



Title: Serious Violence Duty Update

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The paper provides a summary of the strategy that was agreed by the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board and progress against the action plan. 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'. In January 2024 the Serious Violence strategy was discussed and agreed by the SVPP Board.





2. Serious Violence Strategy

2.1 The strategy has three key strands which are:

- Sexual Violence
- Serious Youth Violence which consider public place violence involving those aged under 25
- Violence linked to drugs and alcohol

2.2 Sexual Violence The Board lead for the work is Kent Police.

The levels of sexual violence have fallen compared to the two previous years. The main cohorts of concern are unchanged: girls aged 10 – 17 remain the highest proportion of victims of sexual violence and suspects of concern are primarily boys aged 12 – 18. The offences of sexual assault, rape and exposure make up 50% of all sexual violence.

The VRU and SVPP Board have worked with children and young adults to understand how they are affected by sexual violence and their feedback has helped inform the preventative work of the partnership. Children were involved in the design and launch of the 'Don't Disrespect' campaign in February 2025. The campaign raises awareness of the extent of harassment of girls and women and shows how boys and men can act to challenge their friends and peers. The film has been viewed more than 15,000 times since the launch and the website contains resources for professionals to use in discussion with young people about harassment.

Sexual violence leads from the specified authorities have been agreed. These leads will use the data and young people's feedback to agree additional actions to tackle or prevent sexual violence.

2.3 Serious Youth Violence. The Board lead is Kent County Council.

The work has seven key areas of focus which are data sharing through an online platform, families and parenting, employment and training, early identification and support, safe community environments, schools and education, and safe activities and trusted adults.

There has been progress in tackling public place serious youth violence. The VRU performance data for January shows that knife enabled serious violence has reduced in the last 12 months, with noticeable reductions for children and young adults aged 18 – 24. The overall levels of serious violence for those aged under 25 are at their lowest point since 2019 apart from periods of lockdown.

The SVPP Board met on November 5th to review progress against the Serious Youth Violence action plan. The majority of areas are on track to be delivered by March 2025, and the areas where additional activity is required are to improve engagement with parents to understand their needs, to further develop adolescent parenting courses to allow parents to support





their children as well as they can, and to develop employment opportunities for young adults through sport.

2.4 Violence linked to drugs and alcohol The Board lead is Medway Council.

The work on this strand was delayed following the death of the Medway Board representative, James Williams, earlier this year. Medway Public Health have recently agreed a plan to work with partners to capture the information below and use it to make proposals to the Board

- identify strategies, priorities, resources, and system governance that already seeks to achieve the same aims.
- Develop an evidence-based, system response with clear, shared and measurable objectives
- Understand the links between drugs, alcohol and violence.

3. Future Planning

3.1 The Government has stated a commitment to a 'Young Futures' strategy which includes a pledge to halve knife crime and to create Young Futures Hubs for adolescents. Areas with VRUs are required to establish a Young Futures Prevention Partnership by July 2025 and, by October 2025, establish at least one operational panel that targets support to children with risk factors linked to violence but who are not open to statutory services. The work will be used by the Home Office to develop national guidance in advance of Prevention Partnerships being rolled out across England and Wales.

3.2 The VRU have had funding confirmed for the year 2025 – 26. The Home Office expect the VRU to maintain its core function (to lead and co-ordinate the local response to serious violence, adopting a 'whole system' or 'public health' approach to violence prevention.) Strategic priority issues remain unchanged: multi-agency systems leadership; use of evidence and evaluation; and the effective sharing of data between partners.

3.3 The VRU are required to lead the work on establishing Prevention Partnerships and testing the operational panels. In addition VRUs are asked prepare to deliver the Public Health approach across a wider range of functions which may include Violence Against women and Girls or Anti-Social Behaviour.

3.4 At the time of writing the report the structure of the VRU and the services to be commissioned have yet to be finalised with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

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

