

## **Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner**

**Topic:** Serious Violence

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### **Purpose of briefing**

To provide information to the PCC on national policies and local responses to serious violence concerns. This document links to briefings on drug policy and child exploitation, domestic abuse, sexual violence, and youth justice.

### **Background**

In 2018 the Government published its serious violence strategy (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>) in response to evidenced increases in knife and gun crime and homicides. The programme of work covers a range of Government departments and partners in the public, voluntary and private sector. The strategy has four key areas of development, namely:

- Tackling County lines and misuse of drugs
- Early intervention and prevention
- Supporting communities and local partnership
- Effective law enforcement.

Significant funding was made available to support the development of violence reduction units in those areas demonstrating the highest evidenced increases. Initial findings suggest that there are some positive results from those areas which were funded but the pilot is not yet concluded to provide definitive recommendations going forward. Northumbria PCC is our closest example of a developed violence reduction unit.

### **Lessons learnt**

There is recognition throughout the strategy that the prevention of serious violence is not just a criminal justice matter; early intervention is identified as key to reducing future violent behaviours and therefore moving forward it is imperative that the response is balanced between prevention and effective law enforcement

In the local area there is documented evidence of an increase in violence ( particularly among young females) however this is not as serious as in some other areas nationally. The youth intervention fund in 2020 enabled the development of VISIT, a diversionary project, similar to the adult checkpoint programme. It identifies those young people on the cusp of criminal activity for violent offences and offers an intense intervention as an alternative to entering the Criminal Justice System.

A further round of intervention funding will be made available early this year and alongside other funding streams, such as the Community Integrated care fund encourages preventative work at an even earlier stage.

### **Current issues**

Tackling serious violence is a high national priority at the present time and there is ever increasing concern. Locally the apparent move to prevention is welcomed and there are opportunities to bring

together several workstreams through increased partnership working. Suggested areas of focus include targeting of those children excluded from school at a young age, the siblings of those known to the youth justice services, children of parents currently in custody and greater involvement with schools.

The Serious Violence Duty has been introduced as part of the Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill on 9 March, alongside Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs) and Homicide Reviews. This is a key part of the Government's wider programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence; taking a whole-system approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence. It requires organisations to work together to plan; sharing data, intelligence and knowledge to generate evidence-based analysis of the problem and solutions. Authorities subject to the duty are the police, local authorities, youth offending teams, probation and fire and rescue.

The Home Office have recognised the pivotal role which PCCs can play by giving priority to this area of work in their police and crime plans as well as promoting good partnership working.

### **Decisions needed**

As an OPCVC we already have excellent partnership relationships with our two local Youth Justice services and are active members of their strategic management boards. In addition, we have engagement with other partners through our two local community safety partnerships and local criminal justice Board. Decisions will be needed as to the ongoing support the OPCVC provides to these partnership arrangements to meet the requirements of the proposed duty as well as extending the early intervention model.

### **Partnership involvement**

Authorities subject to the serious violence duty are the police, local authorities, youth offending teams, probation and fire and rescue. Duty holders will be expected to work together to establish the local problem profile and strategic needs assessment. They will be expected to develop and publish a local strategy which will outline the collective action they intend to take and how the partnership will work together.

### **Police involvement**

As highlighted the police are an identified authority subject to the proposed duty as well as on safeguarding boards and community safety partnerships. Durham Constabulary has evidenced a commitment to prevention and problem solving

### **People to meet**

All local criminal justice partner leads have a contribution to make to this agenda as well as heads of the local authority, public health, and other health commissioners.