



PCCs MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN FOCUS: INNOVATIVE & EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO TACKLING SERIOUS VIOLENCE



In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

IN FOCUS: INNOVATIVE & EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO TACKLING SERIOUS VIOLENCE

Foreword from APCC Joint Leads for Serious Violence, Simon Foster and Steve Turner:



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PCC for West Midlands



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The overwhelming majority of Police and Crime Plans identify preventing, tackling and reducing serious violence as a key priority.

As the voice of the public, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are uniquely placed to ensure that local needs are met and to drive collaboration between key partners to secure sustainable and inter-generational solutions to serious violence in our communities.

Violent crime has a devastating impact on victims, families, and communities. It is extremely costly to society, but police forces and other agencies cannot work in isolation to tackle it. This 'In Focus' outlines the crucial work PCCs are doing across England and Wales, to facilitate effective partnerships to prevent serious violence.

Since 2019, PCCs have been leading on the development and implementation of Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in 18 areas across the country. VRUs have been designed to tackle serious violence at its source, by enabling multi-agency working to address the root causes of violence and to embed a culture of prevention, early intervention, and diversion.





Early evidence suggests that VRUs are having a significant impact in their areas and, in response to this, PCCs have secured a three-year funding settlement from the Government. This is crucial to ensuring that VRUs can implement long-term, sustainable solutions to tackle issues, which are often multi-faceted and deeply entrenched in communities.

We are keen to promote and support the work within the 23 PCC areas without centrally funded VRUs, where we have seen some highly effective solutions to tackling violence collaboratively.

The case studies in this report are evidence-based, evaluated interventions that we're proud to promote. Our colleagues have been kind enough to share their reflections on challenges and lessons learnt, which we trust will benefit other areas looking to replicate similar interventions.

In April 2022 the **Government pledged £130 million** to drive down devastating violent crime, including knife crime and homicide. This investment went towards: supporting the 18 existing VRUs as well as establishing two new VRUs located in Cleveland and Humberside; the 'Grip' police enforcement programme, also known as 'hotspot policing'; and the new **Serious Violence Duty** (the Duty).

PCCs have played a key role in delivering the Duty since it was introduced in January 2023. The Duty stipulates that specific authorities have a duty to collaborate to prevent, tackle and reduce serious violence. PCCs have taken on the non-statutory role of lead convenor under the Duty, which places them at the heart of the implementation of local strategy in this joined-up approach. As Joint Leads on Serious Violence and Homicide, both of us are keen to ensure a robust evaluation of the Duty, including maximising the opportunity for sharing best practice and learning.

This 'In Focus' highlights the innovative and exciting work which is taking place in multiple sectors around the country. With the new Duty bringing an increased focus on the issues of violent crime, we are confident that these collaborative and evidence-based approaches are the key to making our communities safer.

Foreword from **The Rt Hon Chris Philp MP, Minister for Policing:**



As the Minister for Crime and Policing, nothing matters more to me than keeping our country's streets safe. I'm proud of the progress this government has made: homicide, knife crime and serious youth violence are all down compared to 2019. In that time, we've taken 100,000 knives off the streets and we're investing over £120 million in combatting serious violence this year alone. But we will never let up in our fight to cut crime and give everyone the security of a safe street and home.





Serious violence is a complex problem, and we must use every means at our disposal to keep driving it down. The government published a comprehensive Serious Violence Strategy in 2018, which made clear that law enforcement was a necessary but not sole condition for success.

Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) exemplify our commitment to working collaboratively. Established in the twenty areas most affected by violent crime – and backed by £225m since 2019 – VRUs bring together local partners to tackle the underlying causes of serious violence, using innovative and evidence-based interventions to steer vulnerable individuals away from involvement in crime.

To take our commitment to partnership working a step further, earlier this year we launched the Serious Violence Duty, which enshrines the principle of multi-agency working in law and ensures that every local area in England and Wales must collaborate to tackle serious violence.

Hotspot policing is another critical part of our approach. The same 20 areas of the country supported by VRUs have also received funding through the Grip programme to boost police forces capacity to take a data-driven approach to tackling serious violence.

These investments are paying off. Taken together, hotspot policing and VRUs have prevented 136,000 acts of violence since 2019. And they are buttressed by further focused government investment such as the Youth Endowment Fund, backed by £200m over 10 years.

Alongside this we must make sure there is the right capacity in place to enforce the law and protect communities. Under this government, there are now almost 150,000 officers in forces across England and Wales - the highest number on record. We have focused on giving police the right powers to keep streets safe from knives, including our recent move to ban zombie-style knives and machetes which have no practical use and are designed simply to look menacing and inflict harm.

Tackling serious violence also means ensuring that we avoid allowing an environment where crime and disorder can flourish. That is why a zero-tolerance approach to all crime types, even those historically considered “minor” is important. Whether it is ASB, public drug consumption or shoplifting - all are crimes which should be comprehensively combatted – ensuring that our streets are safe and orderly and meaning more serious crime is less likely. This is a version of the “Broken Windows” approach pioneered by Commissioner Bill Bratton of NYPD and later LAPD in the 1990s and 2000s. This includes the important commitment to always follow all reasonable Lines of Enquiry for all crimes, particularly using the rich database of facial images on the Police National Database to match against crime scene images from CCTV, Ring Doorbells, DashCams or mobile phones (the matching technology is now incredible). Zero tolerance of low-level offending will help prevent more serious offending from taking place.

Finally, as we learn more about the tools we need, we must continue to adopt innovative approaches. One recent example is our pilot of Serious Violence Reduction Orders, which provide individual stop and search powers for those convicted of knife offences. Launched in April, over 20 orders have already been secured.

This report highlights exactly the sort of activity that we should be striving to undertake across the country to tackle this issue – innovative, grounded in evidence and focused on combatting the underlying causes of violent crime. When it comes to serious violence, there are no simple solutions. Instead, we must keep up a focused, forensic approach to tackling its causes and consequences.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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THAMES VALLEY: OPERATION DETER

INTRODUCTION

Operation Deter (Op Deter) combines two approaches; a more robust **criminal justice approach** to adults found in possession of an offensive weapon, and for young people, earlier and intensive intervention through the **Youth Offending Team Act Now** programme to aim to divert them from the criminal justice system and prevent further offending.

Following a challenge by **Mathew Barber, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley**, on how robust the force were in the use of their powers, Op Deter was implemented within **Thames Valley Police** and across the criminal justice system. Initially introduced in Milton Keynes, it involves changes to operational policing processes to make better use of charging and remanding adult offenders to court. The aim is to reduce knife enabled-crime, reduce re-offending and bring more offenders of knife-enabled crime to justice. In response, this creates a hostile environment for people caught in possession of an offensive weapon whilst sending a clear message that knife crime will not be tolerated.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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THAMES VALLEY: OPERATION DETER

Successful delivery requires close partnership working across a range of internal **Thames Valley Police** (TVP) departments (such as Criminal Justice and Local Policing) and external stakeholders including the **Crown Prosecution Service**, **His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service** and local authority **Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)**.

Op Deter forms part of a wider Thames Valley approach to tackling serious violence and knife crime which focuses on early intervention and prevention to stop young people being drawn into crime and violence, proactive policing to target the small number of people who carry and use knives and robust criminal justice processes to deliver swift outcomes and consequences.

THE APPROACH AND HOW IT WAS IMPLEMENTED

OVER 18'S

Under this zero-tolerance approach, those over 18 found in possession of an offensive weapon are brought to justice more efficiently with the time much reduced between an individual committing an offence, being charged and appearing in court.

Any eligible offences are proactively charged by TVP while the suspect is still in custody, severing these, if required, from other more complex offences to allow for a more timely investigation and outcome. Following charge, the Custody Sergeant will then take a more robust approach to bail.

Since its inception in Milton Keynes, the Op Deter pathway for those over 18 has been rolled out across the force area to all six custody suites and all 11 Local Policing Areas.

Distinctively, the Op Deter approach for those over 18 has been delivered through operational policing and has therefore been **implemented without a need for additional funding**.

THAMES VALLEY, WE HEAR YOU.

Thames Valley's communities want an end to knife crime. If you carry a knife you can expect to be arrested, detained and prosecuted.

Together we can end the knife sentence.

[THE KNIFE SENTENCE] THAMES VALLEY POLICE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONERS





THAMES VALLEY: OPERATION DETER

Instead the PCC has been able to, alongside Thames Valley Police, develop this robust response to knife-enabled crime by ensuring police, prosecutors and courts are aligned to help drive the system to deliver justice quickly and firmly.

UNDER 18's

For young people under 18 there is an alternative approach which consists of an earlier intensive intervention by the YOT through the Act Now programme. This begins while the young person is still in custody to look at the root causes of offending, determine if they are being exploited and encourage them to engage to break the cycle of offending.

When a young person is arrested, a YOT caseworker attends custody within 90 minutes to meet with that young person to commence the intervention process. This takes place while criminal justice options are still being pursued.

Within 48 hours of leaving custody a further meeting will take place with the young person's parents/carers. Prior to Act Now, this process could take weeks or even months.

The programme gives young people every opportunity to engage. However, if they fail to engage or their offending is particularly dangerous, the criminal justice route remains the proper course of action.

Act Now pilots were launched in Milton Keynes in January 2023 followed by Slough in March.

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- Within TVP there have been instances where there has been a lack of confidence in utilising police charging decisions and work has taken place to **educate custody sergeants on when they can use police charging powers as opposed to referring the case** to the CPS. Further education has also taken place on ensuring the correct bladed article offence is used.
- Within Act Now pathway, the teams found that they were receiving referrals for young people who are not resident in Slough or Milton Keynes but had committed a knife-enabled offence there. While they will still attend Custody following the initial referral, the team will then make a safeguarding referral to the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub sharing as much information as necessary to allow the home local authority to follow up.
- Within Act NOW Slough, practitioners have needed to **introduce processes to ensure they are being informed of all young people in custody who are eligible** for the pathway. They now co-locate within Maidenhead custody once a week and have a monthly meeting with all relevant professionals to discuss cases and ensure that all young people have been referred into the pathway.





THAMES VALLEY: OPERATION DETER

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES

A full independent evaluation of Op Deter is currently being commissioned by the OPCC, funded by the PCC and the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, but early data indicates a successful implementation of the approach with positive outputs.

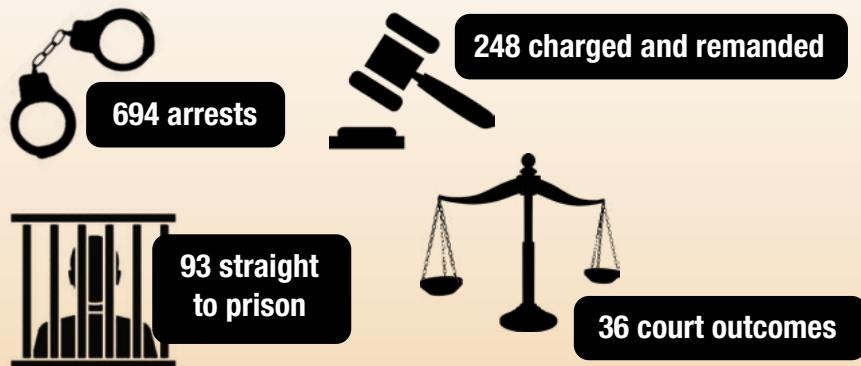
OVER 18's

For adults in Milton Keynes, in the two six-month periods before and after the launch of Op Deter, there was a 35% increase in the number of arrests for knife possession that resulted in charges.

IN THE SIX MONTHS FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH THERE WERE:



ACROSS THE WHOLE OF THAMES VALLEY POLICE 1 JULY 2022 – 31 MAY 2023:





THAMES VALLEY: OPERATION DETER

UNDER 18's

Since its launch in January 2023, ACT Now MK has responded to:



67 arrests
of 53 young
people



The current re-offending
rate for ACT-NOW is 3.77%

In Slough, from March-June 2023, **ACT NOW** has received 13 referrals with seven young people currently engaging within the ACT NOW Pathway.

Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Barber said:

“ Too many young people have become victims of knife crime, and the prevalence of knife carrying is a concern for many residents. There are many approaches to explore in our efforts to tackle it and enforcement, early intervention and prevention all have a role to play.

“ So far the results of Op Deter within the wider Thames Valley Police approach to Serious Violence is showing it's having a real impact in swiftly taking knives off our streets and bringing offenders to justice.

“ Op Deter is now becoming business as usual in the Thames Valley. I hope this comprehensive approach to tackling not just knife crime but the wider culture of knife carrying will be a template for other forces to follow. **”**

Rachel Taylor, Detective Chief Inspector for Criminal Justice, Thames Valley Police said:

“ We continue to see an increase in the number of individuals charged and remanded to court, which is currently the most common outcome for adults aged 18 or over arrested for possession of a knife.

“ Where an individual has been arrested and bailed pending further investigation, we're seeing that strict bail conditions are set and officers are proactively ensuring that knives are removed from our community.

“ We are confident that these results will be replicated across Thames Valley Police as we complete the roll-out of Op Deter this summer. **”**





THAMES VALLEY: OPERATION DETER

Mutahir Ahmed, District Crown Prosecutor Crown Prosecution Service – Thames and Chiltern said:

- “ CPS seek to deal expeditiously with the offenders in weapon offences.
- “ Consideration is given to ‘splitting off’ the weapon offence from other related matters where it is suitable and where that investigation is complete.
- “ Police and CPS work together to advise on seizures of weapons in public and in private with a view to diversion or prosecution as appropriate. At the start of Op Deter there were confusions around the policy and guidance on remand cases, but joint working with police, we are now approaching each case with the Bail Act in mind.
- “ A key aim is making timely decisions and bringing cases to a swift conclusion so that diversion or sentence can be imposed without delay. ”

Young people's thoughts on ACT Now:

- “ Gang violence is getting worse. Being on the project gave me more awareness. ”
- “ Carrying a knife has consequences and it is just not worth it. ”

Parents and carer comments:

- “ Teens need [a] wide range of support to remove the violence culture that has been normalised. The early project is a big part of this. ”
- “ The project gave my son a different insight than moaning parents. ”

CONTACT

To find out more about Operation Deter, please visit: www.knifesentence.org or email: opcc.comms@thamesvalley.police.uk to talk to the partners involved.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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WEST MIDLANDS: FAITH ALLIANCE PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The West Midlands Faith Alliance exists to equip, enable and empower communities of all faiths and none across the West Midlands to further understand and prevent serious youth violence.



WEST MIDLANDS
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP

The Faith Alliance is a regional multi-faith network bringing together faith groups and organisations around the violence reduction agenda.

The Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance encourages proactive community engagement and collaboration with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), however only passing reference is made to the particular role of faith communities.

Drawing on best practice from the West Midlands, we believe that faith communities are a significant untapped component in the national agenda to reduce violence.

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The Commission on Gangs and Violence, authored by the Revd Dr Carver Anderson and published in 2017, made several recommendations for police and government on the topic of reducing serious youth violence. **Among its recommendations was that the role of faith communities in reducing violence ought to be further explored** and that a coordinated, multi-faith approach be developed, enabling better partnership work to ‘increase the peace’ in neighbourhoods affected by violence.

From its inception in 2019, the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (WMVRP), hosted and overseen by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster, has adopted the recommendation set out by the Revd Dr Carver Anderson.

The West Midlands is one of only two Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), of which there are 21 in total nationally, having a workstream dedicated to the role of faith communities in reducing violence.

In the West Midlands, the Faith Alliance (FA) is a multi-faith and community-led regional network, currently facilitated and supported by the WMVRP, working to prevent serious youth violence. **The Faith Alliance network is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom.**

It has grown from around 30 members in February 2020, to over 400 members by July 2023.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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WEST MIDLANDS: FAITH ALLIANCE PROJECT

The image shows the cover of a booklet titled "TOOLKIT FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES". The cover features a photograph of a young girl wearing pink glasses, smiling. The title is in large white letters, and the subtitle "EQUIPPING, ENABLING AND EMPOWERING" is in orange. The "West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership" logo is in the top left corner, and the "WEST MIDLANDS VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP" logo is in the bottom right corner.

**West Midlands
Violence Reduction Partnership**

TOOLKIT FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

EQUIPPING, ENABLING AND EMPOWERING

WEST MIDLANDS
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP

Members include representatives of places of worship, faith-based organisations, community activists, statutory bodies and other charitable organisations. To date, much of the work of the FA has focused on establishing strong foundations for a long-term, community-led approach to reducing violence, for example by connecting existing faith-led organisations and their services, publishing resources and sharing best practice.

Notable events have included a summit at Coventry Cathedral, a workshop roadshow and a webinar series. Key resources and projects have included a Toolkit, campaigns, a short film, trauma-informed training adapted for faith groups, seed funding for community projects, and a directory of members (coming soon).





WEST MIDLANDS: FAITH ALLIANCE PROJECT

In addition to supporting faith communities to tackle violence at a local and regional scale, opportunities to influence the national policy landscape have also emerged as other organisations have taken interest in the work of the West Midlands Faith Alliance. For example, in November 2022, the Faith Alliance was recognised as best practice in a report, entitled *Faith in Prisons*, published by the Good Faith Partnership and launched in Parliament. Faith Alliance-like networks are now also being established by Gloucestershire PCC and the London Violence Reduction Unit.

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

The current round of Home Office funding for VRUs will end in March 2025. As a result, in 2023, much of the focus has been securing the sustainability of the FA network and developing a three-year strategy. In January 2023, a new FA Steering Group, consisting of some 18 leading faith activists and representatives, was established to provide greater community leadership, responsibility and oversight of the FA. The work of the Steering Group has included developing and strengthening the FA's governance and strategic position to provide solid foundations for future work. A process of co-production with faith communities is currently underway, with the view of launching a Faith Alliance 3-year strategy during Inter-Faith Week in November 2023.

EARLY OUTCOMES

To date, there is no known academic evaluation of multi-faith, coordinated network approaches to violence reduction, of the sort demonstrated by the Faith Alliance. However, there is some evidence base for the role of faith among prisoners and ex-offenders in desistance from crime.

WE BELIEVE THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO PROACTIVE FAITH ENGAGEMENT SUCH AS:

- For PCCs/VRUs:**
 - Mobilises communities' proactive factors and assets.
 - Faith communities become sustainable, long-term allies.
 - Faith groups help inspire and organise grassroots movements for change.
- For Police:**
 - Greater trust between police and communities.
 - Better able to tackle sensitive and 'taboo' issues in the community.
 - Helps police to better understand and prevent community tensions.
- For Young People:**
 - Access to safe local people and places when they need them.
 - Helped to understand and respect diversity.
 - More opportunities to share their voice and influence change.





WEST MIDLANDS: FAITH ALLIANCE PROJECT

HOW CAN OTHER PCC/VRU AREAS REPLICATE THIS WORK?

FIVE STEPS FOR SETTING UP A FAITH ALLIANCE-LIKE NETWORK:

- | | |
|--|--|
| STEP ONE:
Asset mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research what faith communities are already doing in your area to tackle the root causes of violence.• Identify key faith leaders who have a positive influence and can mobilise their communities. |
| STEP TWO:
Convene a network | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring together key leaders to get to know each other, share best practice and pool resources. |
| STEP THREE:
Establish a Steering Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate a regular meeting of the most passionate and proactive faith leaders who will lead the network and make key decisions. |
| STEP FOUR:
Co-design a strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work alongside local communities to develop a local faith-based violence prevention strategy that mobilises assets, volunteers and resources. |
| STEP FIVE:
Bring in external funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply together for external sources of funding to sustain or expand existing provision, and to set up new initiatives. |

Few resources are required to establish a network of this kind and it can be scaled up or down to meet the need of the local area. Ideally, an anchor organisation that is willing to provide administrative support to the network (e.g., managing a mailing list, writing minutes, and organising meetings) is helpful. Over the longer term this could be the office of a PCC or Deputy Mayor for Policing.

CONTACT

VRP Faith and Communities Navigator Fred Kratt: fred.kratt@westmidlands.police.uk or Nikki Penniston: nikki.penniston@westmidlands.police.uk Visit: [Violence Reduction Partnership](#)





SUSSEX:

HABITUAL KNIFE CARRIERS PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2019, the **Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership** (VRP) has continued to build on its strong partnership foundations and has made significant progress in understanding the nature and drivers of serious violence in Sussex.



A core VRP steering group provides strategic direction, funding and monitoring of projects across Sussex, delivered locally in Brighton & Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex. A range of innovative practices developed to address serious violence have been shared locally and nationally.

The latest performance report for Q1 2023 (April to June) shows that in the 12 months to June 2023, there was a 10% reduction of Public Place (Non-Domestic) Serious Violence Crime in Sussex compared to the baseline year (pre-funding year to March 2019).

The biggest reductions in Serious Violent Crime have been in Brighton & Hove, with a reduction of 29%, or 177 fewer offences since the pre-funding year to March 2019.

From April-June 2023, a total of 1,841 individuals have already been reached through VRP-funded interventions.



REDUCTION OF PUBLIC PLACE
(Non-Domestic) Serious Violence Crime in Sussex



REDUCTION IN SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIME
in Brighton & Hove (177 fewer offences)

HKC (HABITUAL KNIFE CARRIERS) PROJECT: WHAT WAS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The Habitual Knife Carriers (HKC) project aims to divert children who carry knives and their associates and local peer groups away from being drawn into future knife carrying and other criminal activity.

Young people who are most likely to be carrying knives are identified using the **HKC risk index**. This ground-breaking tool has been developed by Sussex Police and is the first of its kind in the country. It looks at the risk factors associated with known instances of knife crime and identifies young people who have these risk factors.





SUSSEX:

HABITUAL KNIFE CARRIERS PROJECT

Data from the **HKC index** is considered as part of a scoping exercise that involves police, youth offending teams and children's services. This informs which young people enter the programme for one-to-one work and where group and outreach work delivered through the programme should be targeted.



Young people include those already involved in the Youth Justice Service and with local social work teams, as well as others who have been assessed as being at high risk of offending via the HKC index.

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Good rapport with lead professionals is key:

Trust is vital to start to influence young people's behaviour and professionals are able to challenge behaviour directly in conversation, carefully broaching difficult subjects and questioning their choices. It is important to young people that they feel their lead professional is an ally, who genuinely cares about them and understands their experiences.





SUSSEX:

HABITUAL KNIFE CARRIERS PROJECT

Partnership working is vital to the effectiveness of the index:

Whilst the mapping of police data to inform this work is an important innovation, it is just the start of a more complex process. A key element is the mapping of peer networks and the delivery of work with peer groups as well as individuals.

As part of this, a key strength is the ability to identify those within the wider peer group of a prolific offender who have not started to engage in similar behaviour.

Staff in different roles and from different agencies have developed constructive working relationships with one another and these are key to the successes of the programme, underpinned by a strong sense of respect for each other's roles and expertise.

EVALUATION & EARLY OUTCOMES

The National Children's Bureau conducted an impact and outcome evaluation on the project in 2022/23. Highlighted outcomes include improvements in young people's emotional wellbeing, motivation and outlook.

Lifestyle and diversionary activities:

Keeping active and busy through physical, recreational or vocational activities occupies the young people's time and energy. Changes to lifestyle by some young people means they spend more time at home, which has a positive impact on family relationships.

Access to support:

Some young people access treatment for substance misuse and social work from professionals in the Youth Justice Service. Lead professionals often support with education or employment and most young people have accessed the Youth Employability Service.

Victimisation and general risk from violent crime:

24 young people had been linked to a crime occurrence as a victim in the 12 months before referral. After referral, the vast majority (20) of these were not linked to further occurrences as victims.

Knife carrying and violent crime:

Participants reduced their frequency of violent offending after referral to the programme, with a 76% reduction in occurrences that the participating group of 44 young people were linked to as suspects or offenders. Of 43 young people who were linked to at least one occurrence in 12 months before referral, 37 reduced their frequency of offending; of these, 32 had been linked to no further occurrences after referral.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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SUSSEX:

HABITUAL KNIFE CARRIERS PROJECT

NEXT STEPS

The project has been recognised as innovative practice by the College of Policing and the Home Office. It has now been rolled out across the county.

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne OBE said:

“We know that knife-crime can have awful consequences and it makes people feel insecure and anxious in their own neighbourhoods.

“To carry out informed and targeted interventions, it is vital we have the right tools in place focusing on those who are vulnerable. The HKC index is a brilliant tool that helps us to tackle the root cause of a problem, understanding the motivations behind knife carrying and associated crime.

“The index helps professionals to identify young people who are most at risk, build trusting relationships with them and provide education and support to guide them in choosing alternative pathways for their futures. **”**

CONTACT

To find out more about the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership or to contact us please visit: **SPCC - Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership (sussex-pcc.gov.uk)**





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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WEST YORKSHIRE: A&E NAVIGATOR PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION

The **A&E Navigator Programme** is a flagship of the **West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership** (VRP), which has funded the service since it began in 2021. From involvement in knife crime, assault with a weapon to drugs, gangs and exploitation, it allows professionals to intervene at the earliest opportunity. By placing trained and dedicated youth workers within the emergency departments of hospitals, it reaches those in crisis at the right time and at that 'teachable' moment.

Building trusting relationships and developing tailored plans, the Navigators are helping those with violence-related injuries to access support services.

Its success has led to the **UK's first 'Accident & Emergency Navigators' conference, which took place in Leeds** in May 2023, uniting more than 140 representatives of services and organisations, which support victims of serious youth violence.

It was the first opportunity for these services to come together, sharing what works and further developing these services for young people.

Both the **Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin** and **Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Alison Lowe OBE**, spoke at the conference which included high profile delegates from the NHS, World Health Organisation and more.





WEST YORKSHIRE: A&E NAVIGATOR PROGRAMME

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The service extends beyond the hospital walls with regular aftercare appointments when patients return to their communities.

They aim to link people with appropriate community support services, assisting people to address the factors that may make them vulnerable to violence and to help them cope and recover if they have experienced trauma and adversity.

Since its inception, the first Navigator service launched in Leeds and has seen more than 800 referrals.

This has been the catalyst for others in the region, and ensures we are collectively doing more, responding to the issues in a consistent, evidence-based approach.

Bradford Royal Infirmary has directly supported over 2200 young people and had over 1000 interactions.

The '**BLOSM**' Navigator pilot for the **Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust** went live in January 2023 and has supported just under 400 young people in the first five months.





WEST YORKSHIRE: A&E NAVIGATOR PROGRAMME KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Following an evaluation of the programme in April 2022, several key learning points were identified to help shape future delivery.

It showed a need for improved information-sharing between medical staff, youth work staff and referral services.

Without a formal information-sharing process, it highlighted a risk of overreliance on medical staff buy-in for the programme to be a success.

To measure impact further, it also recommended more robust monitoring that highlights evidence of effective and consistent engagement, including detail around the success of referrals and longer-term impact.

The latest evaluation of the model highlighted the challenges surrounding short term funding, the impact this has on systemic change and ensuring monitoring data can be collected.

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES

West Yorkshire's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Alison Lowe OBE said:

“ We know from the experience in West Yorkshire that many of those attending with violence related injuries, often stem from knife crime.

“ Our research tells us that a high proportion of these are likely to be males in their late teens, which is a real challenge.

“ It is absolutely critical that we continue to intervene at the first chance we get, and remove our young people from the revolving doors, which can lead back to further harm. **”**

One of the primary impacts of the service is the emotional support it provides to young patients during a vulnerable and reflective moment in their life. The services are also felt to improve relationships between young patients and staff in the hospitals.

The majority of patients presenting at A&E have more than one presenting issue.

Data available, whilst not fully representative, indicates that patients are involved in violence along with mental health support requirements.

In Leeds, only 5% of those referred were already known to services, suggesting the intervention is working towards increasing awareness and support.





WEST YORKSHIRE: A&E NAVIGATOR PROGRAMME

Overall, knife crime has steadily reduced across West Yorkshire, with fewer offences involving serious violence.

Hospital admissions for sharp objects have also started to drop, compared to 2021.

CASE STUDY

The BLOSM Navigator Pilot has already seen a number of success stories.

Recently, one of their youth workers engaged with a young person who had attended A&E more than 20 times in a short period.

They were offered support and signposted to an existing youth group, which in turn improved their wellbeing and led to no further attendances at A&E.

NEXT STEPS

- The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership is currently working to expand the overall programme by developing a model aligned to Mid Yorkshire Hospital Trust.
- Working with the service in Leeds, the team has been exploring a pilot to extend the current 9-5 service.
- There is work ongoing with the local Integrated Care Board (ICB) to look at the sustainability of the programme beyond 2024-25.

CONTACT

To find out more about the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership's A&E Navigator Programme: [visit their website](#) or email: vrp@westyorks-ca.gov.uk to talk to the team.





DYFED-POWYS: INTACT PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

The Police Force is an integral part of our communities in the vast geographical area of Dyfed-Powys, covering the four Unitary Authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys, Dafydd Llywelyn said:

“ One of my key priorities is preventing harm, by working in a way that seeks to solve problems within our communities.

“ Young people can be drawn into becoming involved in Serious Violence and Organised Crime (SVOC) in a variety of ways; most significantly, organised criminals target vulnerable young people as commodities in the delivery of sex work and drug supply networks. **”**

Research shows this vulnerability can often be a result of **Adverse Childhood Experiences** (ACEs), which are a range of risk factors linked to traumatic events that have been identified to predict a range of negative health and social outcomes.

Links between negative behaviours, such as substance misuse and crime generally are well documented, but several recent studies have also found a strong link between substance misuse and vulnerability.



However, **regular participation in sport** was seen as a protective factor in **limiting the likelihood of involvement in criminal behaviour**. Alongside these developments, discovering **new pathways to building resilience and negating the impact of individual vulnerability** factors are at the forefront of Public Health Wales and Welsh Government's agenda through the Future Generations and Well-being Act (2015). These aims also dovetail with the aims of **INTACT** to deliver a public health approach to policing.





DYFED-POWYS: INTACT PROGRAMME

INTACT is a multi-agency partnership to combat serious violence and organised crime (SVOC) in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys. **INTACT** is the project brand and represents the partnership response to SVOC.

The primary aim of **INTACT**, therefore, is to coordinate and deliver early intervention programmes, which range from public engagement/education to one-to-one focused involvement with specific individuals, drawing upon a range of literature and established principles in youth crime and justice.

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The objective of **INTACT** is to provide a capability to advance the wider 3P activity across the partnership. The intervention built greater emphasis on community engagement, communication and dissemination across a range of stakeholders, including, for example, businesses which may unintentionally become involved in SVOC activities (i.e. taxi drivers and B&Bs? bed and breakfasts? linked to County Lines).



The ever-changing landscape of serious violence and Organised Crime Group (OCG) activity necessitates a dynamic and comprehensive suite of interventions to address the many events that operate under the SVOC remit.

A designated team of PCSOs, led by a SVOC Coordinator, lead on early intervention and prevention of young persons, diverting from crime/SVOC and delivering awareness to communities to become more resilient to the threats from SVOC.





DYFED-POWYS: INTACT PROGRAMME

In essence, the approach is to refer young persons to the INTACT programme via Multi-Agency Referral Forms (MARFs). These MARFs are triaged by the Dyfed Powys Police Vulnerability Unit and, if low level and meeting a threshold criterion, the children/young persons are referred to the INTACT team, who then assess the most appropriate intervention i.e. 1-2-1 work with child and parents, or a group intervention.

The INTACT project is partnered with **Boxwise** and it established two boxing interventions in each local authority that provides outlets for group interventions. Other activities are also supported, recognising the needs and interest of the individuals helped. The key element of the interventions is trusted adult support and delivering inputs, raising awareness and resilience to the threats of various SVOC thematic areas.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO-DATE INCLUDE:

- In excess of 600 children, young persons and vulnerable adults offered a variety of targeted interventions - 87% of a sample of those individuals had no further police contact following intervention.
- 2 x Boxing interventions in each county established.
- Formidable 3P recorded disruption activity.
- More than 18,000 people have received an input in at least one area of SVOC.
- Mid & West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board – Safeguarding Practice Award 2022.
- 200 staff and volunteers from partner agencies received in-person input from INTACT PCSO's about county lines.
- Vulnerable people at risk of 'cuckooing' or exploitation visited and provided with safeguarding advice around county lines.
- Drug/county lines patrols undertaken by Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs), who engaged with the community and spoke about the signs of county lines.
- All INTACT officers have achieved a Level 2-3 award in youth work principles via Agored Cymru, enabling officers to better interact with vulnerable young people.

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Simple logistics such as travel, kit and funding were barriers to the potential successes of some interventions e.g. **Boxwise** and **Premier League Kicks**, although it had been observed that a high percentage had at least attempted to continue with these activities, beyond the initial intervention





DYFED-POWYS: INTACT PROGRAMME

Llanelli Town Councillor Sean Rees said: “**Kicks** has been a great success for the area. This project really has gone from strength to strength with increased numbers taking part with every session. It has brought our community together.

“**We are seeing less young people hanging around the streets and causing less ASB due to the approach of the coaches in engaging with young people of Llanelli by creating a safe, friendly environment which **kicks** provides.**”

Some reservations were also voiced about the appropriateness of the activities, for example, teaching boxing and graffiti to young people. In terms of lessons learnt, wider consideration and reflection on what the design and aims of these interventions are, over and above the physical activity will be necessary to ensure programme fidelity.

Budgets for activities, for example, accessing funds for refreshments at events and interventions are not always clear and fully understood. In terms of lessons learnt, it is observed that overall guidance and management could potentially easily address this issue.

There is evidence of inter-county cooperation in relation to intelligence sharing between INTACT staff, which clearly benefits the Dyfed-Powys approach to SVOC.

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES

ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY WAS COMMISSIONED BETWEEN MARCH AND MAY 2023 TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF THE INTACT PROGRAMME. THEIR EVALUATION SUMMARY FOUND:

- **INTACT has demonstrated a measurable impact on SVOC across the Dyfed-Powys region.** The outreach activities and individual case studies support the testimony of the INTACT and related staff, in terms of the ongoing merits of the programme and how interventions were building relationships and building capacity to work with individuals and communities.
- In terms of value for money, the main programmes of dissemination and targeted communication were adequate, but staff needed more guidance on how to implement these wider initiatives alongside the individual intervention work.
- **The clear limitation of the effectiveness of INTACT was threshold for involvement; overlap and duplication were apparent.**
- The Evaluation recommended that, in future, to increase effective working practices the programme should seek to increase exposure for INTACT more generally and provide clear mandates and service provision guidelines to partner agencies.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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DYFED-POWYS: INTACT PROGRAMME

NEXT STEPS

GOING FORWARD, DYFED-POWYS WILL BE FOCUSING ON:

- An effective transition to the Neighbourhood Policing hubs.
- Progress on the suggested improvement developments within the academic evaluation.
- How the INTACT project might be instrumental in the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty partnership interventions.





NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: YOUTH WORK CHARTER

INTRODUCTION

The Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) and Nottinghamshire's OPCC have produced a **Youth Work Charter** designed by young people, setting out their vision and expectations for quality youth work provision in which their voice is heard.

The **Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership** (NNVRP) has commissioned a **Youth Work Training Programme** in partnership with **Base 51**. This delivers Level 1, 2 and 3 Youth Work Training in line with the National Curriculum for Youth Work and National Occupational Standards with organisations committed to achieving excellence against a **Quality Endorsement Framework**, supported by young service users.

“ Our vision is for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire communities to feel safe from violence and the fear of violence.

“ We work to realise this vision by collaborating with statutory partners and communities to build a whole system, public health approach to violence reduction. ”

Levels of serious violence recorded by Nottinghamshire police in 2022 were **8% lower** than those recorded during the pre-pandemic year of 2019.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: YOUTH WORK CHARTER

51% of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership (NNVRP) core Home Office funding allocation, £724k, has been allocated to commissioning interventions to support over 4,500 children and young people at risk of serious violence in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

We believe quality Youth Work is key to preventing crisis for young people and committed to the NNVRP Youth Work Strategy.

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

- OPCC & NNVRP have a core duty to work with voluntary and community sector (VCS) to prevent crime & serious violence / key funders of youth diversion
- The VCS bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, yet there is inequity of access to training and framework for development
- More broadly, we have experienced locally reductions in, and pressures on, public funding for youth services
- There are continued concerns about serious violence and young people's risk and exposure to vulnerability



The VRP commissioned an independent review of Youth Diversion and following this co-produced with young people a joint 'Youth Work Charter' with a youth work standards framework.

ITS OBJECTIVES WERE TO:

- Keep young people and communities safe
- Create opportunities for young people to develop skills and knowledge for positive choices
- Reduce the risk of criminal engagement or exploitation
- Ensure young people receive the quality of services that they deserve

YOUTH CHARTER VISION:

“ Young people accessing youth diversion provision in Nottingham City and County will have access to projects and practitioners that bring places of safety, opportunity for informed and positive choices, which are connected through a shared vision for young people and youth work. ”



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: YOUTH WORK CHARTER

In 2022, the VRP launched its **Youth Work Training Programme** in partnership with Base 51. Under the programme, Base 51 will deliver Level 1, 2, and 3 Youth Work Training in line with the National Curriculum for Youth Work and National Occupational Standards for the practitioners and organisations in the local Voluntary and Community Youth Work Sector.

IN JUNE 2023, THE VRP LAUNCHED ITS YOUTH WORK CHARTER:

Nottinghamshire VRP's Youth Work Strategy | Violence Reduction Unit (nottsvrp.co.uk)

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

At the launch event the VRP held facilitated discussions with partners and stakeholders to give a 'helping hand' to ensure the Youth Charter is successful and can develop.

Some of the perceived barriers included: Stereotypes of children & young people, Fears or past interactions with practitioners, Representation, Accessibility, Lack of commitment, Poor communication, Fear of change, Is it too hard? Is it for me?

Further work will now be undertaken to maintain momentum with a refined comms strategy and action plan to incorporate feedback and mitigate risks to delivery.

COMMENTS:

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Caroline Henry, who leads the Violence Reduction Partnership, said:

“The insight of young people is invaluable when it comes to shaping how youth services should be delivered. By being part of this project, these young people have helped raise the bar in youth service provision across the city and county.

“To reduce serious violence effectively we need services that work for young people; we need to understand their needs and ensure that they keep engaging with the services we are providing.

“This Youth Charter will also help ensure that we continue to fund youth organisations that are committed to the best standards. **”**

Gemma Seed is a training and engagement coordinator at **Imara**, an organisation which provides therapeutic services for children and young people affected by sexual and domestic abuse.

She said the Youth Charter would show that organisations listen to and value young people.

“It will provide young people with confidence about the services they are going to receive support from. It is designed by young people, for young people. That is so important because it means the youth service is formed around what young people actually want. It proves organisations are listening and it feels like it is an accreditation as there is a standard to follow. **”**





NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: YOUTH WORK CHARTER EARLY OUTCOMES

THROUGH THEIR YOUTH CHARTER THE VRP HOPES TO ACHIEVE:

- Improved quality of youth provision delivered by the VCS (this will be measured through our Quality Endorsement Framework)
- Improved parity of opportunity for learning and development for practitioners
- Reduced gaps in training needs across the VCS
- Increased numbers of people in the VCS with an accredited youth work qualification
- Improved safeguarding of children and young people
- SEND needs are met where possible, or appropriate adjustments made
- Practice is culturally aware and safe
- Reflective practice is adopted
- A partnership contextual safeguarding approach in the longer term.



40 organisations have signed up to say they would like the Youth Charter implementation training, with a view to pledging.

So far 8 young people that have been trained to deliver the Youth Charter implementation training to community organisations.





NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: YOUTH WORK CHARTER

The training academy has 27 students from 17 different organisations working across the three different course levels. There is a waiting list for new cohorts to start in September with an additional online offer to support access for students that live further afield.

CASE STUDY – YOUTH CHARTER

Rejoice Amieghemen is one of the young people who helped create the Youth Charter and is now set to join a delegation visiting youth clubs across Nottinghamshire to help promote the benefits of signing up. The 17-year-old, of Bestwood Park, was a service user at **Support Through Sport**, before becoming a Community Sports Coach at the organisation. She believes her experience of developing her potential at a local youth club demonstrates the importance of having good standards in youth provision and the positive impact it can make on young people.

Rejoice Amieghemen said:

“ The aim of the Youth Charter is to ensure young people have a choice and a voice, making sure they are respected and in a safe environment where they know there are development opportunities and progression in that youth club.

“ From a youth club point of view, it gives them standards to follow to ensure that organisation is working to a good standard that gives young people confidence in them - so altogether it benefits everyone. I hope it is something that can be rolled out across the country to have as a standard that youth clubs must use. The values that it has are so important in what makes a good youth club. **”**

CONTACT

For more information about the Youth Charter, including how to sign up, email the Violence Reduction Partnership at: vrp@notts.police.uk





HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT: VIOLENT CRIME TASKFORCE

INTRODUCTION

The **Violent Crime Taskforce** (VCT) is a team of 11 officers, one sergeant and one inspector working with neighbourhood police teams throughout Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight to understand high risk offenders and locations, offering proactive solutions to prevent violence.

The Taskforce has been made possible by additional funding from the Home Office to help police reduce serious violence in hotspots by completing additional patrols and **putting long-term problem solving in place with partners** to address root causes of the issues.

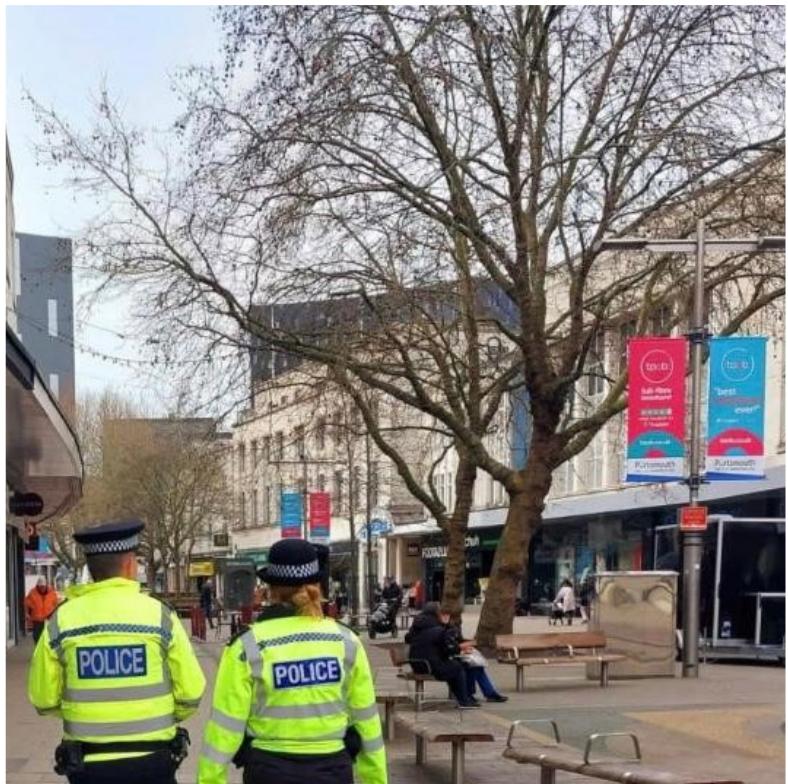
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary were awarded £566,513 for 2022-2023.

The VCT work closely with the **Hampshire and Isle of Wight Violence Reduction Unit** (VRU), which recently adopted a place-based model to coordinate the wider partnership.

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The VCT is coordinated through the OPCC, with a focus on reducing knife enabled crime, robberies and serious assaults as well as the management of serious violence perpetrators.

To manage those who cause the most harm to communities, the VCT has created a **Serious Violence Risk List** for each district which is shared with partners in order to ensure the correct interventions are place to reduce offending.



Most recently, the team has implemented a **Hotspot Policing App** which allows officers to record patrols and give them instant access to area specific briefings while they are on shift, making them more agile to respond to ongoing risks.





HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT: VIOLENT CRIME TASKFORCE

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

As a brand-new team with fresh approach, establishing a precise remit and how to work with the force was a learning curve.

VCT Inspector Sarah Nicholson said:

“ District teams all work differently so it's been about making effective working relationships. The VCT have been embedded into High Harm Teams and has supported them with work around the reduction of serious violence and management of serious violence location and perpetrators. We have enhanced the details by completing deeper analysis into the issues and then worked with the VRU to problem-solve in partnership. **”**

The 11 officers in the VCT were recruited mainly from response teams and lacked experience in problem solving and partnership working which is a key part of the role. To tackle this, training was delivered on Problem Orientated Policing (POP) and SARA, Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment.

Training gaps in perpetrator management were also identified and is now being addressed and all officers have been trained in Problem-Solving to Accreditation Level 3 making them subject-matter experts.

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES

Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Donna Jones said:

“ This taskforce is helping local officers understand the key issues in their neighbourhood and bolstering police visibility by supporting them on extra patrols.

“ Most crucially, the team is reviewing crime patterns, key offenders and key locations and then offering bespoke plans to neighbourhood teams to help reduce violence, and ultimately to prevent incidents from happening.

“ Violent crime is complex, and the taskforce is in place to understand the root causes to help police get on top of the issue.

“ The team is part of the multi-agency activity to ensure there is a joined-up approach to tackling serious violence across the two counties, ensuring all responsible authorities are around the table to keep towns and cities safe.

“ Together with the newly formed place-based Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), my role as Commissioner is a pivotal one under the Serious Violence Duty.

“ The close working relationship between the taskforce and the VRU, from my office, is ensuring we work as a whole system to reduce violence long term, coordinating sustainable prevention and early intervention programmes to ensure we prevent people from committing serious crimes. **”**



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HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT: VIOLENT CRIME TASKFORCE

The Task Force already boasts some recent successes by cutting robberies up to 45% through tactical work in Portsmouth; dramatically reducing the number of incidents in the town centre.

PORTRUSH:



December 2019:
37 robberies



December 2022:
20 robberies
(45% reduction)



January 2020:
33 robberies



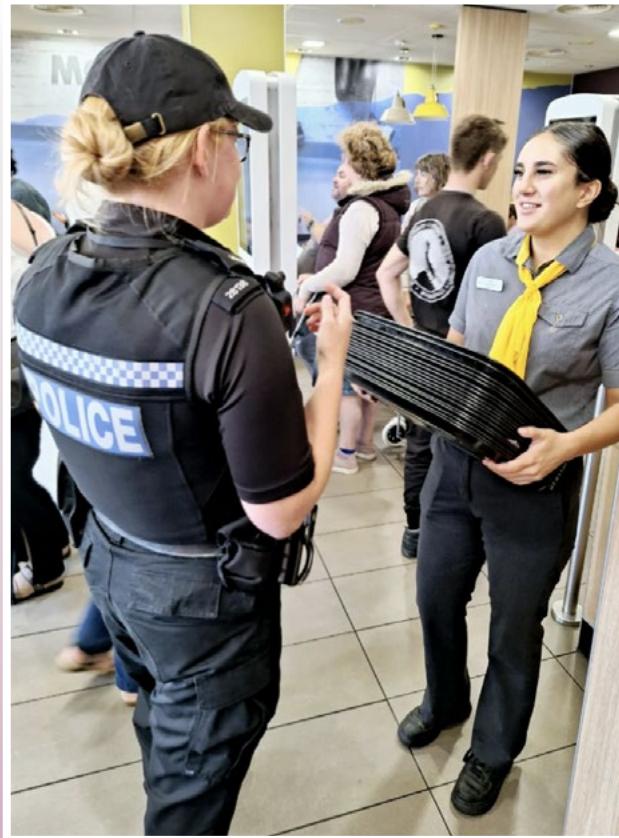
January 2023:
26 robberies
(18% reduction)



CASE STUDY

A VCTF officer in the north of the county has reduced serious violence in the night-time economy by working with license holders, door and bar staff and key venues. Focusing on hot locations and hot people, they harnessed early engagement with partners paired with high visibility patrols to reduce serious violence incidents over a three-week period, thus reducing the risk status of those weekends from amber to green.

As a result, there was a 36% reduction in offending in the night-time economy during the trial.





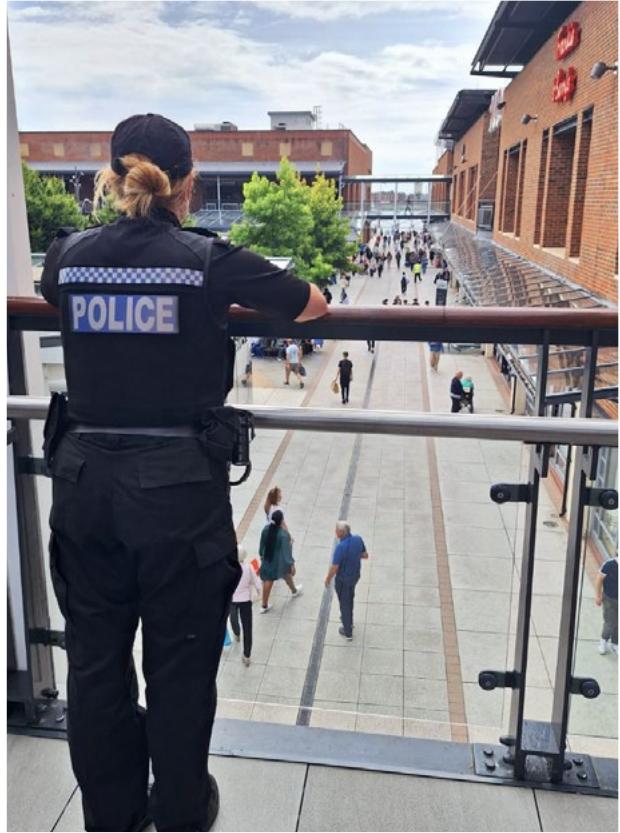
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HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT: VIOLENT CRIME TASKFORCE

NEXT STEPS

- The taskforce's objectives are to continually develop problem-solving capabilities around serious violence hotspots and the management of serious violence perpetrators, in addition to habitual knife carriers.
- The team is currently working in various districts across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to provide additional resources in areas where violence has previously peaked over the summer and continue to support in areas where serious violence has occurred.
- The team will be actively supporting the Force in its response to Op Sceptre (National Knife Crime Week of Action) and Op Calibre (National Personal Robbery Initiative), both of which we will do in partnership with the VRU.



CONTACT

To find out more about the Violent Crime Taskforce's effect on driving down violence, please contact: Sarah.Nicholson@hampshire.police.uk





GREATER MANCHESTER: VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

INTRODUCTION

Greater Manchester's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) takes a community-led approach to violence reduction, which means the unit works closely with communities to understand the strengths, challenges, and needs of the community and determine how local investments will be made.

Several boroughs across the city-region have received funding from the VRU as part of its investment in community-led programmes, outlined in Greater Manchester's Serious Violence Action Plan.

GREATER MANCHESTER VRU RECENTLY PUBLISHED ITS 2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT, WHICH SHOWED:



17% reduction in hospital admissions due to assault by a sharp object among victims aged under 25 compared to 2021



Homicides down by 27% compared to 2021



Knife-enabled homicides down by 19% compared to 2021



More than 10,000 young people involved in prevention activities
Over 1,129 young people involved in community sport through VRU and Greater Sport partnership
Over 800 total referrals to the Navigator service to help young people cope and recover from their experience of violence

These successes are the result of the hard work of the VRU, Greater Manchester Police, partner organisations, and our communities, who are working tirelessly to keep young people safe and to educate them on the devastating consequences of serious violence.

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

When communities are affected by violence, the key to sustainable solutions can often be found by speaking to local residents about the underlying causes of crime, working with rather than deciding for them. Working in a place-based way means that we understand what the priorities are in each community and can co-design services with local people that will benefit their community.





GREATER MANCHESTER: VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

The community-led approach enables the VRU to **move away from competitive grant-giving to building an alliance around the community's priorities**. Local organisations join forces to create an alliance or partnership which works towards a set of agreed priorities together, leaning on the strengths of each organisation. It is important that this investment is co-designed with local residents, recognising the different strengths and challenges in each individual area.

WATCH THIS SHORT VIDEO TO FIND OUT MORE: [VRU - Community-led Approach Overview](#)

Priorities include mentoring programmes and positive role models for young people and families at risk or vulnerable to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation, youth work, improved sense of pride, respect and belonging and improved community cohesion, and activities aimed at engagement of young people on the periphery of organised crime activities.



KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

Sustainability of funding for alliances is an ongoing question. Alliances are supported to build up an evidence base and apply for funding from other sources, but funding expectations, especially long-term, need to be managed collaboratively.





GREATER MANCHESTER: VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

Lessons can be learnt from engagement with communities about common threads in terms of priorities. Although each community has individual needs and issues, key themes do run through communities across Greater Manchester. These themes include more support for families, early intervention, universal youth work and community sport. Consideration should be given to how these priorities can be addressed across all communities.

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES

Salford Community-Led Programme:

- In the 18 months since launch, over 400 young people have been supported through the community-led programme, which focuses on reducing antisocial behaviour, violence and hate crime, improving community cohesion, and providing opportunities for young people.
- Sixty-four young people aged 10-18, identified as at risk of serious youth violence, were given a one-to-one mentor and positive role model.
- Over 90% of those that had a mentor, reported improved personal health and wellbeing, minimising risk-taking behaviours.

Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham said:

“We’re committed to doing all we can to stop violence and crime on our streets across Greater Manchester. Just as important as catching those responsible for committing these crimes and getting them off our streets, is working with communities to tackle the issues and to prevent young people from falling into these behaviours.



“We know that working with communities to develop local programmes and initiatives yields the best results, and I would like to thank the organisations and people who have made the programme a success so far.

“I look forward to seeing the continued positive impact of the programme on young people and families across Greater Manchester. Programmes like this allow us to educate and support young people away from serious violence and crime and the result is a safer, happier, and more cohesive community for all. **”**



GREATER MANCHESTER: VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

Deputy Mayor for Policing, Crime, Criminal Justice and Fire Kate Green said:

“The strength of our approach to reducing violence relies heavily on multiple partners, and opportunities to bring partners, community members and young people together highlight what can be achieved by working together.

“This approach allows us to reduce violence and criminality in our communities and offers a better future for those at risk. In turn, the wider community benefits as a whole in the long-term. **”**



CASE STUDY - MENTORING

Mentoring was defined as a key priority for the community; as a result, the VRU invested in **1Message** as part of the local alliance.

A 17-year-old male, with care experience and currently living in a residential home, was on bail for street robbery, not in education, employment or training, and at risk of child criminal exploitation. The young person had a fear of rejection and abandonment and little understanding of how vulnerable he was. There were several missing-from-home reports for him and a lack of engagement with any external services. His behaviour could be aggressive and challenging both in and out of the home and he regularly used cannabis.

The young person was referred to a mentoring programme delivered by Matthew Norford from **1Message**. Matthew has lived experience of exploitation and of being part of a gang. An initial meeting took place between the young person and Matthew where they agreed to work together. After a few sessions, Matthew was able to support the young person in a Careers Connect appointment, attending an apprenticeship fair, and applying for Universal Credit.

At one session, the young person disclosed that a close friend had taken their own life and he was struggling with his emotions and how to deal with this. Matthew was able to inform the home and ensure he received appropriate support.





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GREATER MANCHESTER: VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

The young person started an apprenticeship in April after attending an interview with Matthew's support and receiving an offer. There have been no additional arrests, only one missing from home episode, a greater understanding of risks and keeping safe, engagement with external agencies such as Catch 22 and Careers Connect, and improved relationships with staff at the home.



CONTACT

To find out more about Greater Manchester VRU's community-led approach, visit:

Community-Led Approach to Violence Reduction - Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit (gmvru.co.uk) or email GMVRU@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk to talk to the team.





MERSEYSIDE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Merseyside's Violence Reduction Partnership's (MVRP) vision is that all communities have the right to be free from violence to provide the best life chances for all.

MERSEYSIDE
Violence
Reduction
Partnership



Since 2019, this team have been embedding a public health 'whole systems' approach to tackling the root causes of serious violence – seeing violence as preventable, not inevitable – and the evidence shows it's already having an impact:



3% reduction in serious violence crime incidents recorded by Merseyside Police.



10.9% reduction in people attending the emergency department for serious violence-related injuries.



14.7% reduction in call outs by the North West Ambulance Service for a serious violence-related incidents.

More than 21,000 beneficiaries engaged in preventive interventions at primary, secondary, and tertiary level. Of those, more than 2,000 were potentially high risk, known risk, or involved in crime.

Almost 8,500 young people benefitting from sports, arts, and culturally based interventions – from qualifications in mental health awareness and first aid, to digital skills and theatre productions, street arts sessions, and sport camps.

Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner Emily Spurrell said:

“The root causes of serious violence are complex and deep-seated. But evidence shows if we work together to put evidence-based interventions in place we can tackle and reduce violence and build brighter futures for young people and our communities.

“Merseyside's Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) is at the forefront of this work. **”**





MERSEYSIDE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

HOW ARE WE ACHIEVING THESE RESULTS?

These results are testament to the strong partnership and collaborative approach adopted by the MVRP and the tireless work of the many organisations involved, all of which are committed to ensuring Merseyside is a place where people can live, work, and visit free from violence and fear of violence.

The MRPV takes a multi-pronged approach – delivering local initiatives and programmes and also uplifting existing services, with all decisions informed by the best available evidence.

Blue light datasets from the **Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group (TIIG)** provide the basis for all decision making. This data provides insight into demand, informing where and what interventions are prioritised. It's also used to monitor and evaluate the performance of interventions to measure success.



This work is led by the **MVRP's Evidence Hub** who have been embedded within the team for the past two years and whose work has been invaluable - driving improvements in processes, data capture, and evidence identification. This has all helped to further deepen the MVRP's understanding of the serious violence landscape in Merseyside and the approaches needed to continue to reduce serious violence.

This evidence-based approach is further enhanced by the frequent sharing of best practice, ideas and learning with **local partners** and other **Violence Reduction Units**, as well as also using external data sources.





MERSEYSIDE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Community voice is at the heart of the MVRP's work, ensuring the views of local people are at the heart of the decisions the team make to invest in interventions and programmes.

SOME OF THE MOST IMPACTFUL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- A peer education programme - Merseyside Youth Association's Mentors in Violence Prevention – which provides young people with the language and framework to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin **gender-based violence**, bullying and other forms of abuse, while building resilience and promoting positive mental health. By supporting a 'whole school' approach to early intervention and prevention of bullying, harassment and risky behaviours, this programme empowers pupils to identify and communicate concerns with both peers and school staff.
- Hundreds of children and young people from across the region being empowered to co-produce solutions to create a safer and fairer society through the **Merseyside Hope Hack**. Insight from this programme is now being fed in to national and local strategic plans and policies, as well as in to the 'Re-imagined Report' which will be presented to Downing Street on 7th December.
- Nearly 300 professionals from 13 different organisations receiving **training** to identify the **underlying causes of offending** to help ensure people with **neurodiverse conditions** get the support they need to prevent them from reoffending. This training was the result of research carried out by **The Brain Charity** to better understand the local landscape and potential for criminal justice reform for neurodiverse people across the region – read the report here.
- Support for children born during the Covid-19 pandemic to help ensure they were ready to start school. With insight from the Evidence Hub, key hotspot areas were selected to receive targeted early years interventions, including Reading to Bump, Monkey Bob, and Look Say Sing Play.
- A series of continuous **professional development events** to address gaps in knowledge, learning and best practice, including on Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA). This resulted in the development of bitesize CAPVA training for professionals and an MVRP funded PhD on CAPVA.
- One of the first organisations in the country to hold a gambling harms event, featuring case studies and input from counselling services and senior police officers to highlight the breadth and scope of gambling-related harms, with a focus on prevention, early intervention, and treatment.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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MERSEYSIDE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS AND PROBATION:

Recognising the role that high quality employment and training opportunities can play in preventing prison leavers and those on probation from reoffending, the MVRP has forged strong links between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Probation Service with a focus on co-location. This includes being the first VRU in the country to have a member of DWP staff seconded into the team.

This move has reaped significant results.

Through DWP Prison Work Coaches (PWC) working part-time in Probation Service offices, ex-offenders now have direct access to training and employment opportunities, helping to reduce re-offending rates.

The co-location has also resulted in greater collaboration and the co-commissioning of interventions, such as the **Nobody Left Behind** initiative which uses free sporting activities as a conduit to help prison leavers and people on probation to access training and employment.

This work has been recognised as good practice at a roundtable with the Minister for Social Mobility & Youth Progression, Mim Davies MP, and Damian Hinds MP, Prisons & Probation Minister. It was also shortlisted for a national award for innovative partnership at the APCC-NPCC conference and other areas of the country, including Thames Valley and Lancashire, are now

EVALUATION AND EARLY OUTCOMES:

The MVRP is fortunate to benefit from a strong partnership with **Liverpool John Moores University** (LJMU), ensuring all their work is driven by data and progress is evidence-based. Evidence is collected by respected academics who lead in their field yet are local to Merseyside and who understand their communities. The MVRP commission LJMU on an annual basis to evaluate the MVRP as a whole, as well as to evaluate selected work programmes. These are available on the [MVRP website](#).





MERSEYSIDE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

In 2021, MVRP commissioned LJMU to look at the cost of crime within Merseyside during 2019/20 - Economic & social costs of violence on [Merseyside: A report for the Merseyside VRP](#). Overall, in 2019/20, violence cost an estimated £185.4 million on Merseyside.

By investing in alternative pathways for young people, from early years to adulthood, the work of the MVRP is focused on reducing this cost for the future. Indeed, the Home Office has estimated for every £1 spent by each VRU, there is a cost benefit saving to the local economy of £3.16.

Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner Emily Spurrell said:

“ Since its inception, our MVRP has worked hard to get upstream of serious violence – acting early to prevent reoffending and divert young people onto a more positive lifepath.

“ While there are no quick fixes to eradicating serious violence, the results so far speak for themselves.

“ Serious violence is already decreasing, and tens of thousands of young people have benefitted from MVRP interventions, all focused on supporting them and giving them better opportunities.

“ Through its data-driven approach, the MVRP is now better placed than ever to deliver the best interventions in the right areas and for the people who need it most, building brighter futures and safer, stronger communities across Merseyside. **”**



CONTACT

For more information about Merseyside's Violence Reduction Partnership, please visit: www.merseysidevrp.com or email: Merseyside.VRP@merseyside.police.uk to talk to the team.





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SOUTH WALES: VIOLENCE PREVENTION UNIT INTRODUCTION

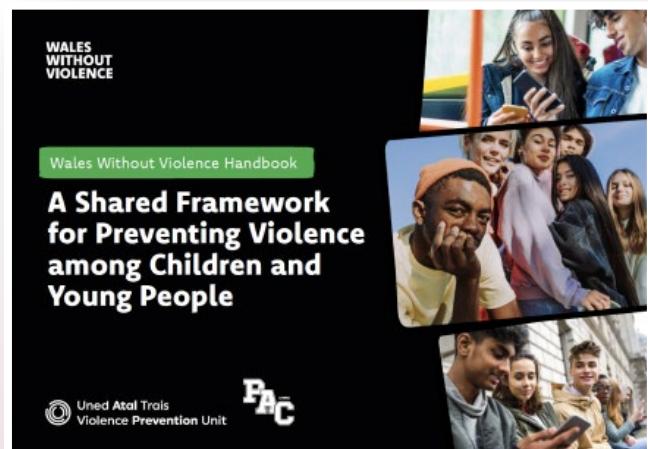
WORKING TOWARDS A WALES WITHOUT VIOLENCE - CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The new Serious Violence Duty, introduced by UK Government in 2023, requires devolved and non-devolved agencies in Wales to work together to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with violence and develop a strategy detailing how they will respond to these issues.

The **Wales Violence Prevention Unit** has a public health approach which is able to support partners in establishing the underlying causes of violence in their area, and understand through evidence from data, research and experience, what works best to prevent it, as well as how best to measure the outcomes and impact of prevention activity.

THE WALES WITHOUT VIOLENCE (WWK) FRAMEWORK

This support has been demonstrated through the publication of **Wales Without Violence: A Shared Framework for Preventing Violence among Children and Young People**. This provides an evidence-informed guide for professionals working to prevent violence among children and young people.



The views, experiences and aspirations of **over 1,000 children, young people and professionals** went into informing this Framework in work led by the **Peer Action Collective Cymru**, which is a ground-breaking network of young peer researchers funded by the Youth Endowment Fund, and the Wales Violence Prevention Unit. Coproduction and community inclusion are at the core of their work.

It is important that **evidence of 'what works'** is what this Wales Without Violence Framework is rooted in. The work therefore considers the practicalities of implementing violence prevention work.

Find out more and download the Framework at: www.waleswithoutviolence.com



SOUTH WALES: VIOLENCE PREVENTION UNIT

NHS VIOLENCE PREVENTION TEAM – BACKGROUND

The NHS has an important role to play in preventing and responding to violence-related injuries in Emergency Departments (EDs). The cost of violence to the NHS in Wales estimated to be £205 million each year.

In South Wales, through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Home Office Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) grant, the Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) has developed a Violence Prevention Team (VPT) which operates within the Emergency Department at the University Hospital of Wales (UHW), Cardiff – the role of the team is to engage with patients who present at the Emergency Department (ED) with violence related injuries.



VIOLENCE PREVENTION TEAM

The Violence Prevention Team comprises of a **Nurse** and a **Violence Prevention Advocate** -both work on-site, at the hospital. They are supported by a community-based **Caseworker** who is employed by Action for Children

THE VPT'S OBJECTIVES ARE:

- **To increase identification** of patients with serious violence injuries to improve police reporting and enhance safeguarding responses;
- **Engage with patients** of serious violence-related-injuries, and provide holistic support that addresses wider risk factors of engagement in violence including vulnerabilities;
- Promote a **public health approach to violence prevention** within healthcare settings, and engage with staff to enhance their knowledge of violence;
- **Establish referral processes** and pathways to support for patients with violence-related injuries to receive longer-term follow up support to prevent future engagement in violence.



SOUTH WALES: VIOLENCE PREVENTION UNIT

IMPACT

THE VPTS IN CARDIFF AND SWANSEA SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGED WITH 1330 PATIENTS DURING 2022/23 AND THE SERVICE LED TO:

- Improvements in safeguarding for vulnerable victims of violence;
- Greater access to support for patients;
- Improvements to staff knowledge, awareness and confidence responding to patients with violence-related injuries.

THE VPT PROVIDES A DESIGNATED RESOURCE WITHIN THE HOSPITAL WHICH IS EXCLUSIVELY FOCUSED ON:

- Identifying patients with injuries caused by violence;
- Engaging these patients and offering support to address their vulnerabilities (e.g. substance misuse, learning difficulties and homelessness);
- Increasing reporting of violent incidents to the police.

IMPROVING ON-SITE RISK

In addition to providing needs-based support to address patient vulnerability, the VPT play a significant role in managing risk within the hospital and community.

Patients who attend the ED with injuries resulting from serious organised crime or gang-related violence can remain at significant risk.



To manage this risk, the VPT will engage with the police and other relevant statutory agencies such as Children's Services to gather information about known associations etc. Once the risk is properly assessed, safeguarding measures - coordinated between the hospital security, on-site police officers and ward staff – are put in place to prevent further harm.





SOUTH WALES: VIOLENCE PREVENTION UNIT TARGETED SUPPORT FOR HIGHER-RISK CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The **Action for Children** community-based caseworker operates in a more targeted way, engaging specifically with patients aged between 11 and 24 who have suffered serious assault injuries. These young individuals are most likely to be involved in organised crime and are at serious risk of being victims of exploitation.

Referrals are made to the caseworker by the hospital-based VPT to ensure the highest-risk children and young people are provided with longer-term, intensive, community-based support.

EVALUATION

A service evaluation of the delivery and implementation of the hospital-based Violence Prevention Team within the University Hospital of Wales was completed by the VPU in October 2021, which concluded that the service had been successfully embedded into the hospital and had established an effective model for responding to patients.

The service had begun to demonstrate positive outcomes, including improved safeguarding, greater access to support for patients, and improvements to staff knowledge, awareness and confidence responding to patients with violence-related injuries.

However, further work is needed to understand the impact of the service on patients, and the cost-benefit of the service to obtain longer-term funding.

SCALING UP

During 2021/22, the **Police and Crime Commissioner, Alun Michael**, was awarded three-year funding from the Home Office 'Teachable Moments Interventions Grant' and 'Youth Endowment Fund' which has helped to:

- Expand the Action for Children Caseworker team at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff, by funding an additional caseworker and a dedicated mental health caseworker in response to increasing levels of youth violence in the city;
- Establish a new Violence Prevention Team at Morriston ED, Swansea, which includes a dedicated, full time Media Academy Cymru (MAC) support practitioner.





HUMBERSIDE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP INTRODUCTION



Police and Crime Commissioners, alongside the APCC have long advocated for further VRU funding, particularly in those areas where the data suggests they are disproportionately affected by serious violence. In January 2022, it was announced that two new VRUs would be set up – one being Humberside. Below is their experience in setting up a new Violence Reduction Unit from scratch.

The Humber Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) is a Home Office-funded Violence Reduction Unit – a multi-agency partnership responsible for leading and co-ordinating the local response to serious violence, using an evidence-based whole-system or “public health” approach.

The Humber VPP was established in 2022, joining 18 existing VRUs in England and Wales.

As a new VRU, Humberside have been able to review best practice and outcomes from the 18 other units which have been established since 2019, it was clear that youth engagement programmes and interventions have made a positive difference in other areas which enabled Humberside to be quick off the mark in commissioning a number of local initiatives, including building on already established schemes to enhance their work. Funding has also been put into ‘Train the Trainer’ programmes to help professionals spot the signs of abuse and sexual violence.

Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner Jonathan Evison said:

“This is the start of a long-term project to tackle and prevent violent crime in our communities. The partnership will seek to identify the root causes of violence and adopt an approach to understanding the factors which lead people to commit violence, whether in the home or the community, and work with them to address their behaviour. It is important that we work to prevent violence from occurring at all, so educational programmes will be developed to engage with young people to steer them away from committing violent crime in the first place. **”**

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

In their first year, **Humber VPP** put in place their partnership arrangements – including a multi-agency Board of senior representatives of core members – and began engagement with young people through their first **‘Hope Hack’** and focus groups.





HUMBERSIDE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

They completed their first Strategic Needs Assessment, drawing on a range of data sources to analyse the causes and extent of serious violence in our area. From this, they agreed a shared definition of serious violence for the Humber area that will be used in their own, and their partners', work, including for the new Serious Violence Duty.

Humber VPP have set out their proposed focus and the framework for their response in their Response Framework. They are using this as the basis for further consultation to develop a more detailed Response Strategy in collaboration with our partners, stakeholders and communities.

During 2022/23 they commissioned 33 different interventions in support of violence prevention – such as sports-based programmes, youth outreach and social skills training. Their commissioned delivery partners recorded over 16,000 engagements with young people through these projects in their first year.

Their evaluation partner, the **University of Hull**, put in place a research team who will work with them and their partners to explore the impact of these interventions – helping to create a better understanding of what works to prevent serious violence.





HUMBERSIDE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

The Humber area is a broad geographical spread of urban and rural communities, four Local Authorities and different health agencies spanning both north and south banks of the Humber Estuary and the two historic counties of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Following the Home Office decision to fund a Humberside VRU in summer 2022, the VRU needed to recruit a small team which was not fully in place until January 2023 and able to start work commissioning programmes and working on the Serious Violence Duty. This meant their first-year funding was a challenge to distribute but they still managed to achieve full grant expenditure. **A lesson learned would be to allow new VRUs to implement their team recruitment and build a structure before funding timescales begin.**

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES (CASE STUDY)

Interventions have included targeted public awareness campaigns on domestic abuse with the aim of supporting victims into services to help them keep safe, encouraging perpetrators to seek help for their controlling behaviours and engaging bystanders to identify and call out those who harm. In addition to seeking to provide a broader societal narrative that no longer allows for the minimisation of violence against women, in any shape or form.

Interventions with young people have seen around £750,000 invested in a variety of programmes engaging with over 2,000 young people. For more information visit: <https://humbervpp.org/news/humber-violence-prevention-partnership-invests-in-local-projects>.

CASE STUDIES

GOOLE YOUTH ACTION – IN YOUR CORNER – VPP FUNDING - £35,000:

This project engages with challenging and vulnerable young people aged 14-18 in the town of Goole, East Yorkshire. The project has a strong Boxing ethos of self-discipline, respect, self-belief, physical and a positive mental health, involving the support of a Boxing Coach, a dedicated Youth link worker and an assistant link worker.

Sam's Story – Sam was referred to the In Your Corner project as they have problems with regulating their emotions and need a way of channeling their angry outbursts.





HUMBERSIDE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

Sam is also socially isolated and benefits from being away from the home so that they have space away from their sibling; the IYC project provides this space.

Sam's parent feels that if Sam cannot control their emotions they may need to be removed from the home and as no other family member will take them in, Sam may become homeless.

Sam has attended all the first four sessions of the project and shown a real interest in Boxing and wanting to better themselves. Sam is learning to control their anger and has not hit their sibling whilst being on the course.



CATZERO IN NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE – VPP FUNDING - £35,000:

This project delivers a personal development programme to young people aged between 18 and 25 to support them away from risk of crime and violence and towards an education, training or employment outcome.

SEB'S STORY:

Seb was referred to CatZero from his Doorstep support worker in January 2023. Seb comes from a background of crime after being involved with gangs and being arrested for assault. He moved out of the family home at 15 and did spend a short amount of time homeless before receiving help from Doorstep. Since moving to Grimsby in 2021 he has kept himself out of trouble and was very keen to better himself for his future and decided he would like to have a go at the Programme.

During the programme Seb has completed and achieved 3 qualifications, successfully moved into his own flat and greatly improved in his confidence and ability to be in large groups of people. Seb's social anxiety has been an issue for him but working with the personal development team and the other members of the group he now feels much better about being in these situations and feels more trusting of others.





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HUMBERSIDE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

Seb has really settled into the group well and has made some great friends. The difference in his self-confidence since the beginning of the programme is huge and he is very proud of the changes he has made.

The main goal for Seb moving forward is to go on to do his English and Maths qualifications as he missed out on these due to his previous lifestyle. The team will continue to support Seb to do this once this programme ends.

CONTACT

For more information on the Humber Violence Prevention Partnership visit: www.humbervpp.org or email: humbervpp@humberside.police.uk to talk to the team.





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LANCASHIRE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK



LANCASHIRE
VIOLENCE REDUCTION
NETWORK

INTRODUCTION

LANCASHIRE'S EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT NAVIGATOR PROGRAMME, TRAUMA INFORMED AWARENESS TRAINING AND CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME

The Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN) proactively targets removing knives from the streets with increased enforcement in hotspot areas, but also using prevention programmes such as the **Emergency Department Navigator programme** in hospital A&Es, **trauma informed awareness training** and the **Champions programme** in partnership with football club community trusts.

From the start of the Network in 2019, through to Lancashire's OPCC securing £5m in 2022 to continue the work of the LVRN into 2025, the benefit of bringing together partners to proactively solve problems, support communities and prevent victims has been clear to see.

Whether it's proactive targeting to remove knives from our streets, increased enforcement in hotspot areas, work with offenders to break the cycle that ends them back in the criminal justice system, or prevention programmes working with young people, the LVRN will continue to play an important role as we work to cut violent crime and make our streets safer.





LANCASHIRE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK

Andrew Snowden, Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire, said:

“ As Commissioner, I have made tackling serious violence and key factors such as organised crime and domestic abuse, priorities within my Fighting Crime Plan.

“ The role of the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN) has been integral in identifying core issues and delivering the right interventions, backed up by robust enforcement. **”**

WHAT IS THE APPROACH AND HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

Lancashire's Violence Reduction Network (LVRN) consists of a collaboration of specialists who bring partners and organisations across Lancashire together to better understand why violence occurs and to take action to prevent it.

The LVRN takes a community-led approach to violence reduction and specifically works with partners and communities to tackle the root causes and address the risk factors that increase the likelihood of somebody becoming an offender or victim of serious violence.

THE LVRN RECENTLY PUBLISHED ITS 2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT WHICH SHOWED:

- 55% reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object.
- Homicides reduced.
- Over 1,000 young people reached through the Champions programme in partnership with Lancashire's football club community trusts.
- Over 3,000 people reached through the Emergency Department Navigator programme to help people cope and recover from their experience of violence.

There have been reductions in a number of the key areas of violent crime across Lancashire, including in identified hotspot areas. There have been huge uptakes amongst the workforce in trauma informed awareness training regarding the impact of trauma on citizens and our staff. Some amazing outcomes have been achieved by the young people engaging with programmes and this is the result of the hard work of the LVRN, Lancashire Constabulary, partner organisations and our communities who are working tirelessly to keep young people safe and to educate them on the devastating consequences of serious violence.



LANCASHIRE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK

The LVRN draws on the best available evidence-base, but also embeds evaluation into each workstream to monitor and test interventions locally. During 2022/23, the LVRN developed an evaluation action plan which collates the learning and recommendations from all evaluations in a single source. This helps to better act on the findings and apply the learning in practice to tailor the approach and achieve the best possible outcomes for creating a safer Lancashire.

Led by data, LVRN have identified specific hotspot areas across the county. Working in a place-based way means that they understand what the priorities are in each area and can specifically target local areas with an intensive approach. Priorities in these hotspot areas include mentoring programmes, increased policing activity, education programmes and implementation of positive role models in the community.



KEY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNT

The LVRN is currently preparing sustainability plans and commissioning based on the knowledge that LVRN will receive a reduced grant for each of the next two years. They will be reviewing evaluations and seeking feedback from partners in order to decide how programmes will be mainstreamed at the end of the life of the current funding allocation in March 2025.

A further challenge has been securing effective interventions to have long-lasting impact, due to the short-term nature of annual grant funding.



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LANCASHIRE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK

Lessons can be learnt from engagement with communities and young people to establish priorities. Due to timescales and internal processes, LVRN have previously faced challenges in engaging individuals with lived experience in initial strategy planning which is something that has remained at the forefront of planning and is being continuously improved on.

EVALUATION/EARLY OUTCOMES



CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME:

- Lancashire Champions Adult Project has reached 414 young people aged 18-25.
- Lancashire Champions Youth Project has reached 594 young people under the age of 18.

(**Note:** The figures below are taken from quarter 1 to quarter 3 of the 2022/23 financial year.)

RECENT EVALUATIONS CARRIED OUT BY ARC FOUND:

- Champions coaches felt supported by football trust managers and staff from Champions.
- Coaches collect routine client outcome data about housing, finances, benefits, wellbeing, volunteering and community activities. Information on re-offending is not currently collected but it is suggested this could be done manually. Partner professionals also recognised 'softer' outcomes, citing for example the value in Champions building meaningful relationships, positive role modelling and support attending appointments.
- Communication and collaboration between police and football trust staff could be improved by raising awareness of the Champions programme, including clearly articulating the role of coaches and how they will be working with clients.

CASE STUDY (1):

Watch how the programme works in one of the local football community trusts and how it has helped Emmie here: **Champions programme helps young people improve their confidence, behaviour and attitude - Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (lancsvrn.co.uk)**.





LANCASHIRE: VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK

CASE STUDY (2):

Initial assessment: Client has been diagnosed with learning difficulties, when he came to the programme, he was very shy and did not talk much. He had been punching the door and wall at home. Came to the Champions programme after taking a knife into school and setting fire to a property with friends. Father had died when he was younger.

How Champions helped them: The client enjoys physical activity and wanted to attend school but found it hard to do so. Over the space of a few weeks, the mentor had many phone calls and visited the house to get him out of bed and to school (first building block on the road of trust and the client believing someone was there for him and to listen to him). After a while, he would be up and ready and the mentor would take him to school, on the way this gave the mentor a chance to reinforce with him the need to be open and honest as this transparent approach would help the mentor to support him and understand his frustrations. The client started a bespoke, private football session, which gave the mentor a chance to engage and talk to him openly whilst having fun. The mentor raised the clients plight to move from a temporary school placement to a different school during a local MASP meeting and he was offered a place at a different school as a result.

Where are they now: The client now attends a different school regularly and is full of smiles. He is enjoying 1:1 coaching and reports feeling listened to. He is also attending a boxing course and receiving mentoring for behaviourally issues so he can work on taking responsibility for his actions and make better informed choices.

NEXT STEPS

The LVRN will continue supporting the fight against crime in Lancashire, with the funding secured by the Commissioner until Spring 2025.

Tackle Violence Together | Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (lancsvrn.co.uk)

CONTACT

Email: commissioner@lancashire-pcc.gov.uk for further information.





In Focus: Innovative & Effective Approaches to Tackling Serious Violence

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