

**For immediate release**

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**News Release**

## **Safer London and University College London seek participants for groundbreaking research on bereavement support following youth violence.**

Safer London and University College of London (UCL), in partnership with Child Bereavement UK, are looking for people to take part in new research exploring what bereavement or therapeutic support is available to individuals affected by youth violence-related murder.

The research has been spearheaded by Karen Green Stewart, a bereaved mother who tragically lost her son Lamar Stewart to youth violence in 2017. Karen approached Safer London, sharing her personal experience, and highlighting the need for an improved support model for those who have lost someone to youth violence.

The aftermath of youth violence-related murders brings immeasurable grief, not only to the immediate family but also extends its reach to relatives, friends, classmates, neighbours, and the wider community. Therefore, Safer London, UCL and Child Bereavement UK are encouraging anyone, particularly young people, who have experienced the loss of friends, siblings, or extended family members such as cousins, to participate in this groundbreaking research.

Safer London and UCL are committed to gaining an understanding of existing support systems and determining their effectiveness. By focusing on the needs of affected individuals, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds, this research aims to contribute to a more culturally competent and inclusive approach to bereavement support.

Safer London and UCL urge individuals who have been affected by youth violence-related murders to take part in this vital research. Participation can help pave the way for improved support systems and ensure that the needs of bereaved individuals and communities are met with sensitivity and effectiveness.

- Those who are interested in participating need to complete the online form, which can be accessed via Safer London's website here: <https://saferlondon.org.uk/loss-research/>

- Research interviews will take place virtually and will take approximately 1 hour.
- Participants must be 13 years+ older and have experienced loss due to youth violence related murder. They can be living anywhere in the UK.
- The loss experienced can be historical. Regardless of whether the incident took place 3, 5 or 10 years ago, those affected are still encouraged to take part.
- Participants will be rewarded with a voucher for their time.

Participants who take part can choose to take up an offer of support from Safer London's Specialist Loss and Bereavement Advocate, who is seconded from Child Bereavement UK and is experienced in delivering loss and bereavement services and support

**Karen Green Stewart said:**

*"The passing of my son Lamar was and still is the most difficult heartbreaking senseless feeling of grief that I and my family have ever endured. And I know there are many other families and friends in the community that have also experienced these feelings as a result of youth violence.*

*In the early stages, bereavement services offered to my family seemed unconnected, bias and only targeted towards the immediate family. In the case of my son there was no bereavement support offered to extended members of the family such as his cousins, as well as his friends, neighbours, or the shopkeeper that saw him almost every day. All these people had a relationship with him for his whole life, but there was nothing.*

*I ask myself the question - are these individuals not impacted by his death? A death so sudden, in such a way.*

*After exploring a number of bereavement services myself I realised there was no services that extended their bereavement services to extended family members and friends. What I did discover was some of these services were full of biasness and layers of red tape. This is challenging for those who need support, particularly for young people, to access it.*

*What I want to see in the future is for services to educate themselves on the impact a death has, not just on the immediate family, but the wider community. They need to understand the ripple effect it has. When a person dies there are many different people who surround that person who are affected by the loss. Especially young people. They go to school, they have friends and social media. They are so many different people in their lives and those people are all equally just as affected by the loss.*

*There needs to be support in place within our current bereavement services, so they can be equipped to work with anyone who has experienced great loss and trauma.*

*So, people can make some sense of their loss and trauma and manage it in a more positive way as they move forward in life.”*

**Sherry Peck, CEO Safer London said:**

*“In our work with young Londoners and families affected by violence and exploitation, we have witnessed firsthand the profound impact of youth violence and its devastating consequences. The lasting trauma caused by murder on families, friends, and communities cannot be overlooked. Our goal is for a research-informed support model to be developed. A model that provides the right assistance, at the right time, from the right people.*

*We understand true expertise resides within the voices of those directly affected. We need the voices, experiences, and opinions of those directly impacted. Whether someone has lost a child, a family member, or a friend, their stories hold the power to shape a new model of support for those impacted by the tragedy of murder.”*

**Professor Peter Fonagy, Head and Psychology and Language Sciences, UCL said:**

*“The loss of a child is the most traumatic experience any parent can have. The loss through violence is likely to provoke a reaction of enormous intensity. We do too little to support these parents because we know too little about how to do this. this research programme is the first London based programme which has identified the problem and is aiming to gather information to tackle this important this vital issue.”*

**Clare Bullen, Head of Support Services, Child Bereavement UK said:**

*“Bereavement can be devastating in any situation, but we know from families we support that a sudden death brings with it additional layers of complexity which require support that’s appropriate to individual needs and circumstances. Child Bereavement UK is pleased to partner with Safer London and UCL on this important project to improve support to those affected by youth violence-related murder*

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**For further information or interview requests please contact Helen Green at [helengreen@saferlondon.org.uk](mailto:helengreen@saferlondon.org.uk) or call 07985 656 286**

**Notes to Editor:**

**Young Londoners and families who use Safer London services**

It’s important to understand that the young Londoners and families Safer London works with have experienced unthinkable trauma. As a safeguarding organisation our number one priority is the welfare of those we work alongside, ensuring they are not put in situations

where they could be potentially retraumatised. Therefore, we do not provide access to young Londoners or their families that use Safer London services for media interviews.

## About Safer London

Safer London works alongside young Londoners and their families affected by violence and exploitation. Through specialist one-to-one intervention, we're supporting young Londoners to move onto the positive futures they deserve. We work with them, their families, peer networks and directly with the communities and the places where they spend their time.

With a footprint in every borough in London, we build trusting, professional partnerships to help us achieve our vision of a city where all young Londoners, their families, peers and communities can thrive, free from exposure to violence and exploitation.

In 2022:

- Safer London's Specialist and expert Caseworkers worked alongside **490 young Londoners**, providing specialist and intensive one to one support.
  - Safer London's specialist family Caseworkers worked with **46 families**, supporting their wellbeing and increasing their resilience.
  - **315 young Londoners** took part in Safer London group sessions and workshops focusing on personal safety, healthy relationships and emotional wellbeing.
  - **42 households** found safe and secure homes through the [Pan London Housing Reciprocal](#)
- Safer London is a test site for Contextual Safeguarding as part of the [Innovate Project](#).
  - Safer London is a delivery partner on the Mayor of London's [Rescue and Response](#) programme.
  - Safer London was awarded the Children and Young People Now Early Intervention Award in 2022 for [Beyond the Banter](#).

Website <http://www.saferlondon.org.uk>

Twitter [@SaferLondon1](#)

## About Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK helps families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. We support children and young people (up to the age of 25) when someone important to them has died or is not expected to live, and parents and the wider family when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying. We provide training to professionals in health and social care, education, and the voluntary and corporate sectors, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families.

[/www.childbereavementuk.org/](http://www.childbereavementuk.org/)

## About UCL

UCL is a modern, outward-looking institution, committed to engaging with the major issues of our times. One of the world's leading multidisciplinary universities, UCL is a true academic powerhouse - as reflected by performance in a range of international rankings and tables.

