

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH GANGS

Covering County Lines, Joint Enterprise, The 3Rs of Gang Membership, The Postcode Trap and Much More



Letise Sampson

Getting to Grips With Gangs: A Resource Guide for Teachers, Parents, Young People and the Wider Community

Letise Sampson

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Bio: Letise Sampson

Young people across the country are facing a very new threat. Alongside the social issues they must deal with from bullying, online grooming, discrimination and mental health, this new threat, one can argue, is one of the most dangerous, ripping families apart, creating fear in the local community and generating a new culture of violence as an acceptable way of dealing with conflict resolution.

Fuelled by the new wave of social media and online videos and propagated through new sub-genres of Hip Hop music such as Grime, Trap and Drill music, gangs have become the silent plague devouring the lives of young people in the streets.

Youths as young as 13 are losing their lives, just by being in the wrong postcode at the wrong time; or through the poor choices of friendships and peer affiliations. This has created a vicious cycle of revenge.

The innocent youth are now stuck in a place of lose-lose choices to survive: to join a gang or face the vulnerability of collateral damage.

It grieves my heart to turn on the TV or read the latest bulletin and see another life lost through this callous act of gang violence. Having a son myself, I wonder is this the prospect he will be looking forward to?

Over the last few years, I have researched hundreds of incidents to see whether there's was a similarity or trend and, even more importantly, to see whether there was a solution. Gang violence is a difficult area to talk about because of all the surrounding issues: bereavement, poverty, dysfunctional families, external influences, abuse, peer pressure and more.

My hope is that by working through this book, thinking about the issues and reading about others' experiences, people will begin to make the right choices.

If this book can help parents and schools to change the future of one gang member, to help them to say no to gangs and to fulfil their destiny, it would have been worth writing it.

My Story

I grew up in Brent, north-west London, in a predominantly African Caribbean area. Gangs, knives, drugs and crime were something of a norm in the area. We looked at it as a way of life because of the music, and we were totally desensitised to the problems.

Young people actually looked up to neighbourhood gangsters; the more violent the gangs were, the more respect and reputation they built which generated fear and created a psychological protection for them. These gangs were then honoured in the form of urban legend folk tales.

I'll admit that my neighbourhood wasn't one of the worst crime-infested neighbourhoods in London, especially when compared with the urban tales from Peckham, Brixton, Hackney and Tottenham. But it shared the common characteristics; young people were being groomed into a gang fast and the gangs were turning more and more ruthless.

As I became conscious of gang violence from my own personal experiences, detailed later in this book, I realised this was something that had always been around me. But I chose to ignore the reality because until you have been a victim or seen things first-hand it doesn't ever hit home.

Most of all I saw how gangs destroyed innocent families through collateral damage. I made a choice: that this was not how my story would be written. I knew I had to do something radical. At 18 I decided to apply for University. I knew I couldn't get away from the area so I guessed doing three years at uni would create escapism from the harsh reality of living in London as a teen.

Going to the University of Bedford, I thought to myself, 'I'm free,' only to find out that gangs existed even there. With lots of students coming from various inner cities in the UK, the night life of university created a gang utopia. Although not as extreme as stabbings, gang-related problems spilled into the campus.

Another turning point was someone losing their life over a gang beating outside the main campus. At that point, I realised the issue was to do with the gang mentality itself and not necessarily where you're from.

After university, needing a place to live, I came back into the area. I made a choice to work hard to save money to buy a place outside of London and create a new life.

Graduating in Internet and Business, I found myself with a job at Sony BMG as an online marketing assistant. After two years working with young people from different walks of life, my mindset changed and I realised life was bigger than a postcode.

At 23 years old I started a media business which became successful. I was able to buy a place outside London and create a new life for myself.

Ten years later, now I am in my 30s. I have several successful businesses in Fitness, Corporate Events and Education with thousands of clients. I feel blessed that I was strong enough to make positive choices to get me in this position.

However, we're now in 2018 and sadly youth gang culture has evolved into something even more violent with the drive for reputation the biggest factor. Never before have quarrels stemming from the most minor things, like posting a negative comment on social media about another gang, put young people's lives and the lives of their families at stake.

So, what can be done about this? I escaped the violence and was able to start again through one simple concept: **CHOICE**.

What young people need is hope and a new sense of positive direction. To understand that life is bigger than the postcode they live in. They need to feel like they are not suspects but can be prospects. This is done through life coaching techniques for older children and awareness of the situation for young children.

One of the things my mother always told me was, never forget where you're coming from. 2020 Dreams and the 2020 Rising program was created to help other young people see their vision clearly and turn their dreams into reality through positive, life-changing programmes.

Introduction

The emergence of youth/street gangs are a cause of concern across the whole of the UK, especially in our inner cities and larger urban areas. Gang culture is linked to a wide range of societal problems from drugs and drink to sexual abuse and gun and knife crime.

We should all be aware of the negative impact gangs have on the fabric of society and of the tell-tale signs that reveal when our students and children are involved with gangs.

We must all do what we can to prevent young people from falling prey to the influence of gangs and to stop those who have become entangled from being lost completely. Every young person rescued from a gang prevents that gang from growing more powerful.

There are many reasons why young people get involved with gangs. Some of them are more external in nature, for example their family members and friends might be involved with gangs, they may have grown up in poverty or there could be a strong gang presence in their local neighbourhood.

Other factors, especially in the reputation-craving youth gangs of today, will be more internal. Some young people are attracted by the perceived glamour of gang life, the chance of earning respect from their peers or the opportunity to obtain material possessions.

Once inside a gang, additional factors can keep them trapped. Mainly a sense of fear stemming from threats and coercion from other gang members, a lack of protection from rival gangs a sense of loyalty to the gang and a fear of being punished for bad behaviour.

Dependency on drugs or alcohol are also a factor.

Disconnection from Society

Attraction to the gang way of life and the formation of bonds between gang members is accompanied by a corresponding weakening of the connection between gang members and the wider community beyond the gang.

Gang members often drift away from their former friends and family members and drop conventional goals such as achieving good results at school or pursuing a particular career path. They stop attending sports clubs, music studios or other constructive groups and the gang becomes increasingly the centre of their existence.

In terms of attitude and behaviour, the moral convictions of the past are gradually dropped or allowed to fade and the gang member starts to engage in delinquent behaviour.

These destructive and criminal behaviours can dominate the conversation when it comes to gangs and lead to a narrow focus on suppression measures such as gang sweeps and the like. This can take attention away from the equally important question of what it is about their lives that drives some young people into the gangs' clutches while their peers seem immune.

What are they missing from their lives and how do they receive it from a gang? This can be a painful but necessary question for parents in particular to ponder.

Youth gang members sometimes talk about the voice of the 'olders' being louder than that of their families. Did their child receive enough unconditional love and acceptance during their upbringing? Were they given clear boundaries? Did they have role models to look up to? Was their home environment happy and nurturing? Were they taught about the dangers of carrying knives?

Most young people want to do the right thing and fit into society as well-adjusted citizens. But conflicted by inner doubts and fears and scarred by experiences teenagers should never have to face they become at risk of losing their way. It can be a difficult task to steer them away from gangs and keep them on the straight and narrow.

Although gang members regularly display similar antisocial behaviours to one another, a 'one size fits all' solution is unlikely to work.

What we really need is a multi-pronged approach aimed at achieving long-term results with parents in particular, schools, community leader, police and other agents working together towards a common aim.

UK Gang Statistics

To get an idea of the scale of the problem we face, here are some gang-related statistics:

- ✓ By 21st May 2019, 25 young people (aged under 30) had already been stabbed to death in London since the start of the year.
- ✓ There were over 6,696 gun offences in England and Wales in 2019.
- ✓ Around half of all gun crime in the UK is gang-related.
- ✓ There were 36,998 knife offences in England and Wales in 2019.
- ✓ Around 20 per cent of all knife crime in the UK is gang-related.
- ✓ The Metropolitan Police have around 3,500 people on their controversial Gang Matrix.

*For more on knife crime, see my book: '**Getting Real With Guns and Knives**'

How to Use This Book

This book is a 2020 Dreams publication created in partnership with 2020 Rising. 2020 Dreams provide high quality workshops on a wide range of topical young people's issues. More details on these are at the end of this book or at www.2020dreams.org.uk.

2020 Rising tackles those tough issue – like youth gangs – that all of us find it difficult to talk about.

This book is designed to be accessible not only to teachers and community group members but also to parents and students themselves.

If you are not a big reader, there are plenty of case studies, discussion points and activities dotted throughout.

This book will provide you with everything you might want to know about what a gang is, how a gang operates and how we can work together as a community to combat their threat and bring back our young people.

For Teachers:

- ✓ Based on established and recent research and latest reports.
- ✓ Broken down into bite-sized chapters to help lesson planning.
- ✓ Can be read cover-to-cover or dipped into.
- ✓ 'Discuss This' panels for class discussion.
- ✓ 'Try This' panels for class activities.

For Parents:

- ✓ Real life case studies.
- ✓ 'Discuss This' panel for discussions at home.
- ✓ 'Try This' panel for family activities.
- ✓ Guidance for improving communication at home.
- ✓ Advice for working with other parents and the community.

For Young People:

- ✓ 'Discuss This' panels gives you things to talk about at school or with your family.
- ✓ 'Try This' panels include fun and useful activities for home and school.
- ✓ Advice to help you get out of a gang or to say no to joining one.

For the Wider Community:

- ✓ Based on established and recent research and latest reports.
- ✓ Builds awareness about gang culture.
- ✓ Practical advice for tackling gangs in your community.

You will find out about the gang mentality, including the 'Three R's' (reputation, respect and retaliation) which are of major importance to how gangs operate, especially in 2018.

You can read about the grooming and initiation process and find out what a typical gang member looks like – and where they come from.

There are also sections on gang behaviour, female sexual exploitation, gang fashion, knife crime, mental health issues and drugs.

Importantly, this book shows how we can work together to deal effectively with gangs. We look at how to assess the level of gang activity in your neighbourhood and how to understand the negative effects that gangs have on our communities. We also explore various types of intervention.

You will learn about the different roles that the police and justice system, community organisations, schools and parents can play in tackling gang influence from Joint Enterprise convictions and suppression tactics to early family intervention and social approaches.

CHAPTER 3: Definition of A Gang

We might think we know what a gang is but can we honestly define how a gang differs from a group of young friends hanging around a shopping centre or performing grime or trap music together? Even if those outside of a gang can come to an agreement as to what makes one, this doesn't mean that the individuals involved relate to that label.

Under questioning, a young person may deny being affiliated to a gang at all and insist that his or her fellow gang members are just friends. Other terms they might use are 'family,' 'breddrin' (brethren), 'crews,' 'cuz' (cousins) or 'my boys.'

This distinction matters because the way we define gangs has big implications for how young people are treated by the justice system. The same crime is likely to be treated more seriously if it is considered to be gang-related (you can read more about this in the next chapter and the chapter on Joint Enterprise).

The more narrow and carefully considered a definition is, the more protection young people have from being unfairly labelled a gang member and having harsher sentences imposed. The more broad the definition, the more protection there is for citizens as the burden of proof is on the accused.

Here are some definitions of a gang taken from the UK and the US.

United Kingdom

The definition of a gang preferred by many UK bodies was drawn up in February 2009 by the Centre for Social Justice, a government think tank. In its 'Dying to Belong' report, this body defined a gang as:

A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

- (1) see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group,
- (2) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence,
- (3) identify with or lay claim over territory,
- (4) have some form of identifying structural feature, and
- (5) are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.

Bodies using this, or a similar definition, range include other government bodies (e.g. the Children's Commissioner who, in November 2017, wrote a report on the welfare of children in gangs) and local council safeguarding boards (LSCBs).

This definition is by no mean accepted across the board. However, it does remove the tendency for misbehaving youths to be automatically labelled as part of a gang.

This was something that the CSJ were keen to dispel in their 2009 report, which said: “The vast majority of groups of young people are not gangs, and the labelling of them as such can have negative consequences for all involved.”

Police and civilians should always keep this in mind before judging a group of youths. Alienating and punishing people for being in a group makes the problem worse!

United States

The federal definition of a gang, as taken from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), is as follows:

An association of three or more individuals:

- ✓ Whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation, frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical marking, style or colour of clothing, hairstyle, hand sign or graffiti.
- ✓ Whose purpose in part is to engage in criminal activity and which uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives.
- ✓ Whose members engage in criminal activity or acts of juvenile delinquency that, if committed by an adult, would be crimes with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation or economic resources.
- ✓ The definition goes on to say that the association may also possess some of the following characteristics:
- ✓ The members may employ rules for joining and operating within the association

- ✓ The members may meet on a recurring basis
- ✓ The association may provide physical protection of its members from others
- ✓ The association may seek to exercise control over a particular geographic location or region, or it may simply defend its perceived interests against rivals.
- ✓ The association may have an identifiable structure.

Activities: What is a Gang Anyway?

Discuss This!

What differences are there between how the UK and USA define gangs? Do these differences matter?

- ✓ What are the pros and cons of a narrow definition?
- ✓ What are the pros and cons of a broad definition?
- ✓ How would you feel if a friend who wasn't in a gang went to jail for a long time because the jury believed he or she was in a gang?
- ✓ How would your family feel if a gang member hurt you but got away with a short sentence because the jury didn't find enough evidence they were in a gang?

Try This!

1. Without looking at any examples, write a list of five things that define a gang.
2. Bring your answers back to your teacher or family and compare definitions.
3. What did you all agree on? Did you disagree on some things?

In the UK definition, unlike the US definition, there has to be evidence that members of a group see themselves as a gang. The US definitions of gang doesn't require this which gives more power to others (e.g. the police) to label young people as gang members.

This federal definition is modified in state definitions and the issue of defining gangs is a hot one there. For example, the state of Mississippi is currently engaged in what has been described as an escalating 'war on gangs' and there are cases whereby state prosecutors can increase sentences by five times or more if they can convince a jury that the offenders were part of a gang when they committed the offence (which could be as minor as selling 30 grams of cannabis).

To make their decision, police officers might draw upon the clothing and tattoos the defendants are wearing and under new proposed legislation (specifically Senate Bill 2868), it would be difficult for a judge to intervene unless they had solid reasons that to do so would serve the interests of justice.

Of course, with limited access to high quality legal defence, those from poor neighbourhoods would become worryingly dependent on the discretion of police officers.

The Mississippi bill comes hot on the heels of a similar broadening of gang definition in another southern state: Kentucky. House Bill 169 passed a House committee in February 2018 and, at the time of writing this book, was due to go before the full House for approval.

As well as defining gangs, this bill also punishes those, even children, who intentionally encourage or solicit another person to join a criminal gang.

This is known as '**gang grooming**'.

CHAPTER 4: Older Gang Members: Grooming and Initiation

The problem with gangs is that sometimes you may become affiliated with one without knowing. This brings me to the story of my good friend who was involved in gangs in Stratford and Stockwell.

He introduced me to a different world. Being in his late 20s, he was what you would call an 'older' and he looked at me as a potential mentee in the gang lifestyle. I was naive at the time and was happy that someone with a street credibility of his calibre would be willing to take me on with his crew.

Little did I know I was being groomed into becoming a gang member. It opened my eyes to a new world of constant near death experiences; just through my affiliation with him alone, I experienced at least six incidents of a threat to my life.

What is Grooming?

The process of grooming for gang membership is rarely covered in the mainstream media but grooming is featured a lot in an equally disturbing phenomenon: the grooming of children for sexual exploitation.

Gang grooming is the psychological process by which new gang members are recruited by older gang members. It often includes an initial period of encouragement, affection and attention and may be followed by violence and threats.

Children as young as 10 are being approached in the streets or even outside the school playground!

One tactic is to claim that the child is being targeted by a rival gang and to offer protection from harm. Other children and teenagers are drawn into gangs because they crave the attention and affection they are not receiving elsewhere or, like me, they look up to and respect an 'older.'

Initiation into Gang Life

I have mentioned the hierarchical structure of gangs earlier in the book. Another common part of the gang structure is the initiation process.

Once they have been drawn in through the grooming process, gang 'youngers' are often used as drug runners or for concealing weapons. This is because of the reduced risk of them being stopped and searched by police. They are also 'human shields,' protecting elders from being 'poked up' (i.e. stabbed) by rivals.

As they prove their worth, new gang members might be ordered to carry out criminal activities such as beatings, robbery, arson or vandalism.

The more violent the crime, the bigger their reputation and the higher their place in the gang hierarchy will be.

Coercing young people into carrying out acts of violence and antisocial behaviour has another effect. By moving from being a victim to a perpetrator of crime, the new recruits are even less likely to want to escape the gang for fear of being punished for their actions.

These are also 'rites of passage' which mark the movement from being on the outskirts of the gang to full membership (or from a child to an adult). In the language of the streets, a new gang member might be told they need to, 'show they're about that life.' If they successfully carry out the tasks given to them they will finally become 'certified' – i.e. a fully-fledged gang member.

Committing violent acts also reinforces the centrality of violence to the gang's existence and helps to further desensitise the individual to the violence that they will partake in and witness.

The physical pain and, sometimes, threat to life that the initiate suffers is outweighed by the emotional high that comes from having demonstrated courage and been accepted into a group. According to 'The Handbook of Gangs,' extreme initiation processes actually lead to closer bonding with a group than milder forms.

There are, of course, many urban myths around what happens within gang initiations and while there are undoubtedly some horrific rites out there, it is important to know that some have been made up and spread for shock factor.

After all, one way for a gang to gain notoriety and respect is by spreading sick tales of horrendous initiations which may never have actually occurred.

Once accepted by the group, the new gang member can expect to be rewarded with drugs, alcohol and material possessions such as clothes, jewellery, shoes or weapons. Perhaps most important of all, the gang member will feel a sense of belonging that they may never have experienced before.

Sexual exploitation is common within gangs with girls in particular at risk. As explained in a later chapter, girls are also enticed and accepted into the gang hierarchy through grooming and initiation.

Desistance: Leaving the Gang

Gang members often refer to the severe consequences gang members will face if they leave a gang. However, research involving ex-members suggests that this may be more a tool of intimidation than a real condition of gang desistance.

Nevertheless, the fear of consequences for leaving the gang combined with the real risk of being targeted by rival gang members or the authorities, can make it very difficult to help young people to disengage from gangs.

Well-meaning civilians should understand this when they talk about choice.

An Alternative Path to Acceptance

As a community, we clearly need to intervene earlier to prevent vulnerable young people from being lured into gang culture by older, manipulative gang members. However, we may also need to look at what young people are gaining from undergoing initiations because something is clearly speaking to them.

It seems that the initiation process is fulfilling a deep unmet need for respect and acceptance. Is it possible to provide an alternative route that is less destructive to society?

For example, in the book, 'Seven Pathways Into and Out of Gangs' (from 'The Re-Evolution of American Street Gangs' collection), author Aaron Kipnis suggests taking inspiration from Boys to Men programmes and:

- ✓ Treating young people as they are, not how we want them to be.
- ✓ Being honest and direct but focusing on the positive.
- ✓ Being respectful (see the chapter on the 3 Rs!).
- ✓ Create joined-up services to form a safety net for those at risk.
- ✓ Recruit former gang members as leaders and programme designers.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for real economic advancement and inclusion in society.

There is no one easy solution to combat the powerful effects of grooming and gang initiation rituals but the more we can understand the psychology behind them, the more likely we can create effective interventions.

Activities: Know Your Enemy!

Discuss This!

- ✓ Why do you think older people really want young teens to join their gang?
- ✓ Some older people admit that younger people are better for drugs running as they will be 'poked-up' instead of them. Would you take on that risk for an older?
- ✓ Some ex-gang members regret being involved in drugs because they kill people. How would you feel about drug running if someone you knew died because of drugs?
- ✓ How would your family feel if you got hurt and they couldn't bring anyone to justice?
- ✓ How would you feel if you found out someone else's child got hurt or killed because of a weapon you carried?

Try This!

Try this activity in pairs.

Imagine you have to get a package from A to B in the next five minutes (set a timer). In that time, come up with three ways to persuade them:

1. Bribery
2. Flattery
3. Threats (don't make it too violent)

The other person has to try and say 'no' to each attempt. Then swap over.

Which techniques do you think work best? What is the best way to say no?

CHAPTER 5: Peer-On-Peer & Online Grooming

Peer-on-peer grooming has been identified by some sources (e.g. Birmingham City Council) as a separate model of grooming from the standard gang initiation model.

This is because grooming does not always involve an older targeting a child or young teen. Peer-on-peer or near peer grooming is when young people (who are themselves already being groomed) draw their friends or other people of a similar age into gang culture.

Peer-on-Peer grooming affects girls as well as boys with girls used to entice their friends into a gang's network (in some cases to be sexually exploited).

The influence of peer-on-peer grooming is sometimes downplayed as was admitted by West Midlands Police in 2014 when they listed a lack of focus on peer-on-peer grooming as a failing in their investigations. Although the investigation wasn't looking into gang membership, the findings still highlight a potential blind spot that those working to tackle gangs need to keep in mind.

Peer-on-peer grooming is clearly going to be an effective tactic for gangs to employ since there will already be shared experiences and a sense of trust between peers.

Peer-on-peer gang grooming does not just happen in the street or outside of the school playground. Social media networks and chat applications are powerful channels by which gang members can exert their influence on peers. Unlike other forms of connection, social media and mobile phones enable 24 hour contact.

Online and Social Media Grooming

Back in 2013, The Birmingham Safeguarding Board highlighted the dangers of internet grooming, pointing out the fact that perpetrators could assume false identities and that online spaces weren't sufficiently monitored.

Vulnerable people, including those with emotional and mental health issues and learning disabilities, were deemed particularly at risk since the usual safeguards weren't in place online.

The potential for children to be targeted maliciously via online apps has been highlighted recently with apps such as WhatsApp, Roblox and Sarahah attracting criticism for failing to do enough to police their users.

Via Online Channels, Gang Members Can:

- ✓ Pretend to be a child to befriend them via chatrooms, social networks, email, SMS messaging, games and mobile apps. This helps them to gain trust that they would otherwise struggle to obtain.
- ✓ Contact targets while they are seemingly safe (at home or a friend's house).
- ✓ Stalk their victims and gain information about their day-to-day activities.
- ✓ Arrange to meet young people with the purpose of inducting them into a gang.
- ✓ Blackmail young people (particularly girls) by encouraging them to send sexualised images or videos.

The Characteristics of The Grooming Process

The basic grooming process can be divided into three stages: finding a target, grooming the target and initiation. This is similar to the 'grooming line' model designed by Barnardo's for victims of sexual exploitation.

With peer-on-peer grooming, the target is already in the groomer's social circle or immediate peer network so the first stage is already completed. For older gang members, grooming might involve identifying a vulnerable child in a public place or online.

After starting a conversation, the gang member will obtain personal details such as the child's name, age and contact details.

Once a proper connection is established, grooming can start. Both positive actions (flattery, providing gifts, etc.) and negative ones (threats, intimidation, violence, etc.) may be used.

Even the apparently generous actions will eventually be used as a form of 'debt bondage,' with victims reminded that they owe the groomer for their presents.

The depths to which gang members will stoop to keep their target under close control

should not be underestimated.

When threatening them with violence, for example, the groomer will draw on information they have gathered to target members of the victim's family.

They might, for example, say that failure to carry out a crime will end in their mum having an 'accident' at work or their brother being stabbed at school.

The effect is to both draw the target closer to the gang while isolating them from all other sources of potential support.

If they are afraid to turn to their family, teachers or authority figures, the groomer (and eventually the gang) will become the sole source of security. Naturally, this protection is never given freely.

Intervening in and Disrupting the Grooming Process

Just as in other gang awareness and prevention programmes, I believe that the earlier we can intervene and teach young people and their families how to avoid being groomed online and how to report concerns (e.g. locating and using the CEOP reporting service), the less likely it is that they will be duped into making poor decisions.

However, it is also crucial to identify those young people who are currently being groomed and to understand that the grooming process itself can make these young people evasive and hostile when it comes to co-operating with the authorities and wider community.

The process of grooming for sexual exploitation and grooming for gang recruitment are so similar that some of the findings from investigations of the former can be applied to the latter.

For example, a 2014 report from Overview & Scrutiny (Birmingham City Council) revealed that the time period over which grooming can occur varies widely.

In some cases, grooming can take months while in others only days are required (one case of grooming took just five days)

In addition, some of the warning signs of grooming activity are valid in both sexual

exploitation and gang recruitment, including:

- ✓ Being contacted by strangers via social media
- ✓ Spending time alone with strangers
- ✓ Being invited to social gatherings which involve predominantly adults (like the parties I attended in north London)
- ✓ Receiving presents (phones, clothes, jewellery, etc.) from new 'friends.'

In all cases of grooming, the main objective is promoting trust for the purposes of carrying out criminal activities.

Therefore, interventions designed to tackle grooming in sex exploitation cases could – and maybe should – also focus on gang recruitment.

Thank you for reading. You have now reached the preview limit for this book.

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