



**Press release**

**For immediate release**

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## **Forums help to deter young people from gun and knife crime**

A series of youth forums are helping to deter young people from gun and knife crime and encouraging them to develop their own solutions and strategies to the issues that they face in their communities.

Organised by One Housing Group's Youth Services Team and Castlehaven Youth Project and funded by Camden Council's Youth Opportunities Fund and The Prince's Trust, the "One Mic, One Life" forums build on the success of two concerts, held in July this year and in August 2008. As well as challenging the blasé attitude that exists among Camden's youth towards this kind of violence and negative behaviour, the forums are also helping to break down the rivalry and territorialism that exists between different groups by bringing together representatives from youth clubs and youth-orientated organisations across the borough.

The forums are proving a huge success, with three held to date and over 120 young people attending in total. Topics for discussion were decided largely by participants, but have explored various aspects of youth culture such as: "Police - Help or Hindrance", "Youth Prisons - Paradise or Punishment" and "Knives - Protection or Prevention".

Along with looking at long term solutions to impact legislation, the forums also provide participants with the opportunity to meet key role models in the local community and hear their messages, such as the police, Camden Council and local government as well as ex-offenders and ex-gang members.

Kamilah McCalman, Youth Development Officer at One Housing Group, who is organising and delivering the initiative at the Roundhouse in Camden, said: "The forums bring together disadvantaged young people, those at risk of criminality and convicted young offenders and help them to develop their own solutions to tackle the growing

problem of gun and knife crime in today's society."

"We hope that they will help young people who feel they have been stereotyped by the peers for looking a certain way, being a certain age or coming from a certain area, by empowering them and supporting them to change these preconceptions."

Councillor Janet Grauberg, Executive Member for Children and Young People at Camden Council, added: "Helping our young people break free from lives involving weapons and crime is vital if we want to encourage them to reach their full potential and live fulfilling and productive lives. These forums are an excellent way of breaking down barriers and giving our young people a better chance in life."

Councillor James King, Executive Member for Community Safety, Camden Council, said: "These forums are an innovative way to deter young people from getting involved in crime. I'm delighted that so many young people are attending these events and hope they will make a positive impact on their lives."

## **Ends**

**For further information please contact Fiona Crook at One Housing Group on telephone: 020 7428 4107 or email: [fcrook@onehousinggroup.co.uk](mailto:fcrook@onehousinggroup.co.uk)**

## **Notes to Editors**

Funding received from Camden Council's Youth Opportunity Fund and The Prince's Trust this year for the One Mic, One Life initiative amounts to over £10,000. The project has also received funding from by Community Action, One Housing Group's charity.

All proceeds received from the One Mic, One Life concert were donated to the Ben Kinsella Trust, which promoted knife crime awareness. For more information see <http://www.benkinsella.org.uk/>

One Housing Group currently manages over 12,000 homes in 26 local authorities across London and adjacent counties, with over 2,700 homes in the development pipeline. These include shared ownership schemes; intermediate rent homes for key workers, affordable rented homes and homes for outright sale.

Visit [www.onehousinggroup.co.uk](http://www.onehousinggroup.co.uk) for further information.