
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	L/650/4675
<b>Sector Subject Area:</b>	13.1 Teaching and Lecturing
<b>Aim:</b>	The aim of this unit is to provide learners with the skills and knowledge to be able to understand violence, gangs, and exploitation and how Youth Work approaches can respond meaningfully to these issues in a range of practice settings.
<b>Assessment Type:</b>	Assessment of this unit will be through an internally set and internally assessed portfolio of evidence.
<b>Assessment Guidance:</b>	Assessment decisions for skills-based learning outcomes must be made during the learner's normal work activity. Skills-based assessment must include direct observation as the main source of evidence and must be carried out over an appropriate period of time.

## Learning outcomes

*The learner will:*

1. Be able to understand what is meant by violence, gangs, and exploitation.

### **Delivery content:**

The aim of this learning outcome is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to understand that violence, gangs, and exploitation are broad concepts that can be differentially defined, e.g. violence can be physical, psychological, material, or structural. Learners will explore different types of violence, gangs and exploitation and common myths and assumptions about these e.g. that gang members are always male.

The learner must:

- 1.1 Define youth **violence, gangs, and exploitation**.
- 1.2 Identify common **assumptions and myths** about youth violence, gangs, and exploitation.

2. Be able to understand contexts, causes and consequences of violence, gangs, and exploitation.

**Delivery content:**

The aim of this learning outcome is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to explore the potential possible causes and consequences of violence, gangs, and exploitation from within their local context e.g. increased knife and gun crime, poverty/austerity, lack of employment and closure of youth services.

The learner must:

- 2.1 Outline the **context of violence, gangs, and exploitation**.
- 2.2 Discuss the **possible causes** for violence, gangs, and exploitation.
- 2.3 Discuss the **consequences** of violence, gangs, and exploitation.

3. Be able to understand how Youth Work approaches can respond to violence, gangs, and exploitation.

**Delivery content:**

The aim of this learning outcome is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to explore how to apply Youth Work approaches at the Personal, Community and Structural levels in a range of practice settings.

The learner must:

- 3.1 Outline key principles of **Youth Work and informal education**.
- 3.2 Explain **how Youth Work can respond** to violence, gangs, and exploitation in a range of practice settings.

4. Be able to evaluate own practice and approaches to violence, gangs, and exploitation.

**Delivery content:**

The aim of this learning outcome is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills to evaluate their understanding of the issues around youth violence, gangs and exploitation and summarise their development needs for their own practice in this field.

The learner must:

- 4.1 Evaluate **own knowledge, skills and understanding** in relation to violence, gangs, and exploitation.

4.2 Summarise **required development actions** to improve own knowledge, skills and understanding of violence gangs and exploitation.

### Scope of Training

The Scope of Training identifies areas that must be covered during the delivery of this unit. This is the minimum that is expected but tutors are expected to include other areas, knowledge of which will benefit their learners, based on location, types of work available and from the tutors own professional experience.

### Requirements

#### Violence, Gangs and Exploitation

Violence, gangs, and exploitation are broad, contestable concepts that can be differentially defined. Young people (both young men and young women) can be involved in each, as victims, perpetrators, and/or witnesses. Violence can be physical, psychological, material, and structural. Similarly, the concepts of gangs and exploitation need careful delineation.

Outline a typology to define violence taken from Harris and Seal (2016) which distinguishes between:

- Physical violence – the use of force, knives, guns, sexual attack, fights;
- Psychological violence – verbal threats, bullying, intimidation, humiliation, ridicule, stalking, ostracising;
- Material violence – inflicting damage on property or other inanimate objects;
- Structural violence – the systematic failure of the state to provide for the basic needs of individuals, or harsh or discriminatory treatment at the hands of state bodies, false imprisonment, abuse of powers, etc.

Define gangs, to distinguish between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs. For example, this is a definition of a street gang:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A relatively durable, street-based group of young people who (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group, and (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence. They may also have any or all the following features: (3) identify with or lay claim over territory, (4) have some form of identifying structural feature, (5) conflict with other similar gangs”. (HM Government, 2012b, p 11).</li> </ul> <p>Differentiate levels of young people’s involvement in gangs from loose affiliation through to direct involvement.</p> <p>Define exploitation:</p> <p>Child criminal exploitation is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology. (Home Office, 2020).</p> <p>Define key terms such as “County Lines.”</p> <p>“County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line.” They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual exploitation).</p> <p>Define other related terminology, for example “cuckooing” (where heroin and crack cocaine dealers associated with ‘County Lines’ supply the methodology, take over the homes of local residents and create outposts to facilitate their supply operations in satellite locations), ‘branded lines,’ ‘debt bondage,’ ‘elders,’ ‘runners.’</p>
<p><b>Assumptions and Myths</b></p>	<p>Learners must explore common assumptions and myths about youth violence, gangs, and exploitation. This could include, but is not limited to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gang members are always male and from ethnic or racial minorities.</li> <li>• Gangs are only an urban problem.</li> <li>• Gangs are always stable, hierarchical organisations with established leaders and clear rules.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Context Of Violence, Gangs and Exploitation</b></p>	<p>This could include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral panic and demonisation of young people within dominant political and media discourses around youth crime (especially knife and gun crime) that is often racialized and how this shapes public opinion.</li> <li>• How social media and youth cultural products such as music may act as an exacerbator to violence, but also provide avenues for meaningful expressions of, and responses to, violence, gangs, and exploitation.</li> <li>• How societal change from industrial to technological impacts on young people especially in socially excluded and deprived communities.</li> <li>• Social contexts: austerity, poverty, lack of employment opportunities and education (e.g. school exclusion).</li> <li>• Increased surveillance of young people in public space.</li> <li>• Closure of youth services.</li> <li>• Policy drives for greater targeting of youth services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible Causes</b></p>	<p>Causes of young people’s involvement in, and experience of, violence, gangs, and exploitation, at 3 levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The personal level</li> </ul> <p>The personal, individual psychological needs that might lie behind young people’s involvement in violence, gangs, and exploitation (e.g. for safety, belonging, status, money). This might include their experience of risk and victimisation in areas with existing high levels of violence and gang activity that lead them to feel they have no choice but to join a gang or carry a weapon (Pitts, 2008); experience of abuse/neglect, parental mental ill-health and</p>

	<p>substance misuse, domestic violence in families, bullying or school exclusion, and housing instability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community level.</li> </ul> <p>Young people’s interactions with their local communities (peers, parents, families and other local organisations and networks, including on-line) and how these may exacerbate or mitigate against violence, gangs, and exploitation within that community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Structural level.</li> </ul> <p>Violence sewn into the fabric of society, within institutions. This could include young people’s treatment at the hands of the state and its representatives (e.g. The Police), the symbolic violence of media discourses, failures within educational systems (e.g. misdiagnosis of, and inadequate response to SEN), and government policy, for example that which seeks to curtail their movement or presence in public space.</p> <p>Learners must also consider how the causes of young men and women’s involvement in violence, gangs and exploitation may differ and create different experiences of victimisation.</p>
<p><b>Consequences</b></p>	<p>Learners must consider the harmful consequences of young people’s involvement in violence, gangs, and exploitation for themselves. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical harm (injury – stab/gun wounds, sexual assault and exploitation, drug misuse and dependency, death);</li> <li>• Psychological harm (stress, mental health issues, trauma, and self-harm)</li> <li>• Material and social harm (involvement in youth justice system and criminal record with implications for education, employment, incarceration, and family breakdown).</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, Learners must also consider the consequences for local communities, for example, increased fear of crime.</p> <p>The consequences for wider society, for example, costs to the taxpayer and the detrimental effect on public health.</p>

	<p>How the consequences of involvement in gangs, violence, and exploitation (as victim, perpetrators and or witnesses) may differ for young men and young women.</p>
<p><b>Youth Work and Informal Education</b></p>	<p>Youth work as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An educative process</li> <li>• The voluntary relationship (young people choose to be involved)</li> <li>• Participation (young people’s involvement and partnership in decision making)</li> <li>• Conversation and dialogue</li> <li>• Reflective practice.</li> </ul> <p>(See for example NYA (National Youth Agency), Harris and Seal, 2016; Jeffs and Smith, 2008).</p>
<p><b>How Youth Work Can Respond</b></p>	<p>Learners must consider how youth work approaches could be applied in a range of practice settings, (corresponding with the 3 levels of causation identified in L.O. 2.2).</p> <p>The Personal Level:</p> <p>How to (in different practice settings):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help young people find alternative means of meeting their needs (e.g. for belonging, identity, loyalty, respect, security, excitement, status, money) through more constructive and legitimate means;</li> <li>• Build relationships with young people based on mutual trust and respect</li> <li>• Constructively challenge violence and exploitation</li> <li>• Capitalise on spontaneous encounters (teachable moments)</li> <li>• Facilitate the extrication of young people from gangs, violence and exploitation whilst minimising the risk of reprisals</li> <li>• Refer young people, including those at risk of victimisation and exploitation to specialist support agencies.</li> </ul> <p>The Community Level</p> <p>How to (in different practice settings):</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a visible, presence in a community</li> <li>• Help communities explore their understandings of violence, the part it plays in their culture, and therefore responses</li> <li>• Engage with young people’s peer groups, families, and the community</li> <li>• Target young people through a universal offer</li> <li>• Avoid ‘chasing violence’ via approaches that direct work to ‘hot spot’ areas (Harris and Seal, 2016)</li> <li>• Challenge ‘crab mentality’ and ‘tall poppy syndrome’ in communities (Harris and Seal, 2016)</li> <li>• Facilitate group activities/events that develop community self-efficacy</li> <li>• Build intergenerational and intercultural capital</li> <li>• Engage with local planning and democratic processes.</li> </ul> <p>The Structural level</p> <p>How to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid collusion with state violence such as anti-crime measures that penalise young in terms of their freedom to gather in public space, irrespective of their involvement in crime or violence</li> <li>• Challenge direct state violence e.g. police brutality, harassment and racism, and excessive surveillance</li> <li>• Assert rights of young people</li> <li>• Help young people to ‘become the media’ and create ‘counter narratives’ that challenge the symbolic violence of dominant discourses (Harris and Seal, 2016)</li> <li>• Animate political action and education to facilitate legitimate expression of grievance and bring about social change.</li> </ul> <p>How youth work approaches can also be delivered through themed responses such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical gender education exploring the nature of social identity (e.g. masculinities and femininities)</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art-based projects - film, drama, photography</li> <li>• Music – e.g. recording, performance</li> <li>• Sport – e.g. boxing/football</li> <li>• Travel and exchange programmes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Own Knowledge, Skills and Understanding</b></p>	<p>Learners must evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their understanding of the issues around youth violence, gangs, and exploitation</li> <li>• The scope to deploy youth work approaches in their own practice setting</li> <li>• Possible practical or themed approaches to work with young people on youth violence, gangs, and exploitation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Required Development Actions</b></p>	<p>Learners must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarise their development needs for their own practice in this field and for future work around violence, gangs, and exploitation</li> <li>• Explain how their own identity and experience could impact on their practice, identifying the assets (e.g. credibility) but also shortcomings (e.g. over-identification and hyper-masculinity) of lived (or lack of) experience of violence, gangs, and exploitation (Harris, 2019).</li> </ul>