# Gang culture – Transcript

***How did you become involved in a gang?***

**Jamie**: When I was a young boy, I ran about. I grew up in an alcoholic home, my mother was an alcoholic and my dad worked all the time.

And what basically happens is, when a young person’s needs aren’t met, they’ll find a way to get them met elsewhere. It’s almost as though when they run about in a gang, they’re a somebody in a gang, they’re a person of worth, their ideas and their opinions are valued so they get their needs met in a kind of distorted way, because anybody outside looking in sees it for what it is, these boys are heading down a road where it’s going to lead to criminality and it’s often pain and heartache for not only them, but the family members.

And one of the things I realised through my own experience of working with these young people is every single young person that I had, not one of them had a positive male role model. Some of their fathers were absent or caught up in addiction or their mother was caught up in addiction.

So it left me with the thought of how difficult it must be for young people to try to find their way in life so what happens is they gravitate towards the darker side of life, like criminality and basically what happens is they come to the attention of the police and local authorities and they almost get stigmatised for their behaviour, they get seen as the bad boy.

And that was my own experience as well, going to primary school and always being on the bad square. When I was in primary school they had this thing called the bad square. I don’t think it’s the norm in schools today but I was always on this bad square and it was almost as if I was standing always on this bad square myself, outside the classroom, in the corridor, it was the square where you lift up the flooring and it gets you into the pipes and all of that, the plumbing, and I’d stand on this bad square and it would be like, the best way I can describe it is, it’s almost as if…

When I turned up to school, I already had real trauma in my life with the stuff that had happened to me in my family home and also the stuff I had witnessed but I didn’t know that at the time. So I got to primary school and I had these issues and I seemed to be always in conflict and I would end up on this bad square and the best way I can describe school for me, all through school it was like everybody knew what they were at school for, and I didn’t. It was as if I’d turned up three days late and everybody knew what they were there for and I was too scared to ask.

[End of transcript]