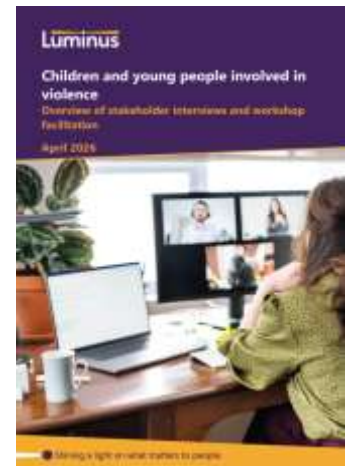


Understanding unmet need for children and young people involved in serious violence

June 2026

Background

As part of the needs assessment to better understand serious violence involving young people, Luminus were commissioned to provide qualitative insight from stakeholders to complement the quantitative surveys and youth interviews already being undertaken. We interviewed 18 stakeholders from a variety of roles that primarily support young people and have experience of serious violence. These included police, education, substance use treatment for young people, youth justice workers and safeguarding leads.



Methodology

All interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach. Questions focused around understanding cohorts; community needs and emerging concerns; geographical focus; access and barriers; good practice and success stories; and future outlook. Top line themes were presented at an in person workshop in April where Luminus provided insight and facilitated table discussions.

Findings

The profile of serious violence is evolving, there is a trend of younger children getting involved in knife crime and increasing cases among young people from middle income families. Cross-border influences, particularly from London (for the Surrey area), are driving gang activity, exploitation and violence. Unmet mental health and neurodiversity needs, alongside school exclusion, are key risk factors for violence. Reduced youth provision, lack of opportunities and harmful social media influences are increasing vulnerability. Grooming, exploitation and county lines activity continue to present significant risks to young people. Cost of living pressures, family stress and online harms are exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Effective approaches identified through this work include the importance of positive relationships, accessible and relational youth support, purposeful activities, and consistent multi-agency working.

"Working with the team was a positive and seamless experience. They quickly understood our requirements, communicated effectively throughout the project, and delivered high quality interviews with professionals working with children, helping us to better understand the nature and impact of serious violence in Surrey. The final report was exceptionally well produced, offering detailed insights and clear, evidence based recommendations to support future work in this area. We would have no hesitation in recommending them and look forward to working together again in the future." **Community Safety, Serious Violence and Partnership Lead, Surrey Police**