

## Article taken from the Ilford Recorder 16 October 2019

Redbridge Council to launch UK's first family therapy for young people at risk of joining gangs



*Redbridge Town Hall. Picture: Ken Mears*

Redbridge Council has secured funding to offer a ground-breaking family therapy programme for young people deemed at risk of becoming involved in gangs.

The £781,055 grant from the Youth Endowment Fund will see Redbridge working in partnership with Cambridgeshire-based company Family Psychology Mutual to deliver the therapy sessions to eligible families.

It is the first time the innovative programme, known as functional family therapy for young people at risk of gang involvement and exploitation (FFT-G), has been trialled outside of the US.

A clinical therapist will work with the young person and their family over a three to five-month period, aiming to overcome negative patterns of behaviour within the family and build on relationship strengths.

The £781,055 grant is the first of its kind to be awarded to the borough by the Youth Endowment Fund - an independent organisation founded with a £200m Home Office investment as part of the government's Serious Violence Strategy.

Councillor Elaine Norman, cabinet member for children and young people said: "Deterring young people away from gangs and criminality is an absolute priority for us.

"We want to give our young people the best opportunities and starts in life, as well as the support they need when they need it.

"This award will enable us to offer an innovative family therapy service that will provide the support and expertise needed to intervene and help where young people have been identified as being at risk of gang Involvement and exploitation."

Tom Jefford, business development director at Family Psychology Mutual said: "This clinical adaptation of Functional Family Therapy is new to the UK and so we hope to make a valuable contribution to reduce the risks posed to vulnerable young people by gang involvement by adding specialist family work to the interventions already in place."

Andy Ratcliffe from the Youth Endowment Fund said: "Young people being drawn in to violent crime is an issue of huge concern for communities right across the country. The Youth Endowment Fund is a serious long-term commitment to tackling this problem.

"We'll fund, support and evaluate front line interventions to start making a difference now, while building a knowledge base of what works, what doesn't and where we need to focus our resources."