

## What are Gangs?

When most of us think of the word "gang" we think of danger and violence by a group of people.

Gangs commit crimes and threaten people and feel no guilt, fear and have no consequences when they hurt people.

Gangs commit crimes to gain power over other gangs for territory and control communities.

Children as young as 10 years old are being groomed to commit crimes and join gangs.

## Why do people join gangs?

Young people join gangs for reasons that make sense to them but not to adults.

## Some reasons why people join gangs are:

- Respect and status
- To gain friends
- A sense of belonging
- Excitement
- To find a substitute family
- Power
- Protection
- Money
- Peer pressure



## Things to help stop people being involved in gangs:

- Talk to your parent or trusted adult
- Encourage young people to be involved in positive activities and to think about their future employment
- Always let your parent/carer know where you are and who you are with
- Always talk about coping with pressure and how to deal with conflict without use of violence
- Remember the serious consequences that occur from violent or illegal behaviour. Keep lines of communication open
- Be aware of what you are doing on the internet and the dangers

## Signs that someone is already in a gang:

- Loss of interest in school
- Changes in behaviour Unexplained extra money or new possessions such as clothes, trainers, jewellery, computers / games, mobile phones
- Staying out late without permission
- A new nickname
- Dressing differently, perhaps in a particular style or colour
- Using tags or graffiti on books and possessions
- Using hand signals or code to speak with friends