



**Title: Serious Violence Duty – Strategy and Strategic Needs Assessment**

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**To:** Kent Community Safety Partnership Board

**Classification:** For Information

The paper provides a summary of the findings of the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and the strategy that was agreed by the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board. The Kent Community Safety Partnership are asked to NOTE the contents of the report.

**1. Introduction.**

- 1.1 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 ('the PCSC Act') received Royal Assent in April 2022. Part 2 of the PCSC Act creates a requirement for specified authorities to collaborate and plan to reduce or prevent serious violence. The Duty requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence:
- Chief Officers of Police for police areas in England and Wales
  - Probation Services
  - Youth Offending Teams
  - All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales
  - Integrated Care Boards in England
  - Local authorities including district councils and county councils
- 1.2 The arrangements for how the collaboration and planning would be delivered were agreed by the specified authorities in April 2023. All the named authorities with the exception of Gravesham Borough Council agreed to establish a Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board (SVPP Board) to be chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Gravesham Borough Council chose to deliver their arrangements through their Community Safety Partnership at which all specified authorities are represented.
- 1.3 The SVPP Board agreed a definition of serious violence which is, 'Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, robbery and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent such as in domestic abuse, sexual offences, gangs, county lines and drug supply'.
- 1.4 In January 2024 the Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence were discussed and agreed by the SVPP Board. The needs assessment was based on data from all contributing specified authorities and used a three-year data set to identify the patterns and trends relating to serious violence included within the definition agreed by the Board. The strategy agreed was for the period 2024 – 2027..





## 2. Finding of the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA).

- 2.1 The VRU led the work on the SNA which was divided into sections due to the different data that was required for the different areas of concern. In addition to the SNA for the county, each Community Safety Partnership received a bespoke analysis of public place serious violence provided by the VRU analysts.

### Public Place Serious Violence

- 2.2 Public place serious violence fell by 5% in the 12 months up to the end of the SNA, and for those aged under 25 the reduction was 9.2%. This type of violence is unevenly spread across the County, with districts along the North and East coastline of the county generally experienced higher levels of serious violence than those in South and West Kent, although Maidstone had the fifth highest levels of serious violence. There were peaks in violence between 3 – 4 pm, 6 – 8 pm and during Night Time Economy hours of 11 pm – midnight.
- 2.3 The main types of serious violence that were recorded are: violence with injury; robbery; knives and weapons; violence linked to drug supply.
- 2.4 The majority of suspects (74%) and victims (64%) were male. The peak age at which suspects of serious violence were identified was 17 and those aged 10 – 25 are over-represented in the data. The numbers of adults involved in knife or weapon related violence fell but there was not a similar decrease in children.

### Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse

- 2.5 The SNA did not include Domestic Abuse as the work was being undertaken by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive, although their findings helped inform the work of the SVPP Board. The SNA did include sexual violence that excluded Domestic Abuse.
- 2.6 The volume of reported sexual violence fell by 11% in 2022 – 23 when compared to the previous year. The majority of suspects (90%) were male and the majority of victims (82%) were female. There was insufficient data to identify the relationship between the suspect and victim.
- 2.7 The needs assessment identified that the victims were primarily girls of school age with the exception of rape offences which had a higher age profile. Suspects were primarily boys of school age. Analysis from the National Police Chiefs' Council published in January 2024 identifies that more than half of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation offences were committed by children against other children.
- 2.8 There were key times of year when sexual violence increased which were in January, June and September. These months are times when there are significant events in the education calendar which suggests a possible line of enquiry as to why the increases occur.





### Voice of Young People

- 2.9 Young people gave their feedback to the VRU Participation Worker on their experiences of violence. Their feedback included that they knew places local to them which were unsafe, and highlighted some transport hubs, high streets and parks as being of particular concern. They also identified that they felt unsafe when being around groups of men, and girls in particular felt unsafe due to the language or behaviour of groups.
- 2.10 Young people wanted to have more adults in locations as this would make them feel safer, and for adults to set a good example for others through their behaviour in public. They also asked that parents should be helped to be better parents as this would allow them to help their children navigate through life without using violence.

### **3. Serious Violence Strategy**

- 3.1 The Serious Violence strategy that will be led by the SVPP Board was agreed in January 2024. The strategy has three key strands which are:
- Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse
  - Serious Youth Violence which consider public place violence involving those aged under 25
  - Violence linked to drugs and alcohol
- 3.2 Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse will focus primarily on sexual violence, and will link with the Domestic Abuse strategy to support work taking place led by the Domestic Abuse leads in Kent and Medway. The work on sexual violence will focus on:
- Improving the access to and sharing of data across the Serious Violence Partnership through the best use of technology to analyse and respond to the levels and distribution of sexual violence amongst young people
  - Understanding the drivers behind sexual violence amongst adolescents and finding solutions to reduce the volume of incidents and harm experienced by young people
  - Developing better ways of communicating with young people so that they can challenge or report unacceptable behaviour or language:
- 3.3 Serious Youth Violence will identify how violence can be prevented through understanding and responding to different risk factors. These are:
- Individual and relationships – families and parenting; employment and training; early identification and support
  - Community – safe community environments; schools and education; safe activities and trusted adults
  - Society – promoting positive social norms and values
- 3.4 Violence linked to drugs and alcohol has links with the Combatting Drugs strategies led by Public Health in Kent and Medway, and with the Police activity in tackling County Lines and in hotspots of violence. The Police receive GRIP funding from the Home Office to





tackle hotspots of violence and the work will align with their plans that are due to be submitted to the Home Office by 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The four areas of work are:

- Using evidence-based policing approaches to reduce the risk of violence in places where violence is a concern, and ensuring partners are involved to maximise the impact of a visible community-based approach
- Identifying those with drug or alcohol addictions who are involved in violent crime
- Breaking drug supply chains
- identify the parents who are misusing alcohol or drugs and where there may be violence in the home and collaborate with Public Health and other partners to seek treatment and support for those identified.

3.5 The Board has identified leads for each strand who are currently developing detailed plans which will inform and shape the work to deliver against the strategic aims. Plans are anticipated to be in place by June 2024 and will be dependant on the SVPP Board leads to agree and sign off the individual plans.

The Kent Community Safety Partnership are asked to NOTE the contents of this report.

