

You should also ignore the gang if they try to contact you, and change your contact information if you can.

If you are planning to leave a gang, talk to someone you trust, e.g. a friend or teacher, and let them know. Having someone there to support you will make the process easier.

You should phone the police on 999 if you feel you are in immediate danger.

Helping someone else

If someone you know is involved in a gang and you are worried, you can talk to someone you trust, like a parent or teacher, or a counsellor to get help.

You can also try to:

- Let the person know how you feel.
- Encourage the person to think about their safety and future.
- Contact helplines for free advice.
- Call the police if you think the person is in danger and needs urgent help.

Making a report

If you have seen or taken part in something illegal in a gang, you might worry about getting into trouble if you report it. It is important to think about your future, safety and what is right, and remember that you aren't alone.

You can report things by:

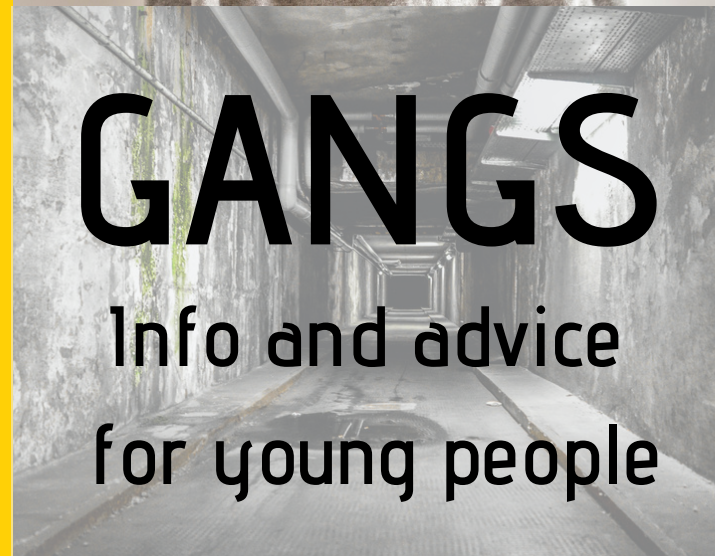
- Asking an adult for help.
- Calling Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
- Calling Childline on 0800 1111.
- Dialling 101 to tell the police about something that has happened already.

If you, or someone you know, is in danger and needs immediate help, **contact the police on 999.**

Helplines and advice

Childline – can be contacted for free on 0800 1111, and offers confidential advice and support whenever you need help.

Gangline – offers free advice and support from ex-gang members, and can be contacted on 01375 483 239.



GANGS

Info and advice
for young people



What are gangs?

A gang can be a group of friends who hang around together – it is okay to go out with a group of friends if you aren't doing anything wrong.

Some gangs, however, can be involved in crime – these gangs can be violent and may fight other gangs, carry weapons or be involved with drugs. Being part of a gang like this is dangerous, as you can be forced to commit a crime or do things that aren't safe.



Why do people join gangs?

Being in a gang can make people feel like they are part of something. The main reason people join gangs is to feel a sense of community and family – if you're looking for a sense of belonging, a gang is not the right place to find it. There are other safe ways to gain the same sense of togetherness and belonging, e.g. joining a sports club, theatre group or extra-curricular clubs that your school has organised.

If you are being forced to join a gang, you should tell someone about it as soon as you can, or contact one of the helplines on the back of this leaflet.

The law

It is not illegal to be part of a gang, but being involved in illegal activities that some gangs take part in is an offence. You can go to prison if you're involved with:

- Gun and knife crime.
- Violence or harassment.

- 'Postcode wars' with other gangs.
- Carrying, using or selling drugs.
- Theft or other illegal activities.
- Rape or sexual assault.

If you commit any of these offences, you are likely to end up with a criminal record – this will have an impact on your applications to college, university or jobs, and may stop you from travelling to certain countries.

Leaving a gang

Leaving a gang can be hard – you will have information that could be given to the police, so gang members will be worried about you sharing what you know and getting them into trouble.

If you want to leave a gang, these tips can help:

- Don't tell the gang you are leaving, just leave
- Spent time with people who aren't in gangs
- Try to avoid places where you know the gang will be