Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the Finsbury Park area

Local residents, workers and councillors have reported issues with drug-dealing and associated violence, crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Finsbury Park area. Islington Council and Islington Police are working hard, in partnership with colleagues in Hackney and Haringey, to tackle the demand for and supply of drugs, reduce harm to individuals and address overall crime and ASB in the area. The Metropolitan Police Service, Islington Council and partner agencies are working in partnership to address these issues. This work includes:

Increasing policing and enforcement

- **Disrupting drug-dealing networks.** The police are using an intelligence-led approach to gain a better understanding of the criminal networks and target those involved, utilising the range of tools and powers available to them.

- **Increased patrols.** Neighbourhood police are regularly patrolling locations where drug-dealing has been reported, such as Lowman Road. The police have introduced 7 extra uniformed officers in Finsbury Park ward to carry out daily patrols and engagement in the area. Over the last year, they have arrested 26 suspects for the supply or production of drugs in the area. There were also 435 intelligence-led, drug-related stops in the area.

- **Action against moped-related crime.** Proactive policing and successful partnership work has led to a decrease in moped-enabled snatch-theft in the area, contributing to a decrease of 70% across the whole of Islington.

- **Conducting regular weapon sweeps.** This will continue to be coordinated by the police. Local residents will be encouraged to get involved in community weapon sweeps to raise awareness and help remove weapons from the area. This also provides residents with an opportunity to get to know their local policing team.

- **Tackling underage knife sales.** The council’s Trading Standards team and the police have been visiting local businesses to prevent underage sales of knives. An undercover test purchasing operation resulted in two shops being caught selling knives to an underage person – they are both now subject to investigation. There is ongoing work by Trading Standards and Licensing teams to ensure businesses comply with their licenses and the law.

- **Looking at innovative ways to get more knives off the street.** Following the success of the knife amnesty bin outside St Mellitus Church, where 651 knives were deposited in three months, the council’s Community Safety team are looking to provide additional such bins where people can safely hand in knives.

- **Taking action to close crack houses.** The police, the council and Partners for Islington have worked together to identify local crack houses and to take enforcement action to close them. The police have executed four drugs-related warrants and closed three crack houses in the area recently.

- **Increasing the use of CCTV.** CCTV is being used to help identify those involved in drug-dealing and to build the intelligence picture. A new camera has been installed in a hotspot area covering Blackstock Road and the surrounding streets.

- **Enhancing the response to local incidents of ASB.** The council’s ASB team are responding to reports in the area and carrying out regular patrols on nearby estates.

- **Holding regular community drop-ins.** The local policing teams will continue to hold regular drop-in sessions for the local community, providing opportunities for residents to raise concerns, which will allow the police and partners to address these issues.

- **Park Rangers.** Haringey Council have employed rangers to patrol Finsbury Park, providing extra security and reassurance.
Providing support for those who need it

- **Supporting rough sleepers into safe and secure accommodation.** Over the last two years, 34 people who were bedding down under Stroud Green Road bridge and nearby have been supported into accommodation. This includes working with outreach and substance misuse partners. In September 2018, a floating hub was trialled, which accommodated 24 individuals. The council continues to look at innovative ways of supporting people to move away from the streets where they are at significant risk. For more on the support we offer, visit [www.islington.gov.uk/roughsleeping](http://www.islington.gov.uk/roughsleeping)

- **Islington Young People Drugs & Alcohol Service (IYPDAS)** provides information and support for young people aged 13-25 who use or misuse substances. One-to-one support is available at nearby Platform Youth Hub at Hornsey Road Baths, 2 Tiltman Place, off Hornsey Road, N7 7EE.

- **Providing substance misuse support services for adults who are dependent.** The council is providing support on the streets in the area for those who are dependent on drugs and/or alcohol and are hard to engage.

- **Setting up safe needle exchange schemes.** All pharmacies in the Finsbury Park area are operating needle exchange schemes and talk to clients about safe return of needles.

- **Encouraging more local shops, cafes and businesses to offer a place of safety.** The council are encouraging more premises to sign up to the ‘Safe Havens’ scheme to provide a safe place for anyone who feels at risk, unwell or needs assistance. There are currently 26 premises signed up in the area. You can spot the Safe Havens sticker in these premises’ windows. For more information visit [www.islington.gov.uk/safehavens](http://www.islington.gov.uk/safehavens)

- **Working with schools to keep children and young people safe.** The council has developed a Good Practice Guide to help schools assess and support pupils at risk of exclusion, and is providing monthly drop-in sessions for parents and carers seeking independent advice on issues arising from their child’s exclusion. This is provided by the Islington Law Centre at the Council’s Contact Centre on 222 Upper Street. The Improving Young Lives through Awareness (IYLA) offer to Islington schools includes training for staff, group work sessions and assemblies for children on keeping safe in the community.

Improving the local area

- **Improving the local environment to deter criminal activity.** Following reviews of the environment in the Blackstock Triangle area, Wray Crescent and on the Andover Estate, the council is implementing changes, including improved lighting, the cutting back of bushes and shrubbery, repairing walls and reducing moped access. A similar review was conducted recently in the grounds of St Thomas’s Church.

- **Weekly street cleaning.** Weekly cleaning services have been put in place to keep streets clean and collect drug paraphernalia.

- **Improving the area under Stroud Green Road bridge.** The area under the bridge is being cleaned regularly and lighting works are underway to change the lights to brighter, white lights to increase the sense of safety.

- **Addressing issues with BT InLink booths.** The council is working with InLink UK to resolve issues with the booths that are linked to drugdealing. Calls to mobiles have been suspended from booths on Fonthill Road, Seven Sisters Road and Blackstock Road.

- **Improving the area outside City & Islington College on Blackstock Road.** Islington Council are working with the college to improve further the layout of the main entrance where people continue to gather and cause problems. Police have used their dispersal powers in order to manage and move on groups and individuals causing ASB.
• **Tackling illegal fly-tipping and waste disposal.** The council’s enforcement teams have been visiting local businesses to provide advice and support businesses to take responsibility for their waste and bins.

• **A meeting is being scheduled** between the Council, Police and local MP – all of whom view this set of challenges as a priority – to discuss future plans for the area.

### Engaging local young people and providing a range of positive activities

The local Finsbury Park youth offer includes:

- **Targeted Youth Support (TYS) Workers** carry out Detached Youth Work in the area on Wednesdays at 5.30pm-8.30pm and also offer counselling. Contact [tys@islington.gov.uk](mailto:tys@islington.gov.uk)

- **Platform Youth Hub**  
  For young people age 13 and over, Platform Youth Hub offers a youth café, music, dance and theatre activities as well as access to support including youth counselling, drug and alcohol services, support into education, employment and training and summer holiday activities.

- **Adventure Playgrounds**  
  For children aged 6 and up, adventure playgrounds provide opportunities for children to run, dig, swing, grow food, climb trees and take measured risks in a safe place. Playgrounds are open after school and at the weekends during school terms and daily during the week in school holidays. The nearest playgrounds are Cornwallis (more information [here](#)) and Timbuktu (more information [here](#)).

- **St. Mark’s Church**  
  Youth club on Friday 6.00pm-8.00pm for under 14s.

- **Highbury Roundhouse Community Centre**  
  The youth club is open on Wednesday from 6.00pm-9.00pm and Fridays from 6.30pm–9.30 pm.

- **Elizabeth House Community Centre**  
  After school clubs, play provision and a youth club on Monday and Wednesday evening (6.00pm-8.30pm) for 11-18 year olds.

- **Finsbury Park Mosque Youth partnership with Jubba Youth Community Association** offers a variety of projects and activities, such as a weekly class in conflict resolution, mentoring, free training workshops and referrals to further support.

- **Sports Activities**  
  Arsenal Football Club’s KICKS project takes place in the area on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and [Access to Sport](#) provide football sessions at Arts and Media School Islington on Tuesdays. Finsbury Park Mosque have a group session on Sundays on the Andover estate, as well as tennis for young women.

### Providing support to children at risk

- **Identifying children and young people at risk of exploitation.** The council and police support, engage and intervene with young people and their families to keep them safe. Examples include:

  - **Integrated Gangs Team:** multi-agency team co-located at Islington Police Station, providing a psychologically-informed approach to keeping young people safe, including gang-involved young people, young victims of crime and gang-affected females.

  - **Abianda:** service for gang-affected girls and young women – [www.abianda.com](http://www.abianda.com)
Minority Matters offers: a safe space for educational support to children; early intervention and support to parents who are concerned about youth crime and county lines; and home visits to families and visits to young people in custody settings. For more information, contact this charity at info@minoritymatters.org.uk


St Giles Trust: a charity providing key-working with children and young people at risk of involvement (or who are already involved) in crime. www.stgilestrust.org.uk

Street Doctors: a charity working with young people to learn about keeping safe in the community and first aid. https://streetdoctors.org/

Youth violence prevention project, including transition to secondary school support, funding to local groups for community-led parent engagement, trauma training for local youth providers, and positive activities in Finsbury Park and Caledonian wards in 2019-20.

Islington Youth Offending Service working with young people subject to court orders or bail or remand processes. Many of these young people are particularly vulnerable due to their previous exposure to trauma. This is a statutory service.

The Exploitation and Missing Team, provide safeguarding interventions to young people who are at risk through county lines drug-dealing, gangs and child sexual exploitation.

For more information on youth services please contact: playandyouth@islington.gov.uk

How you can help

- Report any criminal incidents to the police. In an emergency always call 999. Call 101 if it is not an emergency.
- Make an anonymous report or pass on intelligence to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or online via www.met.police.uk/report
- Email your local policing team ni-finsburyparkward@met.police.uk (Finsbury Park) or ni-highburywest@met.police.uk (Highbury West).
- Attend your local police ward panel meeting to discuss any concerns and find out what the police are doing in your area. To find out when the next meeting is contact your local policing team using the email addresses above.
- If you are worried about a child or young person please contact Islington’s Children’s Services Contact Team on 020 7527 7400 or email csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk. This can be done anonymously by a member of the public.
- Report any anti-social behaviour to the council’s ASB line – 020 7527 7272 – or online at www.islington.gov.uk/reportASB
- If you see someone sleeping rough, please alert Streetlink at www.streetlink.org.uk or call 0300 500 0914.
- If you are concerned about someone with drug or alcohol issues, you can refer adults to cim-tr.betterlives@nhs.net or call 020 3317 6099, or young people can contact drugs@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 5099.
- For facts, support and advice on drugs and alcohol contact Talk to Frank on 0300 1236600 or text 82111.
- You can also donate to the charities listed above.