

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Report of	THE OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
Subject	The Violence Reduction Network (VRN)
Date	28 July 2020
Authors	Grace Strong, Strategic Director, Violence Reduction Network (VRN)

1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) with a particular focus on the programme for 2020/21.

2. Recommendation

2.1. The Panel is asked to note the contents of the report and the progress to date.

3. Background

3.1. The VRN was established in September 2019 following a successful application by the OPCC and partners for Home Office funding. Leicestershire is one of 18 Force areas in England and Wales with a Home Office funded Violence Reduction Unit (referred to locally as the VRN). Following a further successful application in April 2020, an additional £880,000 was secured to continue the work of the VRN throughout 2020/21

3.2. The VRN's core function, as prescribed by the Home Office, is to '*offer leadership, establish a Core Membership and, working with all relevant agencies operating locally, provide strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence.*' The Home Office also states that the core membership should: PCC, Police, Local authorities (Public Health and Children's services), Public Health England, Schools Representatives and Clinical Commissioning Groups. Our Violence Reduction Board's membership is much broader than this including representation from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

3.3. The VRN continues to focus on serious violence in public places with an initial priority focus on under 25s. Appendix A provides more details of the definition agreed by the Violence Reduction (VR) Board.

4. Year One (September 2019 to March 2020)

- 4.1. Since the last report to the Police and Crime Panel in September 2019, there have been considerable developments in the work of the VRN. Early challenges related to mobilisation, establishing the Network within the existing partnership landscape and meeting the early requirements of the Home Office within a tight timescale. Key highlights are outlined below.
- 4.2. The main focus within the first three months was establishing the co-located central team through recruitment and secondment arrangements with partner agencies. This included two part-time Consultants in Public Health from Public Health England, who joined the team from November 2019 to March 2020, to assist in the delivery of mandatory products; the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and the Response Strategy. Both of these documents were completed, signed off and submitted by the core membership within timescales prescribed by the Home Office. Through the process of compiling the SNA we were able to scope and start the process of gathering data to improve our understanding of serious violence and mobilise for regular reporting in year two. A summary of findings and the Response Strategy is accessible via our website <https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/resources>
- 4.3. In November 2019, the Police and Crime Commissioner led a visit to the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit wherein he, his Deputy, CEO, VRN Strategic Director and Lead for Service Design, met with the VRU Director and his team. It was also possible to visit their Social Enterprise, Street and Arrow, an initiative aimed at offering mentoring, work experience and employment in catering to ex-offenders. The visit was invaluable and has directly informed several of the initiatives now being pursued by the VRN.
- 4.4. An initial Communications Strategy was compiled in order to establish the purpose and promote the work of the VRN across the partnership. This included the hosting and co-hosting of Network Events and workshops with different sectors and partnerships. Several Network events were co-hosted with Community Safety Partnerships prior to Covid-19 restrictions. The purpose of these events was dual; to raise the profile of the VRN and its approach and to share insights and shape the Response Strategy. Whilst the SNA and Response Strategy focused on place at a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland level, this was with a view to working more closely with CSPs in year two, not least to support mobilisation for the forthcoming legal duty to prevent serious violence.
- 4.5. There were several interventions commissioned during this time including the new Violence Intervention Project (VIP) based in the Emergency Department (ED) of University Hospital Leicester. This service commenced delivery in January 2020 and is designed around the 'reachable moment' of young people attending hospital due to injuries arising from violence, offering support and interventions to reduce the risk of further harm.
- 4.6. A Community Grant Scheme aimed at grass root community groups and organisations was designed and launched late 2019 with a focus on the provision of community mentoring and purposeful activities. Fourteen applicants were successful and these organisations delivered services throughout quarter four. A community mentoring training programme was also offered to these groups and other organisations to build capacity. Throughout this period, our Lead for Community Partnerships undertook wide-ranging engagement activity with young people and communities to ensure they

influenced both the Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy and to lay the foundations for future work.

4.7. Given the cyclical relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and violence, the VRN invested in multi-agency workforce development through the provision of introductory workshops on ACEs and Trauma-Informed practice. Delivery of these commenced in March 2020 but they have since moved to webinar delivery due to Covid-19. A training package with train-the-trainers provision as part of the Safeguarding Children Partnership was also commissioned to build local capacity to continue to offer foundational training. To support this work, the VRN also purchased the licence to enable screening of the Resilience documentary used elsewhere to raise awareness of ACEs and the importance of resilience in reducing impact.

5. Year Two. The VRN Programme (2020/21)

5.1. The details of the application and the programme plan for 2020/1 were drawn from the findings of the Strategic Needs Assessment and the Response Strategy.

5.2. The current Home Office grant agreement outlines several mandatory products and requirements which all VRUs are expected to deliver. In 2020/21 these are:

- Continue to adopt a multi-agency, public health approach to tackling serious violence including considering advice from Public Health England
- Review and refresh both the Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy
- Conduct a local evaluation and engage with the national evaluation
- Spend no less than 20% of funding on interventions
- Produce an Annual Report
- Undertake a Community Perceptions Survey around serious violence
- Develop plans for sustainability

5.3. All VRUs have three **success measures** set by the Home Office which are monitored centrally (although to date no feedback has been received). These are:

- A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25
- A reduction in knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25
- A reduction in all non-domestic homicides and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives

5.4. This year's programme has **five inter-related projects**, each one led by a member of the VRN central team. These are illustrated below:

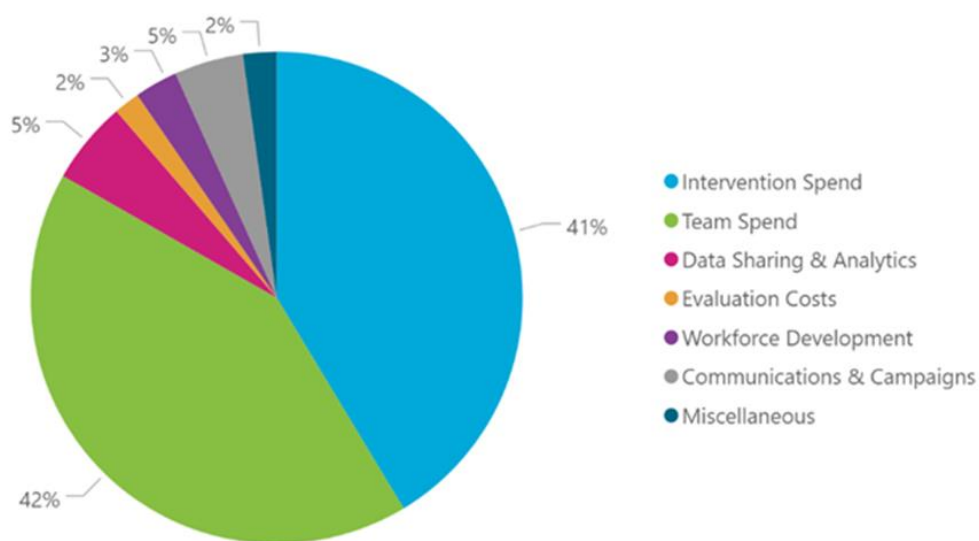


5.5. **Key priorities and activity** within each project are:

Project	Planned work
Leadership and Cultural Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-agency strategy on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed approaches • A refreshed governance structure to broaden membership and to establish a Serious Violence Delivery Group to support the VRN team and the Board in delivering the Response Strategy • A Schools work stream to develop violence prevention strategies within schools aimed at reducing known risk factors such as low attendance and exclusion • Work with CSPs to develop local responses to serious violence and to support mobilisation for the new serious violence duty • Work with partner's to articulate and develop each organisation's role and offer in relation to violence prevention • Investment in workforce development to improve contextual safeguarding • Work with the Sports and Physical Activity sector to incorporate violence prevention strategies into existing work • Introduce and test multi-agency problem-solving to tackle serious violence hotspots • Agree a plan for sustainability of the VRN and its work
Data Analysis and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a serious violence dataset with forward plan for the sharing of data from a range of sources • Design of an interactive serious violence dashboard • Further development of Information Sharing infrastructure to support the VRN's ambitions in data sharing • Weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting to monitor the extent and nature of violence locally • Design and carry out community perception surveys in partnership with the OPCC and CSPs • Design an internal evaluation framework including intervention monitoring and a process and impact review • Scope and undertake a proof of concept phase for a local Injury Surveillance System (Cardiff Model) • Commissioning of an external evaluation
Interventions and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme in up to 20 schools in year one • Continue the Violence Intervention Project (VIP) in the Emergency Department and undertake an initial evaluation to support decisions over re-commissioning • Develop the local CJ early intervention offer through support of the City community resolution pilot (under 18s) and Engage (18-25) • Continue the Unlocking Potential project to improve employment outcomes for vulnerable 16-24 year olds • Invest in the pilot of the Childhood Adversity project to reduce the

Project	Planned work
	<p>impact of ACEs on young people in contact with the youth justice system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in support for children and young people who are known to have experienced ACEs (for example, children with parents in prison) To formulate plans to improve, extend the reach and/or integrate violence prevention interventions for 2021/22
Community Development and Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a young person and community involvement strategy in partnership with the OPCC Commence community panels in collaboration with CSPs Design and deliver a community grant scheme for violence prevention initiatives by grassroots community groups Design and commission a leadership programme for community leaders with the OPCC Develop community and peer mentoring through the VRN grants and interventions Schedule a range of young person and community engagement events
Communications and Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in a dedicated resource to oversee VRN communications and campaigns CCE film and campaign designed and delivered Compile and cascade VRN resources to promote shared language and understanding around violence locally Agree a multi-agency schedule of universal and targeted campaigns delivered through traditional and digital media promoting the social norms we wish to see

5.6 The **planned spend** for 2020/21 is outlined below.



Intervention Spend: £364,000

The Violence Intervention Project (VIP) based in the Emergency Department (UHL) and provided by Turning Point

The Unlocking Potential (UP) project (employment) and provided by Leicestershire Cares

The Childhood Adversity Project provided by Leicestershire Partnership Trust (co-funded with Leicestershire County Council and CCG)

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) mobilisation and training for wave 1 secondary schools

Community Leadership and grassroot Community Grant scheme

ACEs responses to support initiatives aimed at identifying and pursuing opportunities to offer early support for vulnerable children known to have experienced ACEs (for example, parent in prison)

VRN Team £368,601

Costs of 6 staff in central team plus the resource to recruit a Schools lead to drive forward the schools and education work

Data Sharing and Analytics £48,000

Additional investment to improve local multi-agency capability and capacity around data sharing to prevent violence (including injury surveillance). This includes the costs of the new Lead for Evidence and Evaluation

Evaluation Costs £15,000

For a small external evaluation of a VRN intervention(s) (Home Office requirement)

Workforce Development £25,000

Contribution to multi-agency workforce development around contextual safeguarding and trauma-informed practice

Communications and Campaigns £40,000

Funding for a dedicated resource to cascade key messages and learning and to fund evidence-informed, multi-agency campaigns including the wider use of digital media.

5.6. In relation to **progress** during Quarter 1, almost all work has now commenced with notable progress in several areas of the programme including:

- Stage one of a serious violence dataset and dashboard which currently includes police and health data to enable on-going analysis, monitoring and performance reporting.
- The provision of quarterly performance reports to the VR Board from August 2020 onwards
- Commencement of the 'proof of concept' stage for a local Injury Surveillance System aggregating Police, Emergency Department and Ambulance data to inform preventative action
- An internal evaluation framework including monitoring arrangements for all VRN-funded interventions and reporting within the above performance report
- Agreement with CSPs over the VRN's offer of support and VRN attendance scheduled for all CSP Board meetings in 2020/21
- Re-commissioning of the VIP and UP projects
- Wave one of Mentors in Violence Prevention training moved to virtual delivery in October 2020 with 12 secondary schools confirmed

- Commencement of work on the new community perception survey
- Design and launch of the 2020/21 community grants scheme with a focus on supporting Covid-19 recovery
- Design of a community leadership programme with the OPCC ready for commissioning
- Recommencement of the production of the CCE film and work with partners to design supporting material

5.7. In addition to the above the VRN is an active member of the national VRN Network hosted by the Home Office. This has included participating and presenting at a range of workshops and more recently attending a roundtable discussion with Kit Malthouse, Minister for Crime and Policing. At a regional level, the VRN is working closely with both the Nottingham and West Midland VRUs.

6. Impact of Covid-19

6.1. There has been several impacts of Covid-19 on serious violence (as defined by the VRN) and the work of the VRN.

6.2. A Covid-19 report to the last VR Board confirmed that there was a notable reduction in public place serious violence during the national lockdown restrictions. As expected, there has since been a gradual increase in the volume of serious violence offences as restrictions have eased. The VRN is monitoring this and undertaking an analysis of the nature and extent of serious violence, including comparisons between areas within and outside the Leicester lockdown area. However, it is also notable that many of the risk factors associated with serious violence are reported to have risen (and are predicted to continue to rise) throughout the time of the pandemic and protective factors will have been less available to many children and young people (for example due to school closures and reduced face-to-face delivery by many services). The Home Office has confirmed that it is possible to apply to re-profile spend in the event of Covid-19 impeding delivery of the submitted plan. The VR Board will be considering this at the next Board in August with a particular focus on how resources can further support recovery.

6.3. During lockdown, all VRN-funded interventions were required to adjust from face-to-face to virtual delivery during the national lockdown. This had a particular impact on the hospital-based Violence Intervention Project as they were unable to operate from within the Emergency Department. Plans were agreed for a return earlier this month but have been delayed again due to the Leicester lockdown. Alternative referral routes have been established but the preference remains for this service to return to the department as we start to see a rise in violence-related admissions.

6.4. Young person and community engagement were affected by restrictions although this has now moved to virtual delivery where possible. As outlined above, it has also been possible to move training in relation to ACEs and the MVP programme to virtual delivery.

6.5. Understandably, some partner's capacity to engage with the VRN programme is limited at present. This has caused some delays in recruitment to posts but this is now progressing.

Implications

Financial: None

Legal: None.

Equality Impact Assessment: None.

Risks and Impact: Full risk register is maintained as part of the VRN Programme

Link to Police and Crime Plan: Vulnerability and Prevention

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1. VRN Serious Violence Definition

Persons to Contact:

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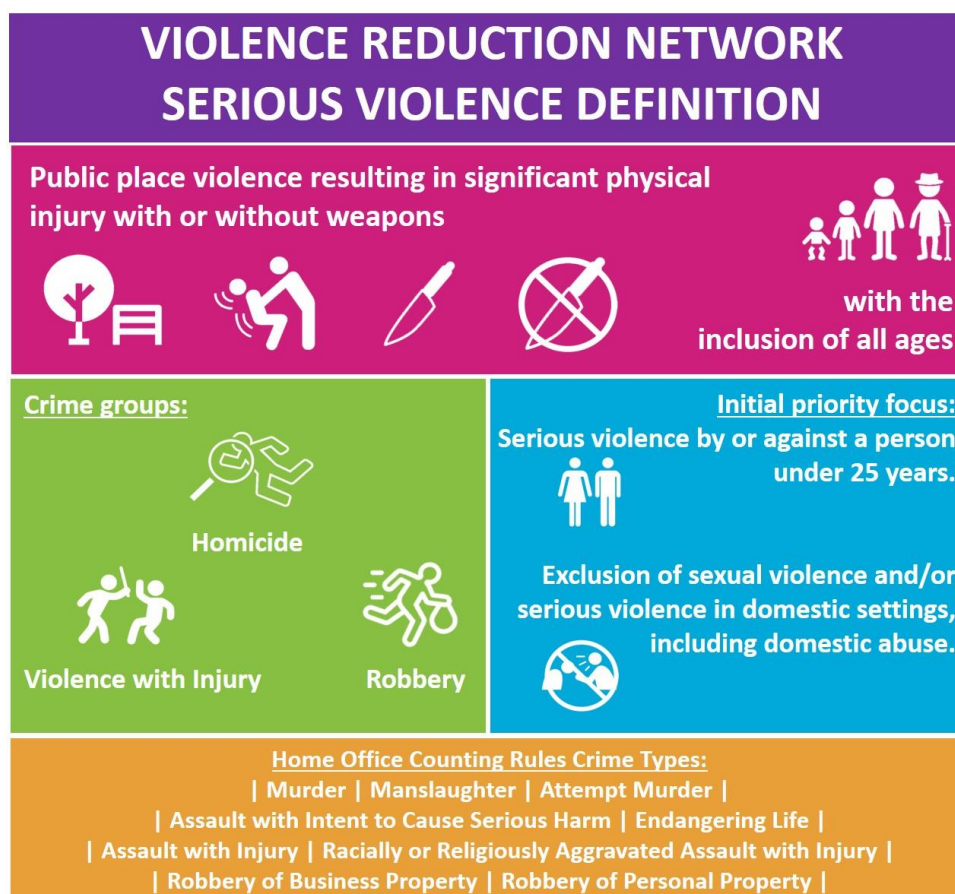
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The VRN's Serious Violence Definition

“Public place violence resulting in significant physical injury with or without weapons”

The VRN's definition includes all ages and is drawn from applicable crime types within Home Office crime groupings: Homicide, Violence with Injury and Robbery.

The VRN's initial priority focus is on serious violence by or against a person under 25 years. At this stage, sexual violence and/or serious violence in domestic settings, including domestic abuse, is excluded.



The crime types, as outlined by Home Office Counting Rules, included in the dashboard dataset:

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Attempt Murder
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm

- Endangering Life
- Assault with Injury
- Racially or Religiously Aggravated Assault with Injury
- Robbery of Personal Property
- Robbery of Business Property

Initial reporting will focus upon VRN priorities:

- In a Public Place
- Offenders U25
- Victims U25