Bath and North East Somerset

Violence Reduction Unit Response Plan

March 2020

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Foreword:

"Serious violence destroys lives. Its repercussions span beyond those *immediately affected to subsequent generations*". (Home Office Serious Violence Strategy 2018).

This Serious and Violent Crime Plan has been produced by the Violence Reduction Unit on behalf of the Bath and North East Somerset Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership. It sets out the plans and actions that the Partnership will undertake in response to the Serious Violence in B&NES profile (March 2020) which analyses the risk, prevalence and harm of serious violence in our area.

It is our response to the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy 2018, which supports a balance between prevention and effective law enforcement with a focus on the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence.

This plan addresses local findings through qualitative and quantitative research, responds to the Behavioural Insights Team report 'Developing a Serious Violence Strategy for Avon and Somerset' and supports the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Avon and Somerset Serious Crime Strategy aiming to bring together organisations from across the force area to discuss challenges, approaches and solutions to keep communities safe.

This plan has been developed by the Violence Reduction Unit steering group, a multi-agency group of partners across Bath & North East Somerset, (see appendix 2, VRU: membership).

We are grateful to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in Avon and Somerset for the grant funding of the Violence Reduction Unit in this local authority area.

Agencies across B&NES are committed to working closely together; by taking action now we can protect the most vulnerable people in our communities from becoming victims and we can find solutions to support those people at risk of being drawn into serious violence.

1. Our ambition

To support:

The Government's Serious Violence Strategy which aims to tackle serious violent crime on a national level.

and

The Police & Crime Commissioner's Serious Violence Strategy for Avon & Somerset which aims to draw on lessons and evidence from other areas to thoroughly understand serious violence in the regional context.

To develop:

A B&NES wide approach to early help and intervention, serious violence avoidance and prevention which will inform policy development, partnership working and evidence-based commissioning.

2. Defining serious violence, the national picture

National funding for Violence Reduction Units is designed to reduce serious violence, yet what constitutes "serious violence" is left undefined. The success measures for the national programme are reductions in:

- a) hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25;
- b) knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25, based on police recorded crime data;
- c) all non-domestic homicides and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives.

The term "serious violence" is most often used to describe crimes resulting in some of the highest harm, least frequently occurring violent crimes which result in serious harm or injury. According to the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy, this description includes homicide, knife crime, gun crime, and robbery.

In a report for the Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, the Behavioural Insights Team included more serious violence against the person and sexual offences, along with domestic violence, and any violent offences involving a knife.

3. Defining Serious Violence in Bath & North East Somerset

The extent of the four offence types recognised in the national strategy is limited in B&NES. Given this, and as indicated by our data, we are likely to adopt a broader definition of serious violence than those adopted by the Home Office and the Business Insights Team report.

The definition we have been using in B&NES includes violence against the person, possession of knives, robbery, serious sexual offences and domestic violence. Except where explicitly noted, we exclude certain offences - these include harassment / stalking and driving offences. However, given the comparatively low figures for serious violence against the person offences at local authority level, noting our increasing trend re: sexual offence, public order and young persons violent offences, and, in keeping with our focus on prevention, we include offences of exploitation, as well as some lower-level violence such as common assault and battery. This recognised that the seriousness of violence also needs to take account of the harmed person's views.

The B&NES Violence Reduction Unit acknowledges that some people have been both perpetrators and victims / survivors of serious violence.

4. Summary of serious violence offending trends in B&NESthe context.

B&NES has a lower overall rate of recorded offences relative to its population than the national average. However, certain serious violence offence groups have risen sharply over the past 4-5 years, e.g. robbery and serious sexual offences. There have been significant rises in personal robbery, rape, and different forms of assault.

Serious violence is concentrated in Bath city centre, although there are signs of an increasing spill over into Keynsham, Twerton and Somer Valley. This is reflected in health data, with a large proportion of those attending Accident & Emergency department for knife injuries being registered with GPs outside of Bath City Centre. These geographical locations of serious violence are also reflected through focus groups and semi structured interviews with people aged under 25, although these under 25s' perception of unsafe places includes play parks and locations with lack of lighting. Twerton and Whiteway areas were highlighted as places where they feel unsafe, through perceptions of drug supply / use and previous incidents in these areas.

Bath city centre was flagged as the second most mentioned unsafe area in the individual under 25s interviews, reflecting our data. Suggestions of improved monitoring related to the city centre and the bus station.

An under 25s focus groups noted that their experiences of interactions with police have left them less likely to approach police officers. However, policing was the most mentioned way of improving safety by the young people who acknowledged that a positive relationship between officers and young people would create a better environment and develop trust with the police.

Victims of knife crime arriving at hospital are concentrated in the 25-34 age bracket and are overwhelmingly male. Most young violent offenders are aged between 15 and 17 and are also almost entirely male. Dependant on circumstances, threats to kill, rape, and less serious assaults are most commonly tagged as relating to domestic abuse. Robberies and assaults such as grievous bodily harm and malicious wounding are most commonly tagged as relating to weapons.

Robberies are concentrated in the after-school period, as are knife attendances at the Royal United Hospital Accident and Emergency Department. In contrast, violence and knife *admissions* are concentrated in the early hours of the morning, possibly suggesting links to the night-time economy and/or domestic violence.

A low proportion of serious violent offences lead to charge/summons. Victims are often refusing further action in violence against the person cases, robberies often result in no suspect being found, serious sexual offences face significant evidential barriers in proceeding towards formal action.

After long-term decreases, recorded crime has risen by 37 per cent since 2014. This has been driven by increases in sexual, public order, and violence offences, though changes to recording and reporting practices may have played a role.

5. Types of serious violent crime – the local picture

Violence against the person

Accounted for almost a third of recorded crime in B&NES in the year ending September 2019, with violence without injury making up the biggest share. This mirrors national proportions, but at lower rates.

Robbery and serious sexual offences

Violence against the person, robbery and serious sexual offences have all seen significant increases since 2014/15, although this increase has steadied or reversed over the last year.

Common assault and personal robbery

The most common violence and robbery offences are common assault and personal robbery respectively. Amongst more serious offences, there were 45 'threat to kill' offences and 32 'malicious wounding' offences in the last year.

Violence amongst children and young people

Overall trends in violence amongst the child and young person cohort match trends for the cohort at large. Knife offences have increased significantly over the last two years, with a smaller proportion of offenders now responsible for a larger proportion of offences.

Geographical locations of violence

Violence against the person is concentrated in Bath City Centre, Keynsham and Somer Valley. Increases have also been seen in these areas in the last year, as well as in Bath City West, Peasedown & Chew Valley.

Robbery

Robbery is most prevalent in Bath City Centre. However, this area has seen a decrease in offending over the last year, suggesting a spilling out of offending into other areas such as Somer Valley.

Knife offences

In the child and young persons' population, the majority of violent and or knife offences over the last year were committed by those aged between 15 and 17. Males were responsible for most of these offences, and all robbery and sexual offences, over the last six years.

Domestic abuse

The most common forms of violence predominantly relate to domestic incidents signalling a high level of domestic abuse. Our data indicates that domestic violence incidents most often occur in the evenings and at weekends; half of domestic violence incidents are believed to take place on the street, and domestic violence itself is particularly concentrated in urban wards. Recent data indicates a strong association between levels of domestic violence and levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

Most domestic violence cases take the form of violence against the person. Offenders are predominantly ex-intimate or current male partners, under 34 years of age and possessing a high incidence of mental ill health, alcohol and substance misuse issues.

Domestic violence victims (survivors) are almost all female and are likely to be aged between 21 and 50. Disability is also a known risk factor for domestic violence.

Children exposed to domestic abuse in B&NES:

Local practitioners confirm the intergenerational effects of domestic abuse as a driver of serious violence in B&NES. Our data confirms the presence of a substantial cohort of children in this category at risk, though whether the size of the cohort is growing or decreasing is currently unclear: In 2015 the police recorded 42 under 18 year olds as being a witness of domestic abuse in B&NES. On average individuals accessing DVA services had two children each; approximately 159 children living in or regularly visiting households experiencing domestic abuse.

6. Local drivers for adults involved in serious violence

Vulnerability is acknowledged by national government to be a key driver of serious violence.

Despite a generally affluent demographic profile, B&NES faces specific challenges relating to vulnerability amongst its most at-risk / disadvantaged citizens.

A significant number of adults who are parents/carers in B&NES experience multiple and overlapping complex needs, with a prevalence of mental ill health concerns. Our data shows that despite mental health issues being the most common category of need, people in this cohort were the least likely to have been assessed.

Some agencies expressed particular concern about the vulnerability of, and violence within, the street community. This community was perceived to feature a high degree of complex needs (e.g. mental ill health and substance misuse), and to possess concerning levels of domestic violence.

7. Local drivers for children and young people involved in serious violence

The following vulnerabilities are particularly relevant when they relate to children, creating a current risk for violence as well as later on in life:

Rates of looked after children, children subject to S47 enquiries and child protection plans have tended to be lower in B&NES compared with the England average, although numbers of looked after children have increased recently to be closer to the national average.

The rate of children excluded from school (permanent and fixed period) is higher than the England average.

The rate of school exclusions for children with Special Educational Needs is above the England average

Our data shows B&NES is an outlier regarding fixed term exclusions of children in need, with consistently higher rates than the England average, and the highest rates in Avon & Somerset since 2014/15.

The educational attainment gap in B&NES is above the national average.

The number of missing children episodes has increased substantially over recent years.

Parents and carers with multiple needs are concentrated in the most deprived areas, resulting in a risk level for children to be involved in violence that is even higher than would otherwise be the case.

The Youth Offending Service cohort within B&NES has a comparatively high rate of multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences, and face particular issues relating to substance misuse and witnessing domestic abuse in the home.

Less is understood about the protective factors that prevent these vulnerable groups from becoming involved in high levels of serious violence in B&NES.

8. Substance misuse

Demand for harmful drugs including crack cocaine and opiates is high in B&NES, and such drugs are known to be connected with serious violence.

Drug users in B&NES appear to be especially complex, with a high proportion of injecting users and above-average rates of children in treatment for drugs beyond cannabis.

There are warning signs over the vulnerability of drug users in terms of employment and accommodation, placing them at risk of exploitation (known to be associated with violence).

This connects to an emerging picture around county lines in the area. Though such lines are increasingly using children from major cities rather than from B&NES directly, violence linked to the lines plays a major role whilst a small cohort of children from B&NES are known to be involved.

9. Night-time economy

Little evidence is available on the role of the night-time economy in driving serious violence within B&NES.

Whilst hospital data identified a concentration of knife admissions in the early hours of the morning, aggregate feelings of night-time safety are up whilst police representatives state that serious violence connected to the night-time economy has gone down. We would need to carry out further analysis could investigate this to identify whether night-time violence may have alternative roots (i.e. drugs, or domestic violence).

10. Developing our action plan

The Government's strategy is framed on four key themes:

- 1) tackling county lines and misuse of drugs,
- 2) early intervention and prevention,
- 3) supporting communities and partnerships, and an
- 4) effective law enforcement and criminal justice response.

Our action plan takes into consideration a public health approach which is underpinned by the following principles:

- 1) focused on a defined population, often with a health risk in common
- 2) with and for communities
- 3) not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries
- 4) focused on generating long term as well as short term solutions
- 5) based on data and intelligence to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities
- 6) rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem

Furthermore, our action plan takes into consideration a place-based multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention to work across organisations and reduce silo working by bringing partners together to focus on improving long term outcomes of the whole place and not just individuals. This includes collaboration, co-production (supports consensus and shared accountability), cooperation in data and intelligence sharing, counter-narrative (identify risk and protective factors at local level and identify and create option to pursue alternatives to criminal activities), and community consensus.

This local action plan for B&NES focusses on the themes of early intervention and prevention along with supporting communities and partnerships and should be read in conjunction with the national Serious Violence Strategy and the Police and Crime Commissioner Strategy for Avon & Somerset.

Our action plan focusses on five main themes:

- 1) Knowledge / evidence
- 2) Commissioning strategy
- 3) A whole systems and public health approach
- 4) Communications & community engagement
- 5) Influencing partners

This plan does not aim to address areas of work that are already underway and does not allocate work to services and agencies without full consideration of resource implications. Examples include: domestic abuse and violence; the Domestic Abuse Partnership is the local multi agency response with its own action plan (see appendix 1); street lighting in play parks (where renovation works are not planned and capital funding is not available); county lines (where the multi agency Exploitation operational group and Exploitation sub group of the B&NES Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership have a specific focus on this field of work).

The diagram on page 15 illustrates the Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership structure and governance process.

Bath and North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership

Think Family and Community

Partners in B&NES have been creative and constructed an exciting new community safety and safeguarding arrangement. We are committed to maximising the integration of safeguarding children and adults with community safety and the work of the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). Our new Partnership is designed to offer us the chance to work more effectively and with joint purpose to protect children, adults, families and communities who most need our help.

In June 2019 the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership was approved by Avon Fire and Rescue, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group, B&NES Council and the National Probation Service. It was developed in partnership with the existing members of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Local Safeguarding Adult Board and RAG which it replaces. The Partnership will come into existence in September 2019.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership is committed to:

- The voice of children, adults, families and communities is strengthened
- Strengthening and improving the work on Think Family and Community
- Improving strategic decision making and leadership by having one cohesive conversation
- Focusing on shared strategic objectives to achieve the greatest impact and improve outcomes for children, adults, families and the community
- Reducing duplication and therefore enable us to use our resources more effectively across B&NES

The Partnership will employ an Independent Chair who will manage the Partnership Support and ensure independent scrutiny takes place. We have developed robust scrutiny arrangements; Lay Members have a key role in this.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary, BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group and B&NES Council have agreed the required funding arrangements.



		Priorities	Actions	Desired outcomes	Lead	RAG rate	Progress
		1. Service	1.1 Share learning from the VRU-commissioned	Strengthen evidence-base	VRU		Some feedback on
		Mapping	interventions delivered in 2019-20	for effective delivery			agenda for 26.06
evidence	/ evidence		1.2 Extend the mapping undertaken as part of the serious youth violence protocol to include services available for all age groups.	Early Help app and other directories highlight relevant interventions	VRU		
	Knowledge		1.3 Ensure agencies can readily access this information.	Guide prompt access to effective interventions	VRU Public Health		
uilding on	uilding		1.4 Identify gaps in services for those at risk of serious violence e.g. young people transitioning into adult interventions	Inform commissioning	VRU		
	B		1.5 Introduce a serious violence pathway, ensuring that vulnerability and risk are prioritised.	Early intervention to prevent serious violence			

2. Risk	2.1 Research locally and nationally available risk	Consistent, evidence-	Avon &
assessme	screening and assessment tools and	based approaches to	Somerse
nt	methodologies and promote effective approaches	screening and assessment	t Police
	across the partnership.		and
			Council
3.	3.1. Commission a piece of work to explore	Better understanding of	VRU
Protective	protective factors, focusing on young people from	protective factors within	
factors	the most disadvantaged areas	B&NES and how to	
		maximise them	
4.	4.1. Use national shared good practice and	Demonstrating safe and	VRU
Evidence-	research to guide intervention development	effective practice.	
based			
approache	4.2. Commit to robust evaluation of local initiatives	; ;	
S	to contribute to this body of knowledge		VRU
		Interventions with	
	4.3 Build a more effective evidence base around	individuals with substance	рні
	the impact of the drug market on serious violence	misuse can be better	
	throughout B&NES	targeted to avoid and	
		prevent serious violence	

5.	6.1 Map localities of concern	Inform proactive targeting	Avon	
Intelligend	;	of resources	and	
e and			Somers	
informatio	6.2 Introduce a multi-agency approach to	Targeted early intervention	et	
n sharing	identifying and supporting individuals at greatest	actions will divert young	Police	
	risk of involvement in serious violence.	people, preventing them		
		from becoming involved in	VRU	TOR agreed and
		serious violent crime.	Chair	meeting convened
6. Problen	17.1 Produce an annual report updating the	Review impact of work of	VRU	
profile	problem profile / needs assessment (March 2020)	VRU and identify next		
		areas to address		
	7.2 Consider how to ensure an updated needs			
	assessment into the future			

	Priority	Action	Desired outcome	Lead	RAG	Progress
					rate	
	1.	1.1. Use VRU funding to commission	Interventions focus on	VRU		Successful bid
	Interventions	evidence-based interventions and	areas of most need and	and		for further
		encourage community innovation	prevent/avoid serious	agen		funding including
>			violent crime in these	су		establishment of
strategy		1.2. Evaluate impact of interventions	areas.	com		a community
irat				missi		grant
				oners		
Commissioning	2. Use of data	2.1 Use data sets to inform hyper-local	Interventions focus on	Avon		
ion		commissioning	areas of most need and	&		
iss			prevent / avoid serious	Some		
Ĩ			violent crime in these	rset		
no			areas.	Polic		
0				е		
	3. Street	3.1 Investigate the lived experiences of the	Inform commissioning to	DHI		Funding
	community	street-based community and develop	divert the street-based	and		allocated for
		targeted resources for professionals and	community from	Julian		research (SJ)
		support staff	involvement in serious	Hous		
			violent crime.	е		

	Priority	Action	Desired outcome	Lead	RAG rate	Progress
annrach		1.1 Agree the governance arrangements for strategic and operational violence prevention work as part of the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (CSSP)'s work	Robust oversight and proper links with all relevant sub groups	BCSSP		New TOR on agenda for 26.06
and nublic health		1.2 Establish clear links with other existing work streams and groups including the Health and Wellbeing Board and relevant sub groups of the CSSP1.3 Appoint a VRU lead	Development of a local Strategy and delivery of the Response Plan	VRU VRU		
A whole evetame	of the issue	 1.1 Define and create a common understanding of a multi-agency Public Health approach to serious violence and what it means locally 1.2 Identify key local agencies and bring them together to work collaboratively to understand their roles in violence prevention 	A collective understanding of the broader implications of violence across all partners within B&NES	Public Health		On agenda for 26.06 to begin this work

3. Data and	3.1. Ensure data sharing agreements	Identify and overcome	Agreement
intelligence	which incorporate arrangements to	barriers to effective	drafted for
sharing	protect identifiable individual level data	data and information	operational
	3.2. Understand what data is routinely collected by different organisations and determine what role it could play in preventative and operational interventions	sharing to inform and mobilise effective preventative and operational interventions.	group
	3.3. Use data and intelligence to achieve a shared understanding of current local issues, opportunities to implement interventions and evaluate their impact		

	Priority	Action	Desired outcome	Lead	RAG rate	Progress
It	1. Community	1.1. Map out community assets and	Empower local	VRU		
engagement	consensus	consider how to build on these	communities to			
gen	approach		actively participate in			
gaç		1.2. Use participatory approaches,	tackling issues that			
en		actively involve community members in	affect them			
ity		design, delivery and evaluation by	collectively.			
un		reducing barriers to engagement				
r community		1.3. Collaborate with those most at risk of being victims or perpetrators of violence				
and wider	2. Voice of the	2.1. Build on recent (Youth Connect	Ensure that children	VRU		
Š	child	South West) consultation with young	are active contributors			
bug		people to ensure up-to-date partnership	and participants in			
		understanding of their views and needs	work to address			
Communications			serious violence			
cat	3. Communica	3.1. Develop and agree a strategy and	All community groups	Comms		
uni	tions	action plan for communications and	involved more effective	leads		
Ē	Strategy	engagement with representatives from all	communication with	from all		
u ou		VRU partners	citizens about serious	agencie		
0			violent crime reduction,	S		
			prevention and			
			avoidance			

4. Promote	4.1. Promote the use of effective	More pupils in	Avon &
awareness of	awareness raising and teaching materials	education settings will	Somers
the risks of	and techniques	understand the risk of	et
serious		becoming involved in	Police
violence in	4.2. Integrate the work of dedicated	serious violence	and
education	Police Community Support Officers into		Council
settings and	awareness raising		educatio
services for			n leads
children	4.3. Ensure that professionals in education and other settings understand how to respond proportionately to violence, including knife crime		
	4.4. Ensure that children understand where to seek support and how to report knife crime		VRU

	Priority	Action	Desired outcome	Lead	RAG	Progress
					rate	
	1. School	1.1. Ensure ongoing, Council-led work to	Reduced risk of	Council		
S	exclusion and	address these issues takes full account of	involvement in serious	Educati		
partners	narrowing the	the problem profile	violence	on Lead		
art	attainment gap					
	in B&NES					
Influencing	2. Trauma-	2.1. Ensure ongoing, BCSSP-led work to	Reduced risk of	BCSSP		
enc	informed	address trauma takes full account of the	involvement in serious			
flue	approaches	problem profile	violence			
l						
	3. Statutory	3.1 Ensure the work of Police, Social	Whole system	VRU		
	intervention	Care, the National Probation Service and	approach			
	S	the Youth Offending Service are				
		integrated into the wider VRU response to				
		serious violence				
	4. Safe places	4.1 Work with partners to support the	Keeping young people	VRU		
		development of safe places for young	safe			
		people to go after school and in the				
		evening (particular focus on central Bath)				

Measures of success are currently being developed in partnership within VRU and will be responsive to forthcoming national guidance regarding outcome measurements.

We will be responsive to local need; our plan and strategy will reflect changes in local and national contexts.

Appendix 1

Linked strategies, plans and work areas:

Home Office serious violent crime strategy Violent crime strategy.pdf

Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership Community & Safeguarding Partnership

A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention - A resource for local system leaders in England" published by Public Health England working with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Home Office <u>Multi-agency approach to serious violence.pdf</u>

Homelessness and Rough sleeper strategy Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy

Children and Young Peoples substance misuse needs assessment <u>Misuse needs assessment</u>

Targeted Youth Support Youth Connect South West

Policing Operations including Operation Sceptre and Operation Topaz Avon & Somerset Police

Domestic Violence & Abuse Strategy Crime prevention and community safety

Health & Wellbeing Strategy Health and Wellbeing Board

Protocol for Children and Young People at Risk of Sexual Exploitation Sexual Exploitationn.pdf

Youth@ Risk Strategy Risk Strategy.pdf

Business Insights team Insights Team.pdf

Serious Youth violence protocol Protocol.pdf

Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families Early Help.pdf

Children missing protocol Missing Protocol.pdf Serious Youth Violence Protocol Serious Youth Violence Protocol

Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol Harmful Sexual Behaviour Protocol

Criminal Exploitation Protocol Criminal Exploitation Protocol

Alcohol Harm reduction strategy Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Needs Assessment: Needs Assessment

Substance misuse overview: Substance misuse

Appendix 2

VRU membership

Chair: Sally Churchyard Bath & North East Somerset Council Adam O'Loughlin, Avon and Somerset Police Donna King, Avon and Somerset Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Gavin Usher, Avon and Somerset Police George Samios, Twerton Infant School Ian Reynolds, Bath & North East Somerset Council James Delafaille, Avon and Somerset Police Janani Arulrajah, Bath & North East Somerset Council Jody Clark, DHI Services Kevin Day, National Probation Service Lores Savine, Bath & North East Somerset Council Mary Kearney-Knowles, Bath & North East Somerset Council Paula Bromley, Bath & North East Somerset Council Penny McKissock and Lucy Fordham Southside Family Project Samantha Jones Bath & North East Somerset Council Sarah Mills, Oldfield School Tracey Pike, Youth Connect South West

Thanks To:

Sean Smythe, Bath & North East Somerset Council Jon Poole, Bath & North East Somerset Council