

# BLACK YOUTH PROBLEM: DISPROPORTIONALITY?

GROWING UP IN POOR NEIGHBOURHOODS  
MULTIPLE POOR OUTCOMES

Anthony Gunter, UEL

“There used to be a [black]  
community...”

Community Stakeholder - 1 adult white male

“...these communities were broken down a long, long time ago. I think the parents have lost that and the grandparents, they’ve lost that community spirit there a long while ago.”

Community Stakeholder 2 – adult black male

# There once was a community

“ ...just papering over big cracks... because the problems that are there were set in motion many years ago. You're looking at people living in extreme poverty, you know you get poor schooling, poor health, followed by things like high levels of crime. So trying to prevent it ... you know, is a problem. You need to change the conditions that people are living in, then that would help to prevent the other things, so it's very easy for them to go in and over police certain areas for their crime figures.”

Community Stakeholder 3 – adult black male

# Families Under Pressure

“If you’ve got a family of six living in a high rise ... sorry for the stereotype ... and then you’ve got the teenage boys who are acting, again, as the father. Again, apologies for the stereotype, but unfortunately it is a reality of how a lot of these young people are living. You know, the whole family structure’s gone, even things like Sunday dinner’s gone. The whole thing’s gone.”

Community Stakeholder 4 – adult black male

“Families are needing support because of a high number of single parentage in the community. You can't do everything, my personal view that is. Mum can't do everything, erm, and then when she's trying to go to work the son's out there but if your neighbour can't take some responsibility as well when he sees your son out ..... in the road not to say something like, hey Johnny or Susan how comes you're, you shouldn't be out here doing that. I think you know the whole community can get involved because we have turned our backs ...”

- ▣ Community Stakeholder 5 – adult black male

# YOUTH PERSPECTIVES

YP1: When you haven't got no money in your pocket you want go out and.....

YP2: You're thinking, why am I from a little estate or in the house and mum hasn't got not enough money to feed me or this and that.

YP1: So, you'd go out to try and provide for your mum and try and, obviously, look big for yourself as well.

YP2: Especially if you've got siblings and that, you need to look after them don't you.

YP1: It's a thing but like if your mum hasn't got a job and she can't get one, and you're in school, or you haven't got no money either like, she can't give you money to get to school and that, you're going to go and do what you need to do.

YP3: Yeah, because I didn't have no money at school so I just sold a bit of weed, f\*\*\*ing good money, f\*\*\* it, yeah.

YP2: For me it wasn't really because of money it's because all my friends are doing it so I thought might as well join in.

# “There used to be a [black] community...”

- ▣ Fragmented communities
- ▣ Families under severe strains/ pressures
- ▣ Squeeze on public funds / right wing backlash > disappearing BAME - Voluntary / Third Sector / Community Groups
- ▣ Increase poverty / unemployment / underemployment and worklessness > Black youth disproportionately affected
- ▣ ~~Generic Youth & Community Work~~ - become Gangs Work



# SOLUTIONS: A Start

- ▣ Rejuvenated and funded grass roots BAME Third & Voluntary Sector
  - still many individuals and groups who want to be part of solution
- ▣ Re-intro generic Community Dev and Youth work
- ▣ Multiple deprivation leads to poor health outcomes- serious youth violence should be addressed principally as public health issue