



Title: Serious Violence Duty – Strategy and Strategic Needs Assessment

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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* '.
- 1.4 In January 2024 the Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence strategy 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. Serious Violence Strategy

- 2.1 The Serious Violence strategy 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
- 2.2 Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse The Board lead for the work is Kent Police. The work for 2024 – 25 focusses 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 includes:
- Consultation with children and young people about their experiences of sexual violence and public place harassment. The findings and recommendations from the work are currently being considered by the SVPP Board before being made available to the wider partnership
 - A public awareness campaign is being designed using the voices of children. The campaign, provisionally titled 'Respect for Girls' will highlight their experiences in public spaces and identify how boys and men can challenge the behaviour of their peers.
 - 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 September 2024 shows that:

- For those aged under 25 there has been a reduction in serious violence of around 9% compared to the previous year.
- For those aged under 18 there has been a reduction in serious violence of around 12% compared to the previous year.

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 and have commissioned an organisation to carry out research that will support a better understanding of the links between drugs, alcohol and violence.
- 2.5 The Board has commissioned a refresh of the existing strategic needs assessment. The work is currently underway and will be ready for the Board meeting in January 2025. The work will include an update on the analysis of sexual violence and public place violence, and a deeper analysis of violence linked to knives and weapons.

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. The recent budget made reference to these being included within the budget settlement for the Home Office for 2025 – 26. The Home Office have consulted on what a Violence Prevention Partnership might comprise and at what level such a partnership should sit. There is currently no further detail or date by when any decision will be made or guidance shared by the Home Office.
- 3.2 The current funding for the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the PCC's Serious Violence Duty project officer expires in March 2025. The SVPP Board have been asked to consider what arrangements they wish to have in place from April 2025 should there be no further funding from the Home Office. The Serious Violence Duty places a requirement on specified authorities to agree a multi-agency partnership which will oversee and govern the response to serious violence, and to agree and monitor a strategy that is informed by a needs assessment.

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

