



Title: Response to the Serious Violence duty from specified authorities

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The paper outlines the work of the specified authorities to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence duty and the findings from the Violence Reduction Unit's Strategic Needs Assessment of March 2023. The Board are asked to note to 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 specified authorities are:
- 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 Duty requires specified authorities to work together through an agreed partnership arrangement. The purpose of the collaboration is to plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence, and to prepare and implement a shared strategy. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their strategy.
- 1.3 The specified authorities were required to confirm the partnership arrangement to the Home Office in March 2023, and must publish both a Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy by January 31st 2024. The authorities confirmed the partnership arrangement to the Home Office in March 2023 and details of the arrangement are listed below.
- 1.4 The key performance indicators which have been set by the Home Office are:
- a reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object.





- a reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police.
- a reduction in homicides recorded by the police.

2. Response to the requirements of the Serious Violence duty

- 2.1 Representatives of the specified authorities and the Police and Crime Commissioner met in February 2023 to discuss the response to the duty. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has responsibilities as the receiver of funding for the duty from the Home Office and the oversight and reporting responsibilities that are associated with the funding. The PCC will use his convening powers for the local partnership arrangements for the Duty to chair a Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (SVPP) Board with representatives from the specified authorities.
- 2.2 The specified authorities agreed a definition of serious violence for the purposes of the duty 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.*
- 2.3 The February meeting agreed that Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are the local partnership model for discharging the Serious Violence Duty. Each CSP is required to produce a strategy to tackle crime and disorder which includes serious violence within their district or borough, and these strategies will reflect the needs of the local communities. Individual CSPs have agreed either to meet the requirements of the duty through the SVPP Board or at a district level through their community safety partnership.
- 2.4 The initial meeting of the Serious Violence Partnership Prevention Board was held on 30th June 2023.

3. Public place Serious Violence

- 3.1 The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) published a strategic needs assessment (SNA) of public place serious violence in March 2023. The SNA is a grant requirement for all 20 VRUs in England and Wales and is published annually. The Kent and Medway assessment includes bespoke analysis of serious violence at the district or borough level and supports the CSPs in their strategic planning to prevent violence.
- 3.2 Separate needs assessments for domestic abuse (DA) are produced by Kent County Council and Medway Council. The Councils have a legal requirement under section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act to assess the need for support for victims of domestic abuse





and their children who may need to access safe accommodation. Findings from the DA needs assessments are not included within this paper.

3.3 Key findings from the VRU needs assessment include:

- Public place serious violence remains lower than that was seen in the county pre-pandemic, and violence linked to the night time economy has reduced when compared to the previous year.
- Those aged between ten and twenty four are disproportionately involved in serious violence either as victims or suspects of the offences. Eighty five percent of the suspects are male and eighty one percent of the victims are male. There were 298 individuals who experienced twenty percent of the harm. The key offence types are robbery, knife or weapon enabled crime, violence with injury and violence linked to drug supply. Violence against women and girls is a priority shared with Kent Police.
- There was a disproportionate increase in the numbers of children involved in knife enabled serious violence when compared to adults.
- Incidents of serious violence are spread unequally across the County and often coincide with urban or coastal areas of deprivation. The most frequent times when violence occurs are 3 – 4pm, 6 – 8pm and 11pm – midnight.

4. Strategic Priorities for 2023 - 24

- 4.1 The Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (SVPP) Board has agreed to commission a strategic needs assessment that is led by the VRU which will include public place serious violence, domestic abuse and sexual abuse. The assessment will be completed by December 2023 and will use data from all specified authorities. The SNA will be available to all CSPA to support localised strategic planning for 2024 – 25.
- 4.2 The specified authorities have agreed to develop a data sharing platform which will allow user generated reporting and analysis of serious violence. The platform will use data from Police, Local Authorities, Probation and other contributing partners. The first phase of the platform has commenced and will, if successful, allow users to analyse violence in locations. The estimated date for completion is September 2023. The second phase of the work will allow analysis of person level data held by agencies but has not yet passed all information governance requirements and no start date has been set.
- 4.3 The Board has commissioned a report to understand the links between multi-agency boards where the causes of violence are considered, and for recommendations to be made on how the SVPP Board can enhance the activity of existing boards. The report will inform the Terms of Reference for the SVPP Board.
- 4.4 The VRU has the following priorities:





- Knife crime including where injury is caused, knife enabled robbery and possession. The VRU will improve analysis of individuals who are repeat offenders or where risks are emerging, develop the active bystander approach to encourage peers to act to keep their friends safe, teach street aid first aid skills to young people, and develop resources for schools and parents.
- Locations and afternoon/evening violence. The VRU will fund community sport to be delivered in hotspots and high harm locations and use a multi-agency focussed deterrence approach to tackle gangs and Young Street Groups.
- Individuals at risk of exploitation will be offered mentoring, A & E navigators will work in Medway and Ashford to support those who have been injured, and CBT will be funded for young people affected by violence.
- Participation. The VRU will work to ensure that children and parents' voices are heard, fund a Community Conferencing service to work with communities affected by violence. Young people have reported that they are affected by misogyny and sexualised language which are making places unsafe for girls, that some transport hubs are unsafe spaces for them, and young people are helping to create resource on how to be an active bystander and a good friend as part of the VRU work.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Board is asked to note the contents of the report and to support the actions from the Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board.

