LOVE OVER MONEY

HACKNEY DESERVES MORE

A lived-experience report on how politics and economics shape young lives, gangs and serious youth violence in Hackney.

BY

Gwenton Dennis Sloley

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Love Over Money: Hackney Deserves More

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The names of the people whose stories appear in Appendix A have been changed to protect them and their families.

Figures are drawn from the published sources listed in the Bibliography and were correct at the time of writing.

First published 2026.

For the friends who never made it.

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01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people do not choose the road because they love money. They choose it when the love around them has been taken away.

Young people in Hackney do not choose the road because they love money. They choose it when the love around them — time, care, safe homes, youth workers, second chances — has been taken away, and money is the only thing left on offer.

The title has two meanings. On the streets of Hackney I was part of LOM — Love of Money — a gang that had been in the borough since the early 1980s. This report changes one word. Love *of* money is what the streets taught us. Love *over* money is what Hackney needs now: a message to empower our community, and a challenge to those who run it.

I came to Hackney in 1992. Over three decades I have watched friends grow up on the same estates, sit in the same classrooms and stand on the same corners. Some of us made it out. Many did not. They are in prison, in the ground, or still trapped. This report is for them.

How do politics and economics shape young lives, gangs and serious youth violence in Hackney?

The answer is not complicated. Hackney now has the highest rate of child income deprivation in England. Half its children live in poverty once rent is paid. Thousands of families are stuck in temporary accommodation. Black Caribbean children are excluded from school at several times the rate of their peers. Youth services were cut hard after 2010. Policing has too often treated our children as suspects first and children second.

This report looks at seven influences and asks what each did to the young people I knew. The evidence comes from two places: the stories of Hackney families I have worked with (Appendix A) and official data, cited throughout.

1 Education

2 Employment prospects

3 Positive role models

4 Housing

5 Health

6 Relationships and socialisation

7 Community support and policing

One question: what happens when love is cut and money fills the gap?

A note on politics. I belong to no party. Where I agree with the Green Party, Chapter 4 says so openly — and holds Hackney's new Green council to the same test.

02

INTRODUCTION: HACKNEY, 1992 TO TODAY

There are two Hackneys. One is in the guidebooks. The other is on the estates a few streets away.

There are two Hackneys. One is in the guidebooks: Broadway Market, Victoria Park, coffee and craft beer. The other is on the estates a few streets away, where children still grow up hungry, overcrowded and afraid.

My Hackney

I was born in St James, Jamaica. In the summer of 1992 I flew from Montego Bay to join my father in London for a six-week holiday, and Hackney became my home. I grew up on a Stoke Newington estate and went to Homerton Boys School.

In 2001, while I was still a teenager, my mother died of cancer. I know what it is for a young person in Hackney to lose the person who loves them most, and to be left without a settled home.

What changed my life was not punishment. It was a flat away from the ends, found through the Makeda Weaver Project, and mentors who believed in me. That is why housing and mentoring sit at the heart of this report, and of my work ever since.

Many of my friends never got that chance. Over the years I watched around 90% of the people I grew up with get killed or go to prison. I carry them with me through every page that follows.

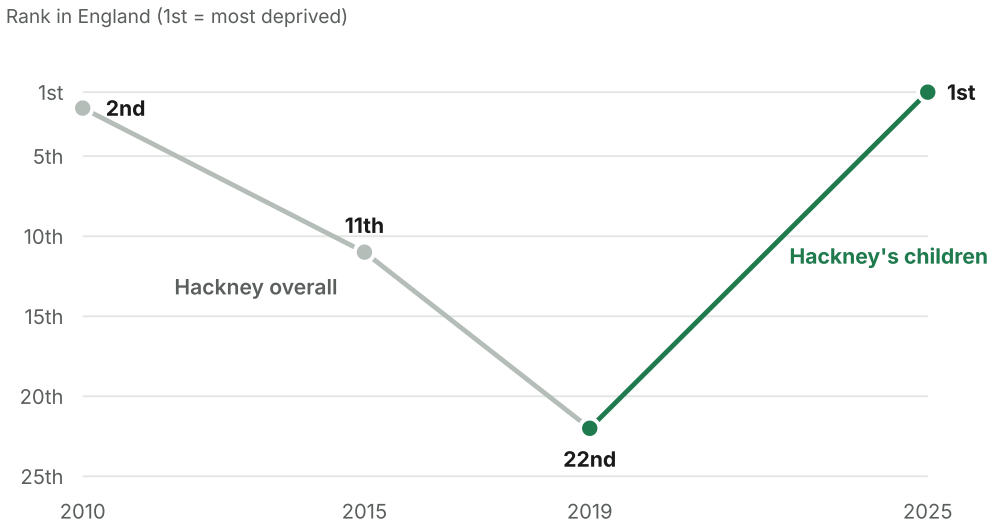
A borough that got richer

Gentrification has changed the high street, but not the lives of the families who were already here. Rising rents have pushed people out or into temporary rooms. The money that came into the borough mostly did not reach the children on the estates.

The council's own figures show it plainly. Hackney's economy grew faster than anywhere in London: businesses grew by 70% between 2011 and 2021, and jobs by 39% between 2017 and 2022. Yet the borough is still the third most income-deprived in London, with low wages and insecure work (Hackney Council, *Economic Development Plan*, 2025). Over half of residents have a degree; 17% have no qualifications at all. That is two Hackneys in one statistic.

On the overall deprivation index, Hackney looked as if it was improving. But that average hid what happened to children. After housing costs, child poverty was 41.3% in 2017 and 50% by 2024/25. The borough got richer; its poorest children did not.

Hackney looked better on paper. Its children did not.



Rank among local authorities in England, 1st = most deprived. Overall: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, 2015, 2019. Children: income deprivation affecting children, 2019 and 2025 (Hackney Council, A Profile of Hackney, 2020; English Indices of Deprivation 2025). The 2025 index changed its method, so the last step is not a like-for-like comparison.

That is not an accident of geography. It is the result of decisions about rent, benefits, housing and services — which is what this report is about.

Hackney at a glance

64%

of children live in income-deprived households — the highest child deprivation in England, with Tower Hamlets

English Indices of Deprivation 2025

50%

of children are in poverty once housing costs are paid (2024/25)

Trust for London

60%

child poverty in Hackney North & Stoke Newington — among the top three constituencies in the UK

The Childhood Trust

17%

of residents paid below the London Living Wage (2022)

Hackney Council, 2025

3,457

households in temporary accommodation, with around 4,000 children (Oct 2024)

Chartered Institute of Housing

13,400+

households seeking social housing

Hackney Council

12 yrs

wait for a three-bedroom council home

Housing Ombudsman, 2025

£1,733

median monthly rent for a two-bedroom home, against £1,400 across London (2019)

Hackney Council, 2020

Bottom 20%

for health — the only London borough in England's most deprived fifth

OCSI, 2026

Thirty years in Hackney

1992 I arrive in Hackney from Jamaica.

2010 Hackney is the 2nd most deprived area in England. Austerity begins.

2011 About 90 of 181 youth service jobs are marked for cuts as services merge into Young Hackney.

2015 The council sets a ten-year target: equal outcomes for young Black men by 2025.

2019 Hackney is now 22nd overall, and 22nd for child income deprivation.

2020 Child Q, a 15-year-old Black girl, is strip-searched by police at her Hackney school.

2025 Hackney tops England for child deprivation. The Housing Ombudsman publishes a special report on the council as a landlord.

2026 Hackney elects its first Green council and mayor.

Why "Love Over Money"

The first meaning is my past. I was part of LOM — Love of Money — on the streets of Hackney. The name said what the streets valued.

The second meaning is the future. I am changing one word, from love *of* money to love *over* money, and turning a negative into a positive. This report takes back the name and gives it to the community: to the young people, the parents and the families who keep Hackney going with very little.

It is also a challenge. Love Over Money is a message to the people paid to serve Hackney: politicians, council leaders, head teachers and faith leaders. Every one of them is paid to look after this borough. Too often the salary, the budget line, the target or the career comes first, and the child comes second. This report asks them to put their love for Hackney before the money they are paid.

03

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

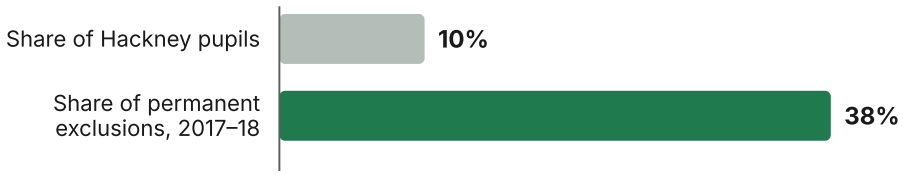
Seven influences decide whether a young person in Hackney makes it. The data shows the pattern; the case studies show the cost.

Each of the seven influences below did real damage to the young people in Appendix A. The data shows the pattern; the case studies show the cost.

3.1 Education

Hackney's schools have improved enormously, yet they still push Black children out at alarming rates. Exclusion is often the first door onto the road.

Black Caribbean pupils: 1 in 10 pupils, nearly 4 in 10 permanent exclusions



Source: Hackney Citizen, reporting Hackney Council data.

- Hackney's permanent exclusion rate was almost twice the inner London average, and higher than every neighbouring borough (EastLondonLines).
- Black Caribbean pupils were about four times more likely than white British pupils to receive repeated fixed-term exclusions (Hackney Citizen, 2020).
- Exclusions in Hackney peak at age 13, a year earlier than nationally. Most excluded pupils had already moved school at least once.

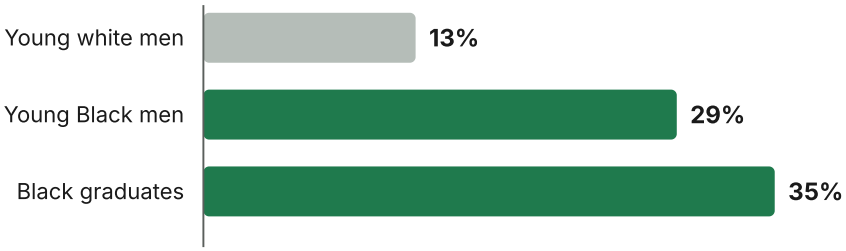
Pupil referral units gather exactly the children gangs look for. That was true in my day and it is true now.

3.2 Employment Prospects

The road offers work on day one. The legal economy too often offers nothing.

UK youth unemployment reached its highest level in a decade at the end of 2025, as overall unemployment hit 5.2% (Channel 4 News). For young Black men in London, the gap is stark.

Young Black men in London are more than twice as likely to be unemployed



Unemployment rate, London. Source: Trust for London.

Peer-led support works. When Hackney trained young Black men to reach their peers on jobs, 58% of 123 young people got positive job outcomes.

Growth has not meant good wages. In 2022, 17% of Hackney residents earned less than the London Living Wage, and the borough has more residents claiming benefits than the London average (Hackney Council, *Economic Development Plan*, 2025). The new jobs went mostly to tech, creative and professional sectors — not to the young men on the estates beside them.

3.3 Positive Role Models

Most of my peers grew up without a father at home. The men who filled that gap were youth workers — or elders on the road.

Half of Hackney's youth service jobs were marked for cuts



Source: Hackney Citizen, 2011.

Across London, councils lost nearly half their youth worker posts between 2011 and 2017 (London Assembly). When the youth worker goes, the elder stays.

Hackney's Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men programme set a target in 2015: equal outcomes for Black boys within ten years. That deadline has now passed.

3.4 Housing

Housing is my professional world, and I have seen what overcrowding and insecurity do to children.

Hackney's rate of temporary accommodation is far above London's

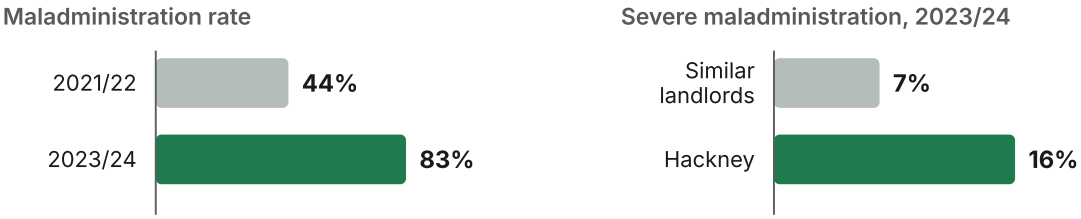


Households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households. Source: Hackney Council, Allocations Policy 2024, Appendix 3.

- More than 13,400 households are seeking social housing.
- Hackney had 3,457 households in temporary accommodation, with around 4,000 children — enough to fill nine primary schools.
- Families now stay in temporary accommodation for three to four years, not weeks.
- In 2025 the council moved to cut its waiting list, affecting around 5,500 households.

The homes that do exist are often failing the families in them. In May 2025 the Housing Ombudsman published a special report into Hackney Council as a landlord, covering over 30,000 homes.

Complaints upheld against Hackney as a landlord nearly doubled



Share of Housing Ombudsman findings. Source: Housing Ombudsman, Special Report on Hackney Council, 2025.

- The worst failings involved leaks, damp and mould, and complaints that went unanswered.
- Only 26.1% of tenants surveyed in 2023/24 were satisfied with repairs.
- Over 60% of Hackney residents live in flats, against 40.3% across London.

And too little of what was built was for families on low incomes. In 2015, house prices were 15 times median incomes, up from 9 times in 2011 (Hackney Council, *Authority Monitoring Report*, 2015). Between 2014 and 2018, only 21% of homes on large sites were affordable — and only 4% of those affordable homes were for social rent (Hackney Council, A *Profile of Hackney*, 2020).

A child moved between hostels changes school, loses friends and loses any adult who knew them. Many Hackney parents work several jobs just to keep a roof overhead.

3.5 Health

Hackney is the only London borough in England's most deprived 20% on health (OCSI). Hackney Foodbank links child poverty to damp, cramped homes, hunger, and harm to children's mental health.

Damp and mould are health problems as well as housing ones, and the Ombudsman found Hackney failing on both. Life expectancy for men in Hackney (79.6 years) is below the London average (Hackney Council, A *Profile of Hackney*, 2020).

> "
>
> *"I used to water down milk to make it last longer. Now, my children can have a proper glass without me worrying."*
>
> A parent helped by a locally funded project — Hackney Giving, Impact Report 2024–25

That is what child poverty looks like in a booming borough.

Trauma is everywhere on the road and almost never treated. Young people who have seen friends stabbed are expected to sit exams the next week.

3.6 Relationships and Socialisation

Girls and young women are drawn into gangs as girlfriends, carriers and targets. They are exploited, and too often treated as accomplices rather than victims. Boys learn what manhood means from drill videos and older men on the block.

Schools and services still do too little on healthy relationships, consent and exploitation.

Young people also need somewhere to be. The council's own *Growing Up in Hackney* planning guidance (2020) names "inadequate and unequal access to city spaces" as one of the main challenges facing children, and points to segregated play spaces in the same development as an example. When teenagers are moved on from every bench and playground, the stairwell and the block become their only space.

3.7 Community Support and Policing

Support ends at 18. Danger does not. Youth offending services stop at a birthday, and the 18–25 gap is still wide open. That gap is exactly where my work in relocation and safe housing begins.

Child Q. In 2020 a 15-year-old Black girl was strip-searched by Met officers at her Hackney school, without an appropriate adult, while on her period. No drugs were found. The safeguarding review found no justification for the search and said racism was likely an influencing factor. It made eight findings and 14 recommendations (City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, 2022). Trust in policing in Hackney has not recovered.

There is progress. The council reports knife crime with injury down nearly 15% in a year. But every death is a family destroyed, and the money still goes mainly to enforcement after harm, not prevention before it.

04

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The fixes are known. What has been missing is the will to fund prevention before harm.

The fixes are known; what has been missing is the will to fund prevention before harm.

A note on politics. I do not belong to any party, and this report is not a campaign leaflet. But where a Green Party position matches what our young people need — on rent control, social housing, child poverty and youth services — I say so. That is agreement on policy, not an endorsement. In May 2026 Hackney elected its first Green council and mayor. That makes this report a test for them too. Hackney has heard promises before. It deserves more.

At a glance

1 Education

Zero permanent exclusions of Black Caribbean pupils below Year 9, and a trusted youth worker in every secondary school.

2 Employment

Fund peer-led job support, ring-fence local jobs, and raise family incomes at source.

3 Role models

Rebuild open-access youth work with long-term funding, and train credible mentors.

4 Housing

Council homes for social rent at scale, rent controls, and fix the damp and mould now.

5 Health

Trauma screening for every child excluded, arrested or bereaved by violence.

6 Relationships

Consent and exploitation education in every school; exploited children treated as victims first.

7 Community and policing

Close the 18–25 gap, implement every Child Q recommendation, and move money to prevention.

★ First of all

Give young people a vote at 16, and a formal say on every youth budget until then.

First: give young people a vote at 16

A 16-year-old can work, pay tax and join the army, but cannot vote on the services that shape their life. The Green Party has long backed votes at 16. Until it happens, Hackney should give its Youth Parliament a formal say on every youth budget.

4.1 Education

1. **Set a target of zero permanent exclusions of Black Caribbean pupils below Year 9**, with every school publishing exclusions by ethnicity each term.
2. **Put a trusted youth worker in every secondary school**, as campaigners asked for after Child Q. Behaviour should be met with support before sanction.
3. **Careers advice from Year 7**, including apprenticeships and routes for young people with records.

4.2 Employment

1. **Fund peer-led employment support.** Hackney's own young leaders got 58% of participants into positive outcomes. Scale what works.
2. **Ring-fence council and partner jobs for local young people**, including those with spent or minor convictions.
3. **Raise family incomes at source.** The Greens back scrapping the two-child limit and raising Universal Credit by £40 a week. When half of Hackney's children are poor once rent is paid, family income is youth violence policy.

4.3 Positive Role Models

1. **Rebuild open-access youth work** with long-term funding, not one-year pilots. The Greens have long called for more youth clubs and services.
2. **Train credible mentors** — people who understand the road, including those who have left it — alongside professionals.
3. **Publish an honest review of the Young Black Men programme** against its 2025 target, written with the young men themselves.

4.4 Housing

1. **Build council homes at scale.** The Greens propose 150,000 new social homes a year nationally; Hackney's new mayor has made new council homes a core priority. New homes must be for social rent, not just "affordable" at up to 80% of market rents.
2. **Bring in rent controls and secure tenancies**, so families stop being moved on every year. The Greens back rent controls and an end to no-fault evictions.

3. **Fix the homes we already have.** Act on every Housing Ombudsman recommendation, put families with children first for damp and mould repairs, and publish progress every quarter.
4. **Make the child-friendly guidance bite.** Enforce *Growing Up in Hackney* in every planning decision: no segregated play spaces, and real places for teenagers to meet, not just playgrounds for under-fives.
5. **Provide safe-house and relocation places for young people at risk**, with aftercare, for those who need to leave the borough to stay alive.

4.5 Health

1. **Trauma screening for any child excluded, arrested or bereaved by violence**, with talking therapy offered where young people actually are — on estates and in youth clubs, not only in clinics.
2. **Treat food poverty as a health emergency** for children, working with Hackney Foodbank.

4.6 Relationships and Socialisation

1. **Relationships, consent and exploitation education** in every school, delivered by people young people trust.
2. **Treat exploited girls and boys as victims first**, in every police and council process.

4.7 Community Support and Policing

1. **Close the 18–25 gap.** Long-term wraparound support — rehousing, mentoring, trauma care — for young adults leaving gangs or fleeing violence.
2. **Implement every Child Q recommendation in full**, report progress publicly, and end strip-searches of children in schools.
3. **Shift money from enforcement after harm to prevention before it.** Every murder investigation costs far more than the youth worker who might have prevented it.
4. **Let residents decide where the money goes.** Hackney Giving gave out £338,000 in 70 grants in 2024–25 and began letting local volunteers choose which projects to fund. The council should do the same with youth and community budgets, with young people on the panel.
5. **Train practitioners** on youth gang involvement: police, council, NHS and faith workers.

A message to Hackney's leaders: love before money

Every recommendation above depends on people who are paid to serve Hackney choosing to put its children first.

Politicians and council leaders

You are paid to serve the borough, not your party or your career. Judge every budget by what it does for the poorest child in Hackney. Come to the estates, not just the Town Hall.

Head teachers

Results tables and Ofsted grades matter, but not more than the child at risk of exclusion. Keep them in school, and keep them in sight.

Faith leaders

Open your doors to young people on the road, not only to those already in the pews. Be the elder they are missing.

Everyone paid from the public purse

If you would not accept it for your own child, do not accept it for Hackney's children.

LOVE FOR HACKNEY IS NOT A FEELING. IT IS TURNING UP, STAYING, AND SPENDING MONEY WHERE IT SAVES LIVES.

Holding the new council to account

Hackney's first Green administration came in promising change. These are the tests this report will track, taken from the mayor's stated priorities (Hackney Citizen, May 2026). The last row is this report's own test.

Commitment	What success looks like	Review by
New council homes "a core priority"	Homes started and let at social rent each year, published	**May 2027**
Borough-wide landlord licensing	Scheme live, with enforcement figures published	**May 2027**
Lobby for local rent control powers	A formal ask to government, with a public reply	**May 2027**
"Who owns Hackney" investigation	Published findings and a plan for land use	**May 2027**
Campaign against austerity	Youth service budget restored to at least 2010 levels in real terms	**May 2028**

Commitment	What success looks like	Review by
Exclusions	Black Caribbean exclusion rate published every term and falling	**May 2028**

Conclusion

Young people are responsible for their choices. I have never excused violence, and the families of victims deserve justice. But the choices on offer in Hackney have been narrowed by decisions made in council chambers and Westminster: decisions about rent, benefits, schools and youth work.

When love — time, care, a safe home, an adult who stays — is cut, money fills the gap. The road is always hiring. The answer is not more enforcement after the funeral. It is investing in love before the first deal.

I was once part of LOM — Love of Money — on the streets. Now I am asking every politician, council leader, head teacher and faith leader in this borough to live by one changed word — love over money — and to put their love for Hackney before the money they are paid.

HACKNEY DESERVES MORE. ITS CHILDREN DESERVE MORE. MY FRIENDS DESERVED MORE.

A

APPENDIX A: THE ONES WHO WERE LET DOWN

Four Hackney stories of young people the system failed, shared by their families.

These stories come from Hackney families I have known and worked with. Names, ages and identifying details have been changed to protect them. Each is told with respect for the young person and the people who love them.

LILA

Grew up on an estate near Dalston · Things started to go wrong at 13

Home. Lila was raised by her mum, one of four children. Money was always tight. For three years the family moved between temporary accommodation — four different places, four different schools. They never properly unpacked.

School. She loved primary school. She was bright and quiet, and she loved art. Secondary school felt huge and overwhelming. She started missing days and grew anxious. At 14 she was sent to a pupil referral unit, which she said felt like "being put in a room and forgotten."

The road. At 14 she got to know an older girl — someone who noticed her when no one else did. She started running small errands, and it felt like belonging. Money meant she could buy her own uniform instead of asking her mum for everything. She didn't want to be a burden.

Who was there, and who wasn't. A learning mentor helped for six months, then left and was never replaced. Social services visited twice a year but never really asked how she was. Her youth club closed down. Police stopped her twice, just for being in a group.

What happened. She was drawn in at 15 and spent time in custody. She has since rebuilt her life and now works supporting other women, but she still carries the scars.

WHERE IT COULD HAVE CHANGED

If someone had helped her stay in one school instead of moving her four times. In her words: "I just wanted somewhere to be mine."

"She wasn't bad — she was just lonely. Someone saw that need before I could fill it, and it wasn't someone who had her future at heart."

Lila's mum

KOFI

Grew up around Hackney Central · Things started to go wrong at 11 · Died at 17

Home. Kofi's dad left when he was small, and his mum worked two jobs. As the oldest, he looked after his little sister most evenings. They got by, but there was never enough money left at the end of the month.

School. He was brilliant at maths, and teachers said he had real potential. But by Year 9 he was often absent — staying at home so his mum could go to work. At 15 he was excluded after a fight he didn't start.

The road. At 14 he started carrying things because he needed £30 for his sister's school trip. It became a habit. Money meant he could keep the lights on and his sister smiling. He thought he was helping.

Who was there, and who wasn't. He had a great youth worker at the community centre, until the funding was cut when he was 16. No one from school came to see him after he was excluded. When the family turned to social services, they were told there was "not enough evidence of risk."

What happened. Kofi was stabbed and died at 17.

WHERE IT COULD HAVE CHANGED

If the school had called home to ask why he wasn't there, instead of just marking him absent. As he once put it: "I wasn't skipping — I was holding my family together."

> *"They called him a victim. But he was a hero in this house. He just needed someone to tell him he didn't have to be the hero at 15."*
>
> Kofi's mum

RIO

Grew up near London Fields · Things started to go wrong at 12

Home. Rio was in foster care from the age of eight and moved between six placements. He never really unpacked, and always kept a bag by the door, just in case.

School. He moved school five times and never kept friends for long. He got into trouble for "acting out" and was excluded at 13. Three pupil referral units followed; none lasted more than a few months.

The road. At 13 he was invited along for the first time. They asked his name, and that was it — he felt seen. Money meant stability: his own bed, his own food, no begging anyone for anything.

Who was there, and who wasn't. His social workers changed every six to nine months. Just as he began to trust one, they were gone. He tried to join a youth club and was turned away because "it's full." The police were always there, but never to ask if he was okay.

What happened. He was sentenced at 18 and served his time. Today he works with care leavers and has raised a family of his own, but he still struggles to trust authority.

WHERE IT COULD HAVE CHANGED

If just one adult had sat down with him and said: "You don't have to earn a place here. You already have one."

> *"I didn't join them for the money. I joined them because they were the only ones who knew my name."*
>
> Rio, in his own words

TARIQ

Grew up on an estate in Stoke Newington · Things started to go wrong at 14

Home. Tariq grew up in a big family — five children in a two-bedroom flat. Until he was 16 he shared a sofa bed with two of his brothers. He felt invisible, as if he was just taking up space.

School. He was quiet; teachers said he "faded into the background." He had support needs, but nothing was put in place. He stopped going at 15, and nobody chased it.

The road. He hung around outside shops because there was nowhere else to go. Someone offered him £20 to hold a bag. He did it because he was bored and needed to feel useful. After that, it got harder to say no.

Who was there, and who wasn't. His form tutor said he would "grow out of it." The waiting list for mental health support felt endless. The council said it couldn't help with overcrowding "until someone is at risk." By then, he already was.

What happened. He spent several spells in custody. Today he runs a community garden project and is still working through the impact of those years.

WHERE IT COULD HAVE CHANGED

If someone had really looked at him and seen that he wasn't "just being quiet." He was crying out for help in the only way he knew how.

> *"We all lived on top of each other, but somehow he was the one nobody saw. How does that happen?"*
>
> Tariq's brother

What the stories share

Four different lives, the same failures. Every one of these young people was moved, overlooked or let go by the services that were meant to hold them.

Moved and moved again

Lila and Rio were moved from home to home and school to school until nothing felt like theirs.

HOUSING · EDUCATION

Pushed out of school

Lila, Kofi and Rio were excluded or sent to pupil referral units in their early teens.

EDUCATION

Money for the family

Kofi and Lila took money from the road to ease the pressure at home.

EMPLOYMENT · FAMILY INCOME

The adult who left

A learning mentor, a youth worker, a string of social workers — each taken away just as trust was built.

ROLE MODELS · COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Help only "when at risk"

Tariq's support needs, his family's overcrowding and his mental health all waited until it was too late.

HOUSING · HEALTH

Police, but not protection

The police appear in these stories as a presence, never as the people who asked if they were okay.

POLICING

Not one of them went looking for money. They went looking for someone who knew their name. That is the difference between love *of* money and love *over* money.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Hackney families who trusted me with their stories, to my colleagues at London Gang Exit, and to everyone working to give the young people of this borough a reason to hope.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gwenton Dennis Sloley was born in St James, Jamaica, and came to Hackney in 1992. He grew up in Stoke Newington, and his lived experience of Hackney's streets drives everything he does. He has dedicated his career to helping young people and families find a way out and a safe place to live.

£42.5m
estimated saving to the state over a decade, recognised by the Home Office

£6m+
saved through London Gang Exit safe-house relocations

16+ yrs
housing witnesses and victims in safe houses nationwide

- **Co-founder, London Gang Exit:** relocates at-risk young people and families to safe houses with aftercare.
- **Lives saved:** the £42.5 million estimate is based on the average cost of a murder investigation, more than £1.7 million.
- **Housing specialist:** called on at least twice a week to help families after a proven attempt on a loved one's life.
- **Mentor, Makeda Weaver Project:** mentored young men to leave gangs and rebuild their lives, through the same project that helped him.
- **Witness protection and relocation:** from 2008, worked on a witness protection project set up by Southwark Council with an officer from Scotland Yard.
- **Islington Council Gang Prevention Team:** two years in a key role.
- **Trainer:** trains the Metropolitan Police, NHS, councils and faith groups on youth gang involvement, including national multi-faith training, the first of its kind.
- **National and international reach:** has worked with young people caught up in serious violence across the country and as far as the Isle of Man and Trinidad, and has gone to court to help families get their children back into school.
- **City Hall:** took part in a gangs meeting with the then Mayor of London.
- **Broadcaster:** hosts *The Gwenton Show*.
- **Candidate:** has stood for election in London four times since 2019, including as an independent for Mayor of Hackney in 2022 on crime prevention, school exclusions, mental health and council housing.
- **Community sport:** involved with Hackney football team Global.

Awards and recognition

2016	Borough Commander's Commendation, Lewisham
2018	Award at the Croydon Youth Summit for lives saved over a decade, presented by Met Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt
MOPAC	Honoured by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime for multi-faith training and knife-crime advisory support
2026	Runner-up, Excellence in Innovation, National SOC Local Awards, for the EnTRAPrenuership youth enterprise project

HE CONTINUES TO SAVE LIVES.

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A FINAL WORD

Many of my friends have died on these pavements. Many more are in jail, because they didn't have hope. I want every young person to see me standing at this podium today, running for Mayor of Hackney, and understand that they can achieve too.

Gwenton Dennis Sloley

Candidate for Mayor of Hackney, 2022

HALF OF HACKNEY'S CHILDREN ARE POOR ONCE THE RENT IS PAID.

Hackney has the highest rate of child income deprivation in England. Thousands of families wait in temporary rooms, and Black Caribbean children are still excluded from school at several times the rate of their peers.

Love Over Money is a lived-experience report on how politics and economics shape young lives, gangs and serious youth violence in Hackney, written by someone who grew up on its estates and has spent his career getting young people out.

It sets out seven influences that decide whether a young person makes it, the evidence behind each, and clear recommendations for the council, schools, faith leaders and government. And it asks everyone paid to serve Hackney to put their love for the borough before the money they are paid.

"The road is always hiring. The answer is not more enforcement after the funeral. It is investing in love before the first deal."

Gwenton Dennis Sloley is co-founder of London Gang Exit and has spent more than 16 years housing witnesses and victims in safe houses across the country. His work is estimated to have saved the state about £42.5 million over a decade. He continues to save lives.

HACKNEY DESERVES MORE