



**Title:** Serious Violence Duty Update

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**Classification:** Unclassified

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, except for 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: '*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 considers public place violence involving those aged under 25
- Violence linked to drugs and alcohol

## 3. SVD Updated Guidance 2026/2027

3.1 A summary of updates is as follows:

Area	Last Year	This Year
Scope of Violence	Focus on traditional offences	Expanded to include emerging trends
Partnership Roles	General expectations	Clearer, more specific roles
Data Requirements	Basic reporting	Enhanced, real-time data use
Community Engagement	Limited	Increased emphasis
Prevention Focus	Some mention	Stronger focus, more examples
Accountability	Annual reports	Continuous monitoring and evaluation
Legal Alignment	Previous legislation	Reflects latest laws and policies

## 4. Serious Violence Strategy Key Strand Updates

4.1 **Sexual Violence** - The Board lead for the work is Kent Police.

- The VRU Strategic Needs Assessment displays that Rape, Sexual Assault and Non-Contact sexual offences have fallen.
- In total, **sexual violence has fallen by 16%**.
- Most suspects are male aged between 13 and 17.
- Most victims are female aged between 10 and 17.
- Peaks in sexual violence occur in January, May and June.
- Rape and sexual offences often increase during major holidays and social gatherings, such as Christmas, Spring and Summer.
- Exposure offences increase in the May to September months.





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.

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.

#### 4.2 **Serious Youth Violence** - The Board lead is Kent County Council.

- The VRU Strategic Needs Assessment displays that **knife enabled serious violence for under 18s has reduced by -22.9%. For 18–25-year-olds, it has reduced by -4.5%.**
- Reductions have been seen in: Aggravated burglary Homicide Public Order Rape (knife/firearm, stranger, drink spike) Robbery (personal) Violence with injury (assault with injury) Violence with injury (assault with intent to cause serious harm).
- Over the last two years clear reductions in volumes of serious violence made savings to the criminal justice system and police of in cases of violence with injury £3,743,933.55 in cases of robbery (personal) £1,569,680.37.

#### 4.3 **Violence linked to drugs and alcohol** - The Board lead is Medway Council.

Serious violence associated with drug use and supply chains is complex, violence associated with alcohol use is all too common. The causes and opportunities to tackle it fall outside the remit of any single agency, but an evidence based collaborative approach is likely to achieve the greatest impact to prevent it. This work is being led by Medway's Public Health team, and they are supported by all specified authorities in the Serious Violence Duty.

The aim of the strategy, starting in Medway, is to 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.

### 5. **Future Planning**

#### 5.1 **Young Futures Pilot** - The current lead is the Violence Reduction Unit.

The pilot aims to identify vulnerable children who could be at risk of permanent exclusion or entering the criminal justice system. The pilot has operated in 2 schools within Medway. It receives referrals directly from schools and Police databases. A panel comprising of VRU, Police, Youth Justice, NHS, school leads, and Kent Fire and Rescue meet to assess the children's needs and offer programmes specific to the child's interests and needs. Support is trauma-informed and progress tracked by VRU coordinators. A 'Connect and Discover' event





was hosted at a Medway school, bringing together Commissioned Services and partners within the Local Authority, to promote the pilot and gain key insights into the local offers to support our children and young people. Funding will continue into 2026-2027 and expansion of the scheme is intended.

- 5.2 The VRU's funding has been confirmed for the year 2026-2027. The VRU will continue to use a data-led and evaluation-based approach to reducing serious youth violence. This year will focus on improving efficiencies and eliminating duplication of provisions across the county.
- 5.3 At the time of writing the report the services to be commissioned by the VRU have yet to be finalised with the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 5.4 For more information about the work of the VRU, please visit our website <https://kentandmedwayvru.co.uk> :



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