



Home Office

## **Serious Violence Duty**

Preventing and reducing serious violence  
Statutory Guidance for responsible  
authorities

England and Wales

December 2022



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# Executive Summary

## About this guidance

1. This guidance is issued by the Secretary of State as statutory guidance under Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (“the PCSC Act”) and has been produced to support organisations and authorities exercising functions in relation to the Serious Violence Duty.
2. The guidance sets out case studies demonstrating effective partnership working, advice on data sharing, information on monitoring and inspection and advice on working with the voluntary and community sector and young people. This guidance also provides links to existing guidance and information rather than repeat or reproduce it here.
3. The guidance also outlines the changes made to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensuring preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs).
4. This guidance is for specified authorities defined in section 11 of, and Schedule 1 to, the PCSC Act (Chief Officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Integrated Care Boards<sup>1</sup>, Local Health Boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services).
5. The guidance is also for a secondary group known as the relevant authorities who are able to co-operate with the specified authorities as necessary. This includes prison authorities, youth custody authorities and educational authorities (defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act). It is also for any organisation or person prescribed in regulations under section 10 of the PCSC Act.

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<sup>1</sup> Clinical Commissioning Groups replaced with Integrated Care Boards from 1 July 2022 as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

6. Local policing bodies (a police and crime commissioner, the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority) may assist a specified authority for the purposes of the Duty.
7. Specific guidance is also included for authorities operating in Wales, which reflects the distinct Welsh legislative, policy and operational context.

# Chapter One: The Duty

## Introduction

8. Following public consultation in July 2019<sup>2</sup>, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty (“the Duty”) on a range of specified authorities. This will ensure relevant services work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.
9. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships and by making sure they have a strategy in place to explicitly tackle serious violence.

## The Duty

### Why has the Duty been introduced?

10. Serious violence has a devastating impact on lives of victims and families, and instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. For example, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 84 percent between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020.
11. The Duty is a key part of the Government’s programme of work to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence: taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.
12. In addition to tough law enforcement, we need to understand and address the factors that cause someone to commit violent crime in the first place, this includes where

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/serious-violence-new-legal-duty-to-support-multi-agency-action>

coercion is a factor regarding vulnerable children and adults. The Duty aims to ensure that agencies are focussed on their activity to prevent and reduce serious violence whilst also providing sufficient flexibility so that the relevant organisations will engage and work together in the most effective local partnership for any given area.

## What is the Duty?

13. The Duty covers the requirements set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act. It requires specified authorities<sup>3</sup> for a local government area to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities<sup>4</sup> for the area in the preparation of their strategy.
14. The Duty does not require the creation of new multi-agency structures. Local senior leaders, as set out in this guidance, may use existing local structures where possible to comply with the requirements of the Duty to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local areas and, ultimately, to improve community safety and safeguarding.
15. The Duty requires the specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. In doing so, local areas are encouraged to adopt the World Health Organisation's definition of a public health approach, which can be summarised as follows:
  - Focussed on a defined population; the specified authorities will need to agree a defined geographic boundary within which they will operate for the purposes of the Serious Violence Duty. Meanwhile, the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) will include a common understanding of the cohorts that are most vulnerable to serious violence and the local strategy will need to demonstrate how each area is focussing resources on the defined population most in need of support.

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<sup>3</sup> As defined in section 11 of and Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act.

<sup>4</sup> As defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act.



- With and for communities; localities will be required to embed the voices and lived experiences of the communities they serve in their Serious Violence Duty-related activity. Both the SNA and local strategy should reflect the voices and lived experiences of the communities they intend to support. Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries; in order to successfully deliver the Serious Violence Duty, duty holders are required to work across professional and organisational boundaries in order to deliver a truly multi-agency approach.
- Focussed on generating long term as well as short term solutions; localities must consider both long and short term solutions to addressing the drivers of serious violence in their areas when developing the SNA and local strategy. Identification of solutions should always give due consideration to the delivery of the most effective and impactful services available, which will vary depending on the local context of violence.
- Based on data and useful information to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities; the specified authorities are recommended to pool the data they hold individually to create new insights and a more complete understanding of the local drivers of serious violence. It is through effective partner data sharing and collaboration that the most informed SNAs and local strategies can be developed.
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem.<sup>5</sup> Where possible, localities must learn from the experiences of others to guide their activity to that which is most effective. When developing the local strategy, duty holders should use resources such as the YEF Toolkit<sup>6</sup>, Early Intervention Foundation<sup>7</sup> Guidebook and the College of Policing, among others, to ensure they are commissioning activities which are known to deliver the greatest impact for people at risk of, or already involved in, serious violence. Considering evidence of impact does not prevent duty holders from pursuing innovative approaches but, where this is the case, duty holders must

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<sup>5</sup> [who\\_2022\\_plv\\_strategy\\_2022-2026\\_finalfile.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Home | EIF Guidebook](#)

consider the balance they are striking between delivery with strong evidence of impact and delivery that may have good potential but is less well-evidenced. This will help to ensure that the risk of failing to achieve impact is appropriately managed.

16. The World Health Organisation provides a useful framework with four steps<sup>8</sup> for implementing a public health approach to understanding and preventing serious violence.
17. It should also be recognised that enforcement and criminal justice-based activity is a critical part of a public health approach. In adopting a public health approach, this should not be seen to in any way undermine or prevent the need for the valuable and vital work of the police and other partners in relation to enforcement and criminal justice-based activity. This is clear in advice from the College of Policing and Public Health England<sup>9</sup> concerning public health approaches in policing<sup>10</sup>.
18. Specified authorities across England and Wales must identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, and, so far as it is possible to do so, identify the causes of that violence. To do so, specified authorities should undertake an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence within their area and use this analysis to develop a local strategic needs assessment which should inform the local strategy. The strategy, which specified authorities must prepare and implement, should contain bespoke solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. This must be kept under review, which should be done on an annual basis and updated when necessary.
19. The Duty is intended to create the right conditions for authorities to collaborate and communicate regularly, using existing partnerships where possible and to share information and take effective coordinated action in their local areas. All organisations and agencies subject to the Duty will be accountable for their activity and co-operation.

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<sup>8</sup> [Violence Prevention Alliance Approach \(who.int\)](https://www.violencepreventionalliance.org.uk/who-int)

<sup>9</sup> On 1 October 2021, Public Health England transitioned to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, within Department of Health and Social Care, and the UK Health Security Agency (a new executive agency of DHSC).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.college.police.uk/about/public-health>

## Who must comply with the Duty?

20. The Duty requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence:

- Police
  - Chief Officers of police for police areas in England and Wales
- Justice
  - Probation Services
  - Youth Offending Teams
- Fire and Rescue
  - All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales<sup>11</sup>
- Health
  - Integrated Care Boards<sup>12</sup> in England
  - Local Health Boards in Wales
- Local authorities
  - A district council
  - A county council in England
  - A London borough council
  - The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
  - The Council of the Isles of Scilly
  - A county council in Wales
  - A county borough council in Wales

Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act sets out the local government area for which each authority is a “specified authority”. Some of these authorities will be devolved in

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<sup>11</sup> This includes Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners solely in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions, as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended.

<sup>12</sup> Clinical Commissioning Groups replaced with Integrated Care Boards from 1 July 2022 as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

Wales. This guidance includes a specific chapter on the Welsh context, which will be relevant to any authority (devolved or non-devolved) delivering the Duty in Wales. Chapter 1 of this guidance 'Delivery in Wales' captures the distinct legislative and policy background in Wales, as well as the partnership agreements in place across Wales.

21. The Duty does not specify a 'lead' authority to be responsible for coordinating activity or prescribe a structure within which specified authorities are expected to work. It is for the specified authorities to come together to decide on the appropriate lead and structure of collaboration for their area. Local policing bodies will be responsible for allocating grant funding for authorities under the Duty.
22. Some localities may choose to use Violence Reduction Units (VRU) to lead on the work (if there is one present) or their local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), whilst others may use other partnerships such as the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements such as adult and child safeguarding partnerships, Local Criminal Justice boards, Integrated Care Boards or Health and Wellbeing boards. It may also be the case that collaboration via a number of different partnership structures is preferred depending on the local context such as local boards who may have an interest in the Duty.
23. To complement the overarching Duty, amendments to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ensure that Community Safety Partnerships have an explicit role in evidence based strategic action on serious violence. These amendments require CSPs to formulate and implement strategies to prevent people from becoming involved in, and reduce instances of, serious violence in the area. As CSPs are subject to both the new Crime and Disorder Act requirements and the Duty, this will enable them to escalate local serious violence issues to a higher strategic level where necessary. This will ensure that CSPs have accountability for ensuring that a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence is in place even if they are not the partnership arrangement chosen to deliver the Duty.
24. Local policing bodies, being Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority, are not specified authorities under the Duty. However, they are strongly encouraged to take on a role as lead convener for the local partnership arrangements for the Duty in order to support the development and implementation of

the local strategy. In line with the current arrangements within CSPs, specified authorities must co-operate with the local policing body if that local policing body chooses to assist or monitor the specified authority in exercising its functions under the Duty. This also applies to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.

25. In recognition of the vital role schools and colleges play in safeguarding children and young people, educational authorities including; local authority maintained schools, academies, independent schools, free schools; including primary schools, alternative provision education and further education providers, must be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. Section 15 of the PCSC Act also provides that these educational authorities must collaborate with specified authorities to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area, if their involvement is requested. Educational authorities can also request to participate in partnership arrangements and in this event the specified authorities would be required to collaborate with them. A strategic education representative(s) or representative education group for the local area should be chosen by the partnership to provide a link between the specified responsible authorities and individual institutions. Educational authorities may also be required under the Duty to carry out actions specified in a strategy which have been widely consulted on and agreed by the partnership in collaboration with the strategic education representative(s) or representative group. They may also be required under the Duty to collaborate with another education authority, or a prison or youth custody authority in the local government area. However, in certain circumstances those duties do not apply<sup>13</sup>.

26. Prisons and the Children and Young People Secure Estate play an integral role in protecting the public, both in the rehabilitation of those people in prisons and young children who have committed violent offences and are in custody, and people on probation or children supervised by Youth Offending Teams in the community. As with

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<sup>13</sup> Section 15(7) of the PCSC Act provides that an educational authority is not subject to a duty to collaborate or carry out actions (otherwise required by section 15(3), (4) or (5)(b)), if or to the extent that compliance with the duty: (a) would be incompatible with any other duty of the authority imposed by an enactment (other than subsection (5)(b)), (b) would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions, (c) would be disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area to which the duty relates, or (d) would mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs. Subsection (8) provides that in determining whether subsection (7) applies to an authority, the cumulative effect of complying with duties under this section must be taken into account.

educational authorities, prison and youth custody authorities are required to be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. Section 15 of the PCSC Act also provides that they must collaborate with specified authorities if their involvement is requested. This means that individual institutions are required to collaborate and actively participate when requested to do so by the specified authorities for the area. Prison and youth custody authorities can also request to participate in partnership arrangements, and in this event the specified authorities would be required to collaborate with them. Prison and youth custody authorities may also be required under the Duty to carry out actions specified in a local strategy, and to collaborate with an educational authority, or another prison or youth custody authority in the local government area. However, in certain circumstances those duties do not apply<sup>14</sup>. The duties described above are placed on the governor or director of the relevant custodial institution. However, for adult prisons, Prison Group Directors may ensure engagement between prison authorities and specified authorities where it is considered relevant and necessary for the prevention and reduction of serious violence. They may also be nominated to represent relevant youth custody authorities.

27. Specified authorities may wish to engage with educational, prison and/or youth custody authorities in order to:

- Seek local useful information which may contribute to the diagnosis of the local strategic needs assessment.
- Access relevant data to feed into an evidence-based analysis of local causes of serious violence.
- Deliver any actions resulting from the strategy at an individual institution level which have been pre-agreed with the relevant institution/s.

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<sup>14</sup> Section 15(7) of the PCSC Act provide that a prison authority and a youth custody authority is not subject to a duty to collaborate and carry out actions (otherwise required by section 15 (3), (4) or (5)(b)) , if or to the extent that compliance with the duty: (a) would be incompatible with any other duty of the authority imposed by an enactment (other than subsection (5)(b)), (b) would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions, (c) would be disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area to which the duty relates, or (d) would mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs. Subsection (8) provides that in determining whether subsection (7) applies to an authority, the cumulative effect of complying with duties under this section must be taken into account.

- Assess the effectiveness and outcomes of any actions resulting from the strategy involving or delivered by individual institutions.

## Defining Serious Violence

28. Specified authorities will need to work together to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area as far as possible.
29. The PCSC Act does not define serious violence for the purposes of the Duty. In determining what amounts to serious violence in their local area, the specified authorities must take into account the following factors listed in Section 13 (6) of the PCSC Act:
- a) the maximum penalty which could be imposed for any offence involved in the violence;
  - b) the impact of the violence on any victim;
  - c) the prevalence of the violence in the area, and
  - d) the impact of the violence on the community in the area.
30. Section 13 of the PCSC Act makes clear that violence is not limited to physical violence against the person. It provides that, for the purposes of the Duty, violence includes domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence but does not include terrorism. This does not mean that specified authorities will be compelled to take action on these crime types specifically linked to the Duty alone, but instead that they should consider whether violence of these kinds amounts to serious violence in their area, in accordance with the factors set out above.
31. This approach allows the strategy to take account of new and emerging forms of serious violence as they develop and are identified and recognises the geographical difference in the prevalence of different types of serious violent crimes.
32. In considering how to define serious violence within their area and taking into account the factors in section 13(6), specified authorities should include a focus on public space youth violence including; homicide, violence against the person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing.

33. However, there is flexibility for specified authorities in local areas to take account of their evidence-based strategic needs assessment when defining serious violence and, taking into account the factors in section 13(6), they can include in their strategy actions which focus on other related types of serious violence, including (but not limited to) alcohol related violence, criminal exploitation, modern slavery and violence against women and girls<sup>15</sup>, including domestic abuse and sexual offences, and male and LGBTQ+ victims.
34. Section 13(3)(a)(i) of the PCSC Act specifies that domestic abuse is defined as per section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ('the DA Act')<sup>16</sup>. The DA Act defines domestic abuse as behaviour (either single incidents or a pattern of behaviour) between those who are aged 16 years old or over, 'personally connected', which is abusive. Abusive behaviour, goes beyond just physical violence to also include violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual abuse, economic abuse, and psychological, emotional or other abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance provides clear information on what domestic abuse is and how to identify it<sup>17</sup>. The DA Act also places a duty on local areas to provide support services in safe accommodation to domestic abuse victims and survivors and their children. Over the past two years, £125 million has been allocated to support local areas to provide these services. They are also supported in delivering these services by statutory guidance<sup>18</sup>.
35. Sexual violence is defined in section 13(4) and (5) of the PCSC Act as meaning an offence under the law of England and Wales specified in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, other than the offence of fraudulent evasion of excise duty. In determining whether an offence is specified in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any limitation in that Schedule referring to the circumstances of a particular case

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<sup>15</sup> The Tackling VAWG Strategy 2021 defines VAWG as acts of violence or abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and 'honour' killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online. While we use the term 'violence against women and girls', this refers to all victims of any of these offences.

<sup>16</sup> [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/32/section/1)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-act-2021>

<sup>18</sup> [Domestic abuse support within safe accommodation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation)



(including the sentence imposed) is to be disregarded. This definition includes rape and indecent assault. Specified authorities should refer to Chapter 2: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences of this guidance for further information on conducting needs assessments for domestic abuse and sexual offences.

## Defining the Local Area

36. The “local area” within which specified authorities in respect of which the Duty applies is at a minimum, within a local government area being a district, a London borough, the City of London or the Isles of Scilly when in England, and as a county or county borough in Wales.

37. However, a local partnership can extend its coverage to a wider area such as a police force area, if that is what is agreed for the area. The strategy can cover an area broader than a county so long as all of the specified authorities for that area are involved in its preparation, implementation and retain oversight of delivery.

38. The legislation is intentionally flexible to allow specified authorities to determine the geographical extent of their collaboration (subject to the minimum specified area). There is no universally “correct” approach when determining the size of the area within which the partnership will operate. The chosen area will most likely align with the local partnership through which the Duty is delivered. Representatives from the specified authorities should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership through which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty.

39. In order to comply with the Duty, it is not necessary to create a new partnership. Instead, the specified authorities can use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications. For example, specified authorities may wish to create a sub-committee to an already established partnership, such as a Community Safety Partnership or Child Safeguarding Partnerships. Alternatively, they may wish to strengthen the connections between multiple existing partnerships operating within a geographic area. For example, connecting the work of multiple Community Safety Partnerships operating in the same police force area to develop a more effective strategic approach to tackling serious violence. CSPs will still need to be satisfied that this approach delivers their requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 amendments. The Duty is an opportunity to simplify and add focus to existing

partnership arrangements rather than add additional complexity to the current multi-agency landscape.

40. Section 9 of the PCSC Act allows two or more specified authorities to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence in a “relevant area”<sup>19</sup>. This means that authorities are permitted to work across local government boundaries and in doing so, collaborate on strategies which cover areas greater than that which they primarily provide services in. This could include collaboration with authorities in neighbouring areas or those further afield. Where appropriate, bodies and agencies may choose to work across local government boundaries and even nationally where there is the need to tackle specific serious violence issues (e.g. in the case of county lines drug dealing or instances where individuals are placed in custody or care outside of the local authority responsible for them).

### What are specified authorities expected to do?

41. Once the specified authorities have identified a partnership structure, the core elements of the Duty are:

- a. Understanding local issues: In order to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their areas, and so far as it is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence, the partnership should work together to establish the local ‘strategic needs assessment’ – identifying the drivers of serious violence acting in the local area and the cohorts of people most affected or at risk. This will require the sharing of relevant data and useful information held by the individual organisations subject to the Duty.
- b. Preparation, publication and implementation of a strategy: In order to prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area, the partnership must collectively develop a strategy which should outline the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to address the drivers identified in the strategic needs assessment

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<sup>19</sup> “relevant area”, in relation to a specified authority, educational authority, prison authority or youth custody authority means an area made up of: (a) all or part of a local government area for which it is a specified authority, educational authority, prison authority or youth custody authority, and (b) all or part of one or more other local government areas (regardless of whether, in the case of a specified authority or educational authority, it is also a specified authority or educational authority for the other area or areas).

and work to prevent and reduce serious violence in the local area. The strategy should set out how the proposed actions will enhance and complement existing local arrangements responding to serious violence. Part of this work may include consideration of joint funding or investment to support local early interventions and responses. Partnerships will also need to consult with any and all educational authorities, prisons and youth custody authorities situated in the local area, that they consider necessary, as part of this process. Strategies must be published and must not include any material that the specified authorities consider might jeopardise the safety of any person, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or the investigation or prosecution of an offence or compromise the security or, good order or discipline within, an educational, prison or youth custody authority. Regulations made by the Secretary of State prescribe further requirements for the publication and dissemination of such strategies.

- c. Review: The Duty requires that once a strategy has been prepared and published, it must be kept under review and, from time to time, revised. The partnership should review the strategy on at least an annual basis. A review should specifically consider how the interventions and solutions have impacted on serious violence within their area – considering for example crime statistics and accident and emergency data. The review may highlight the need for a refreshed strategic needs assessment and strategy, for example where new and emerging crime types are identified.

42. These core elements are explored in further detail throughout this guidance. All specified authorities, as well as any education, prison or youth custody authorities who are tasked with actions under the strategy, will be accountable for their activity and co-operation in implementing the strategy. Any and all actions set out in a strategy should be pre-agreed by all specified authorities and any relevant agencies which they may impact. They may wish to identify a senior officer in their agency to have responsibility and authority for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Duty.

## Delivery in Wales

### Introduction

43. Although crime and justice are not devolved to Wales, key services which help to prevent crime such as health and social care, accommodation, education, employability and substance misuse are devolved. This means that Welsh crime and justice activity happens in a unique delivery and legislative context.
44. Devolved and non-devolved organisations work in partnership in Wales to deliver the best possible outcomes for people and to reflect relevant Welsh Government legislation and strategies in the delivery of services. Organisations such as the Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, local authorities, Local Health Boards, Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service in Wales, Policing in Wales, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice work closely together in Wales to deliver effective services.
45. This supports a distinct approach to the delivery of crime and justice provision in Wales. This approach focusses on recognising the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's), working together to keep communities safe and preventing reoffending and further harm to victims through adopting trauma-informed practice.
46. This is formalised and sustained by a memorandum of understanding between Public Health Wales, Policing in Wales and criminal justice partners. It is also evidenced through joint strategic work such as the Framework to support positive change for those at risk of offending in Wales<sup>20</sup>, the Youth Justice Blueprint<sup>21</sup>, the Women's Justice Blueprint<sup>22</sup> and work in areas such as anti-racism and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV). This work is being delivered within the context of the Welsh Ministers' executive powers and the legislative competence of the Senedd as set out in the Government of Wales Act 2006.

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<sup>20</sup> [Supporting those at risk of re-offending | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>21</sup> [youth-justice-blueprint\\_0.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> [female-offending-blueprint\\_3.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

47. Drawing on this context, this chapter outlines the specific factors which will need to be considered by relevant bodies when they are delivering on the Duty in Wales.

### The partnership context in Wales

48. Every Welsh local area will have a range of existing multi-agency arrangements in place. These existing partnerships will include Public Service Boards (under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015), Regional Partnership Boards (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014), Regional Safeguarding Boards<sup>23</sup> for both Adults and Children (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014), Regional or Local Community Safety Partnerships, Regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Boards (VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015).
49. Partnership arrangements may also include Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups, Serious Violence and Organised Crime Boards, Local Criminal Justice Boards, Integrated Offender Management Groups, Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Health Board Stakeholder Reference Groups, Children and Young People Partnership Boards and Learning Disability Partnership Boards.
50. The PCSC Act does not specify the partnership model through which specified authorities must fulfil their obligations to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. Representatives from the specified statutory organisations should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership in which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty. Public Service Boards, Regional Partnership Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and (for parts of the Duty) the VAWDASV Board will already include most or all of the partners who need to be involved.
51. In order to comply with the Duty, it may not be necessary to create a new partnership, and existing partnerships should be used where possible. Where there are strong partnerships that already exist in Wales, they are in a strong position to deliver the Duty

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<sup>23</sup> The National Independent Safeguarding Board for Wales has two duties in relation to Regional Safeguarding Boards that are set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; to provide support and advice to Safeguarding Boards with a view to ensuring that they are effective and to report on the adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children and adults in Wales.

in most local areas. As the Duty can include domestic abuse and sexual violence within its remit, where it is considered to be serious violence in the area (per s.13(6)), organisations with responsibilities under the Duty may consider how they can address both the Duty and their responsibilities under the VAWDASV Act (see paragraphs 62 below) without setting up parallel or duplicative arrangements. Specified authorities may wish to consider adapting and revising their current arrangements under the VAWDASV Act, to ensure that these arrangements also address serious violence more broadly in line with the Serious Violence Duty.

52. This may require regional VAWDASV boards to review their membership to ensure that all relevant bodies are engaged and potentially to revise their existing strategies. The Serious Violence Duty strategy can then make suitable reference to regional VAWDASV strategies.

53. The specified authorities within the partnership area should come together, provide information and data, and collaborate in the formulation and agreement of the strategic needs assessment, as already takes place for the Strategic Assessment, Wellbeing Plans and Population Needs Assessment and Action Plans.

### Relevant current statutory duties in Wales

54. Services being delivered in Wales need to consider the distinct legislative and policy background in Wales, as well as the partnership agreements in place across Wales. This section outlines some of the relevant duties which partners will need to consider when fulfilling their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty in Wales.

#### Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act)

55. The WFG Act puts a responsibility on specified public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, and to work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. In particular, the WFG Act places a duty on specified public bodies in Wales to carry out sustainable development, acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

56. When delivering on their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, authorities should consider how they can maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals<sup>24</sup> specified in the WFG Act. They should also consider how to best embed sustainable development principles, or the five ways of working in the WFG Act: prevention, integration, collaboration, long term and involvement.
57. Since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, there has been a statutory obligation for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to produce evidence-based strategies referred to as Strategic Assessments. In Wales these can be stand-alone documents or incorporated into the Population Needs Assessments and Action Plans or the Wellbeing Plans. The PCSC Act amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to require CSPs to prepare strategies addressing two further matters, namely preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence in the area and reducing instances of serious violence in the area. The Strategic Assessment for the amended Crime and Disorder Act duty and the Serious Violence Duty will need to similarly ensure the requirements of the WFG Act are met as set out above.

### A Healthier Wales

58. Health is a devolved service in Wales but Health Boards across NHS Wales will work with their partners in supporting the Serious Violence Duty. They are responsible for meeting the needs of urgent and emergency care, working with police and other crime agencies and third sector to treat and support individuals. Pressures on urgent care services can be reduced if serious violence can be addressed in the locality so it is important that partnerships are working to tackle the reasons for and interventions to reduce serious violence. Health Boards should use their regional partnership board links with social care as well as their safety partnerships to ensure that there is join up between the agencies to best support those suffering from serious violence. Their strategic plans and integrated medium-term plans should reflect the need to play an active part in supporting and delivering against the Duty.

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<sup>24</sup> [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: the essentials \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

59. Wales takes a public health approach to addressing the underlying causes of crime and the Healthier Wales Strategy seeks to create a better health outcome for all people. The Strategy seeks to fundamentally change Welsh health care in five main ways:

- Health and social care system will work together.
- Prevention by detecting earlier intervention within community settings.
- Get better at measuring what really matters to identify what support is needed.
- Make Wales an attractive place to work in health and social care.
- A single system with everyone working together.

60. Advice services, such as the 111 service, need to develop appropriate signposting to community facilities and support services so that callers seeking help at an early stage are able to be directed to appropriate services for support, including those offered by statutory services and the third sector.

61. Primary and community care services need to be aware of the signs and signals of serious violence, and also be aware of the need to provide safe and secure advice and treatment, and as well as knowing the alternative pathways open to individuals.

#### Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

62. The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 (the VAWDASV Act) sets out a duty for local authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare a strategy for the local authority area for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV). The purpose of the VAWDASV Act is to improve:

- Arrangements for the prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- Arrangements for the protection of victims of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- Support for people affected by violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

63. This duty is exercised through regional VAWDASV partnership boards which operate under guidance from Welsh Government. The requirements under the VAWDASV Act,



particularly the requirement for the local authorities and Local Health Boards to jointly develop a local strategy, align strongly with the responsibilities placed on organisations under the Serious Violence Duty.

64. As noted above, where appropriate and possible specified authorities should seek to avoid setting up parallel arrangements to cover the VAWDASV Act and the Serious Violence Duty separately. Instead, organisations should look to adapt and revise their current arrangements under the VAWDASV Act to ensure that these arrangements also address serious violence more broadly in line with the Serious Violence Duty. This will require regional VAWDASV boards to review their membership to ensure that all relevant bodies are engaged, and potentially to revise their existing strategies.
65. Welsh Ministers also have a statutory requirement under the VAWDASV Act to prepare and publish a National Strategy to prevent gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and to protect and support victims following a general election. The Welsh Government has developed its next five-year VAWDASV National Strategy alongside a group of key partner organisations including the police, specialist sector and survivors.
66. The strategy was published in May 2022<sup>25</sup> and is being delivered through a Blueprint approach, which brings together devolved and non-devolved organisations, as well as strengthening the partnership between public private and specialist sectors. It will be overseen by a National Partnership Board co-chaired by the lead Police and Crime Commissioner for Wales. Relevant authorities should consider this revised National Strategy when undertaking their responsibilities under the Duty.
67. The prevention of VAWDASV is seen as an increasingly critical and feasible component to tackle issues of serious violence. The Violence Prevention Unit systematic evidence assessment on VAWDASV identifies a range of effective practice to prevent VAWDASV that can be considered for implementation as part of the delivery of the national VAWDASV strategy<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>26</sup> [REPORT \(violencepreventionwales.co.uk\)](#)

## Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

68. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The fundamental principles of the Act are:

- Well-being – supporting people to achieve their own well-being.
- People – giving people an equal say in the support they receive.
- Partnership – co-operative service delivery.
- Prevention – right need at the right time.

69. Specified authorities, including safeguarding Boards should consider the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the distinct Welsh legal framework for social services when considering how they will fulfil their functions in reducing and preventing serious violence under the Serious Violence Duty in Wales.

70. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures and All Wales Practice Guides<sup>27</sup> are owned by the Regional Safeguarding Boards and were launched in 2019. The Procedures help practitioners apply the legislation and statutory safeguarding guidance Working Together to Safeguard People.

71. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures promote consistent, evidence-based safeguarding practice across agencies and across Wales. Training has been provided on the Procedures and guides, facilitated by the Safeguarding Boards. These procedures should be considered in developing any new practice pertaining to safeguarding children and adults in Wales.

## Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011

72. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>28</sup> is an international agreement setting out the rights of children. The rationale for the UNCRC

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<sup>27</sup> [Safeguarding Wales](#)

<sup>28</sup> [United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child: poster | GOV.WALES](#)

is that children's rights need specific consideration due to the special care and protection often needed by children and young people.

73. Children's rights are enshrined in Welsh law under the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 - underlining Wales' commitment to children's rights and the UNCRC. The Measure places a duty on Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC when developing or reviewing legislation and policy.

74. Where the Serious Violence Duty impacts children and young people, plans should be grounded in a rights-based approach.

#### Housing (Wales) Act 2014

75. Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places responsibilities on local authorities in relation to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. This includes:

- A duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps where someone is at risk of homelessness within 56 days (s66).
- A duty to take reasonable steps to secure accommodation for someone who is homeless (s73).
- A duty to accommodate for someone who is homeless and falls within a priority need category (s75).
- A duty to provide interim accommodation for someone who is homeless and who may be priority need (s68).

76. Section 70 of the Housing (Wales) Act outlines the list of categories which are considered for priority need status, including a person subject to domestic abuse and a person between 18 and 21 who is at risk of sexual or financial exploitation. The Act is clear that anyone at risk or is being subjected to abuse or domestic abuse should be considered as homeless and be eligible for support to find alternative accommodation.

77. The Code of Guidance<sup>29</sup> was updated and published in 2016 and provides advice in relation to the duties.<sup>30</sup> As a result of the pandemic, supplementary guidance from the Welsh Government included a wider definition of vulnerability to include anyone at risk of rough sleeping from a public health position. This approach will continue beyond the end of the pandemic as the Welsh Government prioritises complete transformation of homelessness services in this term of Government.

78. The responsibilities should be considered by organisations as they take measures to implement the Serious Violence Duty.

### Socio-economic Duty – The Equality Act 2010

79. The Socio-economic Duty (contained in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010), which has been commenced in Wales but not in England, requires that public authorities, including local authorities, local health boards, and fire and rescue services, should:

*“When making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.”*

80. The purpose of the Socio-economic Duty is to encourage better decision making, ensuring more equal outcomes. When developing an approach to delivering on their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, leads in Wales should consider how the plans reduce the inequalities of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

### Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021

81. In recognition of the vital role schools and colleges play in safeguarding children and young people, educational authorities must be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act

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<sup>29</sup> [allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/allocation-of-accommodation-and-homelessness-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>

2021<sup>31</sup> (“CA(W)”) established the Curriculum for Wales in law and replaced the basic curriculum (which includes, for example, the national and local curricula set out in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002<sup>32</sup>). The CA(W) Act makes provision about progression and assessment in connection with the curriculum for 3 to 16 year olds. It also has some limited effects on the curriculum for learners above compulsory school age at maintained schools.

82. In Wales, schools must follow the guidance Keeping learners safe: the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools<sup>33</sup> under the Education Act 2002. Arrangements for safeguarding children are set out in section 175 of the 2002 Act.
83. Organisations should consider the 2021 Act in the context of the Serious Violence Duty when taking forward work which impacts on education settings. The new Curriculum for Wales<sup>34</sup>, which was introduced from September 2022, will include a Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience (Area) which has equal status in law to the five other area of the curriculum. It will enhance the new curriculum’s focus on the health and wellbeing of learners which includes mandatory Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)<sup>35</sup>.

## Relevant National Strategies in Wales

84. The following strategies and action plans impact on the strategic context for work to prevent serious violence in Wales. They should be considered by specified authorities when delivering their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty. This includes the National Strategy for VAWDASV, which is covered under the section on statutory duties above; specified authorities are encouraged to consider where preventative activity is directed at risk factors that domestic abuse and sexual offences share with public space youth violence:

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<sup>31</sup> [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/12/section-1)

<sup>32</sup> [Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/26/section-1)

<sup>33</sup> [Keeping learners safe | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe)

<sup>34</sup> [Curriculum for Wales - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales)

<sup>35</sup> [Cross-cutting themes for designing your curriculum - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum)

## Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22

85. The Welsh Government published their Substance Misuse Delivery Plan (2019-22)<sup>36</sup> in October 2019. The plan is rooted in a harm reduction approach which recognises substance misuse as a health and care issue as opposed to one that is solely related to criminal justice. However, close work is required, and takes place, with the criminal justice sector in order to take forward aspects of the Plan.
86. The overall aim of the Plan is to ensure that people in Wales are aware of the harm and the impact of substance misuse and to know where they can seek information, help and support. The Plan was revised in response to Covid-19 to reflect the work that has been, and will be, undertaken as a result of the pandemic. The plan will be revised in 2023 and the Welsh Government will ensure the criminal justice sector is involved in this process.
87. Close partnership working in Wales, particularly between Welsh Government, Area Planning Boards, the substance misuse third sector, HMPPS and the police, ensures that the needs of the most vulnerable substance misuse population are met and the appropriate guidance is in place.
88. We would expect relevant partners to consider the Substance Misuse Delivery plan when considering the Serious Violence Duty.

## The whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing

89. The Welsh Government has published a Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being. The Framework is intended to support schools, including pupil referral units and education settings in reviewing their own well-being landscape and in developing plans to address their weaknesses and build on their strengths. The Framework recognises that the school alone cannot meet all the needs of a complex population of children and young people, and sets out the role of regional bodies, the NHS and others such as the third sector, in supporting the school.

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<sup>36</sup> [Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22](#)

90. Schools and local authorities must consider the Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being when developing action plans, strategies and other policies that impact on the well-being of learners, staff and others working within the school environment. Local authorities will also need to consider the Framework in relation to education other than in a school setting.

### Youth Work Strategy for Wales

91. Youth work in Wales promotes and actively encourages opportunities for all young people aged 11-25. Effective youth work plays a significant role in helping young people understand their rights, socialise, develop, and access support with a range of issues, including their mental and emotional health or wellbeing. It supports young people to play an active role in their communities and offer support with their engagement in education, employment or training.

92. The Youth Work Strategy for Wales<sup>37</sup> sets out a shared vision for the future of youth work in Wales and is supported by an Implementation Plan<sup>38</sup>. These documents will be revised to reflect work being undertaken in response to recommendations set out in the Interim Youth Work Board's report, Time to Deliver for Young People in Wales<sup>39</sup>, to develop a sustainable delivery model for youth work services in Wales. A new Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board has been appointed to help take forward the report recommendations. Authorities with responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty should consider the Strategy and Implementation Plan.

### Youth Engagement and Progression Framework and Young Person's Guarantee

93. The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework aims to ensure young people make a positive transition into education, employment or training when they leave school, reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training and prevent youth homelessness. The Framework is, built around early identification and prevention, and should be considered by authorities as they discharge their duties under the Serious Violence Duty.

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<sup>37</sup> [Youth Work Strategy for Wales](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Youth work and engagement | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Interim Youth Work Board: final report | GOV.WALES](#)

94. The Young Person's Guarantee is the Welsh Government's key commitment to everyone under the age of 25, living in Wales, to be supported to gain a place in education or training, and help to get into work or become self-employed. Providing meaningful opportunities for education, training and employment can divert young people away from perpetrating crime, and this should be considered when delivering on responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty.

#### An Anti-racist Action Plan for Wales

95. The Welsh Government recognises that it is time for urgent action to tackle racism. Together with partners and stakeholders, the Welsh Government has published an Anti-racist Action Plan for Wales<sup>40</sup>, supporting a vision for an anti-racist Wales where partners take a pro-active approach to tackling racism in all of its forms.

96. This is complemented by a Criminal Justice Anti-Racist Plan for Wales<sup>41</sup> jointly led and owned by Criminal Justice in Wales partners including, Policing in Wales, HMPPS Wales, Youth Justice Board Cymru, HMCTS, CPS, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government. The plan sets out a range of joint actions to address race inequalities and create system wide change

97. When undertaking their duties under the Serious Violence Duty, authorities should take an anti-racist approach and ensure they proactively take steps to address racism in all of its forms.

#### LGBTQ+ Action Plan

98. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, non-binary, intersex or people with variations in sexual characteristics (VSC), asexual, and aromantic people, in short all LGBTQ+ communities face very real struggles against disadvantage, inequality and discrimination. The Welsh Government has consulted on an ambitious, cross-government LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, which will seek to tackle the existing

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<sup>40</sup> [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>41</sup> [c22-0119 criminal-justice-anti-racism-action-plan-for-wales report criminal-justice-in-wales interactive.pdf \(southwalescommissioner.org.uk\)](#)



structural inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities, to challenge discrimination and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

99. When undertaking their duties under the Serious Violence Duty, authorities should consider the Plan and seek to challenge discrimination and violence against LGBTQ+ people. This complements existing responsibilities under the Equality Act.

### Together for Mental Health

100. Together for Mental Health is the Welsh Government's strategy to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health services. It sets out a number of high-level outcomes aimed at achieving a significant improvement to both the quality and accessibility of mental health services for all ages. The strategy recognises that the causes and effects of poor mental health are complex, challenging and multi-faceted and therefore require an integrated, cross-government and cross-sector partnership approach if we are to achieve these outcomes. This should be considered by authorities as they fulfil their duties under the Serious Violence Duty.

### **Information sharing in Wales to support the Serious Violence Duty**

101. Data sharing is a cornerstone in delivering on the Serious Violence Duty in Wales. Organisations in Wales directly concerned with health, education, safety, crime prevention and social well-being of people have signed up to the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) which provides a tool to enable the sharing of personal information effectively and lawfully.
102. We would expect WASPI to form the basis of information sharing to support the Serious Violence Duty. Please also see specific guidance on information sharing in Chapter 2 of this guidance.

### **Wales partnerships and partners**

103. It will be for the specified authorities to decide how best to work together to deliver their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty. However, we have highlighted

some partnerships in this section that will contribute to the Duty in Wales at a local and/or strategic level.

### Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards

104. Within Wales the commissioning of substance misuse services rests with seven Area Planning Boards (co-terminus with health boards). However, substance misuse treatment for offenders in the community remains the responsibility of HMPPS though in several APB areas this is co-commissioned. The membership of the APBs includes representatives from the 'responsible authorities', which comprise CSPs, to enable statutory responsibilities in respect to substance misuse to be discharged at a regional level.

### The Wales Safer Communities Network

105. The Wales Safer Communities Network (The Network) was created following a Welsh Government Review into Community Safety. The Network is there to support future Welsh community safety policy and practice development and to help to build the appropriate skills and knowledge required to implement changes and reflect evidence-based best practice across Wales<sup>42</sup>. This is delivered through the ongoing development of an online community safety library and resources database for Wales, which includes the strategic assessments.

106. The Network provides support to the Wales Data Analysis Innovation and Improvement Network; Wales Association of Community Safety Officers; All Wales Anti-Social Behaviour Practitioners Network; and Community Justice Cymru all of whom are likely to have information, data and existing service delivery and development that is important to the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty.

107. The Network, Criminal Justice in Wales and Violence Prevention Unit all provide a range of support and information for local specified authorities. Working together to reduce gaps and the risk of duplication, they will work together to provide a range of support utilising the individual remits to support partners to deliver the Duty.

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<sup>42</sup> [Safer Communities for Wales - Wales Safer Communities](#)

## The Violence Prevention Unit

108. The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) is a partnership of people from an alliance of organisations working together to prevent all forms of violence in Wales through a public health approach. The Violence Prevention Unit are a multi-agency team, including members from Police Forces, Police and Crime Commissioners', Public Health Wales, Local Authorities, and the voluntary sector. The VPU is supported by additional commitments from over 30 Welsh partners, under the remit of the All Wales Violence Prevention Board. The mission of the VPU is to prevent Violence in Wales through a public health approach.
109. The VPU Website<sup>43</sup> has greater detail of work undertaken by the VPU, including research that helps identify effective practice for violence prevention and some of the services they directly commission to prevent violence. Part of the role of the VPU is utilising multi-agency data, research and analysis to better understand and prevent serious violence. The VPU will be supporting partners to address the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.

## Wales Police Schools Programme (WPSP)

110. The Wales Police Schools Programme (WPSP) operates in all primary and secondary schools in Wales, focussing on early intervention and prevention in relation to a range of issues with children and young people, based in the school environment. The WPSP delivers a balanced programme across all key stages of the curriculum, including topics such as substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, bullying, online safety, sexting, child sexual exploitation and consent.

## Partnership Agreement for Prison Health

111. In Wales a Partnership Agreement for Prison Health is in place. This work is monitored by a Prison Health and Social Care Oversight Group which is jointly chaired by Welsh Government and HMPPS in Wales. The Partnership Agreement for Prison

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<sup>43</sup> [Violence Prevention Unit \(violencepreventionwales.co.uk\)](https://violencepreventionwales.co.uk)

Health is a collaborative agreement between Welsh Government, HMPPS, Health Boards and Public Health Wales. It sets out agreed priorities for improving prison health. The priorities are built around the agreement that this is a whole prison approach to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of prisoners in Wales. They are:

- The wider prison environment and its contribution to improving health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Mental health and the development of agreed standards for mental health services in prisons.
- Substance misuse and the development of a new Substance Misuse Treatment Framework for prisons.
- Medicines Management.

#### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and the Adverse Hub for Wales

112. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to traumatic childhood experiences which can continue to have an impact on people's well-being across their life course. Research shows there is a strong association between ACEs and crime, as both victim and perpetrator. Research by Public Health Wales (ACEs Study 2015) found that those with four or more ACEs were: 14 more times likely to have been the victim of crime in the last 12 months; 15 more times to have been the perpetrator of violence in the last 12 months; and 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated in their lives. Public Health Wales' research into the prevalence and impact of ACEs in Wales was one of the main drivers behind the establishment of the ACE Hub for Wales.

113. Funded by the Welsh Government since 2017, the ACE Support Hub (the Hub), supports individuals, organisations and communities to become ACE aware. The Hub has adopted a strengths based approach to preventing ACEs, focussing on sharing evidence and learning from best practice, developing the knowledge and skills of professionals, and driving change and system transformation at both local and national levels.

114. The Hub has worked with Traumatic Stress Wales to develop a common trauma-informed practice framework for Wales, which will be of interest to authorities delivering

the Serious Violence Duty<sup>44</sup>. The framework aims to support a coherent, and consistent, approach to developing and implementing trauma-informed practices.

### Community and Voluntary sector (Third sector)

115. The Third sector contributes widely to supporting people in Wales. As recognised in the general guidance, their support in delivering a Serious Violence Duty that properly reflects local issues should be properly considered. This includes the VAWDASV specialist sector, who play an integral part in tackling VAWDASV in Wales.

116. Community and Voluntary Sector (Third Sector) in Wales are a key and important partner across partnerships, including Regional Partnership Boards, Regional Safeguarding Boards and Public Service Boards. Attendance is, as an equal partner, acknowledging the important trusted and independent role that the organisations play in local communities and in providing links with all sectors of local communities. Utilising the skills of the sector is an important element of delivering Welsh legislation. This is supported through Third Sector Support Wales, a partnership of the local Community Voluntary Councils across Wales and the national body Wales Council for Voluntary Action. The collaboration, integration and engagement with this sector will be a key element for delivery of the Serious Violence Duty (for example providing input into the analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in the local area and solutions for tackling them).

### Engaging with children and young people, victims, survivors and perpetrators of crime

117. Engagement and involvement with all parts of the population across Wales is a key requirement of existing legislation: the SS&WB Act, WFG Act and VAWDASV Act to name a few. We expect the existing arrangements to be expanded to include all groups who are currently not engaged with, or to adapt the questions and data gathered to include an element of serious violence and its impact on all parts of the community. This should include children and young people, adults including older people, those from marginalised groups, victims and survivors in the case of violence against women,

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<sup>44</sup> [Trauma-Informed Wales \(traumaframeworkcymru.com\)](https://traumaframeworkcymru.com)

domestic abuse and sexual violence, as well as perpetrators. This can and should include the collection of data sets and information from community and voluntary groups who are already working in these fields and are engaging with communities in ways that statutory bodies may not be able to.

118. A National Survivor Engagement Framework will be developed in Wales as part of the National VAWDASV Strategy and Blueprint. This will combine multiple ways in which survivors can influence work in Wales and provide a vehicle for survivors to advocate for themselves to educate their peers, communities, colleagues and wider stakeholders. The insight provided by the Framework will be an important source of insight for authorities as they deliver the Serious Violence Duty in Wales.

#### Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales

119. The Serious Violence Duty applies to Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales. Specific guidance for Fire and Rescue Fire Authorities is provided in Chapter 4, subject to exceptions noted in the text in that Chapter.

#### Strategies that apply in relation to Wales

120. The serious violence strategies must be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department within 7 days of publication. It should be sent to: [Serioussviolenceduty@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Serioussviolenceduty@homeoffice.gov.uk). In addition, for areas covering all or part of a local Government area in Wales, the strategy must be published in both English and Welsh and submitted to Welsh Ministers within 7 days of publication, by sending the strategy to [CrimeandJustice@gov.wales](mailto:CrimeandJustice@gov.wales).
121. This should either be as a weblink to where the strategy is published or as an attachment (PDF or Word version).
122. For more detailed information about the publication of the strategies please see paragraph 324 onwards of this guidance.

# Chapter Two: Planning and Collaboration

## Collaboration

123. Every local area will have a range of existing multi-agency arrangements in place. These existing partnerships may include Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), Health and Wellbeing Boards, Serious Organised Crime Partnerships as well as Supporting Families Programme Structures, Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards, VAWDASV Boards, Criminal Justice Boards, Violence Reduction Units (non-statutory), Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
124. As previously set out, the PCSC Act does not specify the partnership model through which specified authorities must fulfil their obligations to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. Representatives from the specified authorities should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership in which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty. An example of a multi-agency partnership model is included as a case study below.
125. This flexibility is designed to allow specified authorities to build on existing infrastructure, strengths and capabilities as they consider most appropriate. In order to comply with the Duty, it may not be necessary to create a new partnership, and the specified authorities should use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications. CSPs will still need to be satisfied that this approach complies with their requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 amendments (made by the PCSC Act 2022) to prepare and implement a serious violence strategy. Where partnership arrangements span more than one local government area, thought should be given to how variations in need and provision will be reviewed at a more local level – for example, through individual local authority scrutiny committees.

126. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have also produced a useful resource for local system leaders on multi-agency partnership working for the purposes of serious violence prevention.<sup>45</sup>
127. The specified authorities within the partnership area should come together, provide information and data, and collaborate in the formulation and agreement of the strategic needs assessment. It will be for the local partnership, on behalf of the specified authorities, to decide how best to work together to deliver the actions identified in the strategy as a result of the initial assessment.
128. There is no “one size fits all” approach, as some specified authorities will need to collaborate with other authorities across a wider geographical area on some issues (for example, knife crime across London or county lines drug dealing), whereas other bodies may be able to collaborate in smaller areas on other issues (for example, a rise in school exclusions in part of a local authority area leading to an increased risk of serious violence). Similarly, some identified actions may require all specified authorities to work together, whereas other actions may only require the specific attention of one or two of the authorities.

## Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences

129. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a statutory definition of domestic abuse which includes not just physical abuse, but also emotional abuse, economic abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual abuse and psychological or other abuse<sup>46</sup>. In addition, there are growing links between domestic abuse and victims who died by suicide.
130. For the purposes of the Duty, sexual offences are defined as offences under the law of England and Wales specified in Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/838930/multi-agency\\_approach\\_to\\_serious\\_violence\\_prevention.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> This is a non-exhaustive list of offences which could constitute domestic abuse. The [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#) provides full information on what domestic abuse is and how to identify it.

<sup>47</sup> Aside from paragraph 14 in that schedule which does not apply to this duty



Sexual offences can often occur in the context of domestic abuse but in many instances they do not.

131. Around one-third of violence against the person offences and one fifth of all homicides are domestic abuse related. Where domestic abuse or sexual offences are determined to be serious violence in a local area, in accordance with section 13(6) of the PCSC Act, specified authorities should take action to prevent and reduce such offending. Local areas' strategy should include how they will exercise their functions to tackle domestic abuse and sexual offences.
132. Action on domestic abuse and sexual offences is particularly encouraged where preventative activity is directed at risk factors which are shared between these crimes and public space youth violence. Such risk factors might include, but are not limited to, growing up in a violent home, substance abuse, social isolation and adverse childhood experiences. The latter can have a significant impact on health and the associated risks of perpetrating broader forms of violence in later life<sup>48</sup>.
133. Action to address these shared risk factors is encouraged even when domestic abuse and sexual offences are not determined to be serious violence in a local area.
134. The Serious Violence Strategy identifies 22 risk factors from a series of reviews for youth and gang violence. Of these, many also appear in systematic reviews of risk factors associated with intimate partner violence including child abuse (physical, sexual and neglect), low IQ/learning difficulties, poor parental supervision, poor quality/delinquent peer relationships, and substance abuse. Early intervention and preventative strategies aimed at these risk factors are known to be effective in reducing both types of offending.
135. Evidence similarly points to the impact of experiencing domestic and sexual abuse in childhood having adverse impacts on children in later life<sup>49</sup>. Some domestic abuse perpetrator interventions recognise the overlapping risk factors by identifying the

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<sup>48</sup> [Violence-prevention.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>49</sup> <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/document/sowing-the-seeds-childrens-experience-of-domestic-abuse-and-criminality/>

impact abusers have on children, and the adverse childhood experiences they will consequently have. This is an integral part of their design.

136. The Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy<sup>50</sup> and the complementary Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan<sup>51</sup> focus on improving collaboration and multi-agency working between organisations, including at a local level. Specialist domestic abuse organisations offer a range of training for professionals working in multi-agency safeguarding contexts.
137. Given such complexity, the most effective multi-agency responses to all forms of domestic abuse and sexual offences will be those in which pre-existing mechanisms are joined into any structures that discharge the Duty.
138. The appropriate partnership model for authorities to work together to undertake the requirements of the Duty is not prescriptive. Organisations with responsibilities under the Duty may consider how they can address those responsibilities alongside those under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, as well as relevant legislation relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences, without setting up parallel or duplicative arrangements unless they wish to do so. Specified authorities may wish to consider adapting and revising their current multi-agency arrangements aimed at preventing domestic abuse and sexual offences in order to deliver the Duty.
139. Listed below are some examples of these existing arrangements, most of which focus on preventing reoffending. And those able to assist children who experience domestic abuse, which the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance acknowledges is as an adverse childhood experience, can help tackle the links between these experiences and future offending:
- **Operation Encompass** – This scheme involves information sharing between police and schools in cases where a school-aged child has experienced a domestic abuse incident, so the school is in a better position to support the affected child.

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<sup>50</sup> [Tackling violence against women and girls strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/tackling-domestic-abuse-plan.pdf)

- **Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards** – these assess the need for and commission support services for all domestic abuse victims and survivors, including their children, within safe accommodation. Their make up may vary across areas, but as a minimum, they will include those representing local authorities, victims and survivors and their children, domestic abuse charities or voluntary organisations, health care providers, and the police or other criminal justice agencies.
- **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)** – These are a framework of statutory arrangements, under which the police and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, with the cooperation of other agencies with responsibility for health, housing, and social care, are required jointly to assess and manage the risk presented by known sexual and violent offenders. This includes those convicted of offences related to sexual abuse and domestic abuse. These arrangements are designed to prevent future reoffending.
- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs)** – This is a non-statutory process that brings together statutory and voluntary agencies to jointly support adult and child victims and survivors of domestic abuse who are at a high risk of serious harm or homicide, and to disrupt and divert the behaviour of the perpetrator. The core MARAC agencies are the police, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor services, housing, children's services, the Probation Service, primary health, mental health, substance misuse service and adult social care.

140. There are also examples of Home Office-funded Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) delivering activity that tackles domestic abuse and sexual offences, notably where the end goal of that activity is to drive reductions in public space violence. It should be noted that VRUs spend comparatively small amounts of funding on these activities.

141. The primary aim of Home Office VRU funding is to prevent and reduce public space violence amongst under 25s. Accordingly, the vast majority of Home Office funded VRU activity is focused on those crime types directly related to this primary aim. However, VRUs are also able to use Home Office funding to deliver activity that covers broader crime types, should their Strategic Needs Assessments identify that doing so will positively impact reductions in their primary aim. This includes domestic abuse and sexual offences, for which some VRUs have identified that they can reduce public space violence by commissioning targeted preventative work on domestic abuse. An example of this is included in the Northumbria case study below.

142. Outside of Home Office funding, VRUs are able to utilise match resources without restrictions as to whether this must be focused on reducing public space violence. Whilst they will continually be measured against their ability to make progress against their primary aim, there are examples of VRUs using outside resources to both co-ordinate partnership responses to domestic abuse and sexual offences or commission activity themselves.

### **Case Study: Northumbria VRU**

The majority of Northumbria VRU's work and interventions focus on street level violence, particularly in relation to young people. The VRU has drawn from both existing research and local data which identifies a relationship between young people who witness or become victims of domestic abuse having a higher risk of being involved in future public space violence both as victims and perpetrators.

Accordingly, the VRU spends approximately £150,000 of its budget to complement the current provisions in place across Northumbria. This includes the VRU appointing a dedicated Domestic Abuse Specialist who works with all six local authorities, commissioned domestic abuse providers and the six Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards to progress the key priorities identified in its Strategic Needs Assessment. Its approach largely takes the form of education and engagement at the earliest opportunity as well as progressing dedicated training and awareness around bystander approaches for men and boys. A strategic review of perpetrator interventions, carried out by a commissioners forum, made a number of recommendations that are being explored via the six Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards. One of the key recommendations was to take a strategic approach to all perpetrator commissioning activity across the region and more targeted work with high harm perpetrators. The VRU is currently working with Domestic Abuse commissioned service to develop a 'hub and spoke' model that will provide additional resource to work with a cohort of high harm perpetrators within the MARAC process on behaviour change. This is a joint initiative with the VRU and local authorities. It is envisaged that as the VRU develops there will be more opportunities for joint approaches to tackle Domestic Abuse as part of our wider public health approach to reducing serious violence.

### Case Study: Nottinghamshire VRU

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire has included domestic abuse and sexual violence within the scope of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (NNVRU) since its inception in June 2019. The VRU recognises that children living in households where domestic abuse occurs have an increased risk of developing acute and long-term physical, emotional health problems and trauma, which may, without the right support, perpetuate the cycle of violence. As a result, the NNVRU seek to build the local and national evidence base through the commissioning and evaluation of interventions, as well as the commissioning of research, to better understand the ‘causes of the causes’ of public space violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence and the preventative factors which link these crimes and could be tackled to mitigate their impacts.

One such project is the Choices Project, delivered by Equation, which addressed abusive behaviours in all forms as part of a participant-led project over ten weeks, aimed at young men in year 10. Participants were predominantly excluded from mainstream school, had experienced, or been exposed to domestic abuse, had demonstrated aggressive or violent behaviour, as well as negative attitudes toward women and girls. The project had clear learning aims but was largely participant led, it enabled young men to explore their feelings in a safe environment whilst providing them with the tools to problem solve and manage feelings of anger, building their self-esteem and aspirations. Topics included exploitation by criminal gangs such as county lines, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation alongside a strong focus on healthy relationships, personal space, toxic behaviours and consent. Through empowerment, education and giving participants a voice, the project was able to influence young people’s lives in a positive way.

## Safeguarding children

143. It is essential that frontline professionals recognise the specific needs and vulnerability of children and young people, regardless of the circumstances around any interaction children and young people may be involved in such as gang or drug related violence. There needs to be a proportionate response in the strategy so that those

children and young people impacted by criminal exploitation and engaging in serious violence are seen as victims and are safeguarded and supported as opposed to criminalised.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a duty on three of the specified authorities (police, health and local authority) as statutory 'safeguarding partners' for local areas in England. This duty means that they (and other relevant agencies they consider appropriate) must work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including identifying and responding to their needs. Chapter 3 of the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children<sup>52</sup> makes clear the duty on safeguarding partners to make arrangements to work together, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is shared and equal.

144. The Serious Violence Duty does not detract from these responsibilities. In collaborating to prevent and reduce serious violence, safeguarding partners have an opportunity to demonstrate and strengthen the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in a local area. There is extensive existing statutory guidance found in "Working together to safeguard children"<sup>53</sup> to support local partners to develop their serious violence strategy and consider the importance of safeguarding children.

145. Whole-family working is also integral to delivering effective preventative support. The needs and goals of all the family should be considered, rather than just responding to the needs of the lead individual. This ensures that the resilience of the entire family unit is strengthened and improves outcomes in the long-term. Whole-family working requires understanding needs of both adults and children, understanding where needs are overlapping and interconnected. Families should recognise who their lead practitioner is, and be able to share their story once. The lead practitioner will coordinate other services around the family, providing 'wrap around' support, ensuring each family has a bespoke plan in place to address their needs and improve their outcomes.

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<sup>52</sup> [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>53</sup> [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

### Case Study: Multi-agency Partnership Model

In Swansea, the Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) and partners are delivering a range of interventions and multi-agency arrangements to reduce and prevent violence, and to take a holistic child-centred approach to children and young people involved/at-risk of involvement in violence. The VPU has funded a host of interventions at a primary, secondary and tertiary level, which includes interventions that target the root causes of violence and offer support at what is considered a ‘teachable moment’. These interventions sit within a system that has established a range of approaches to target violence.

The Swansea CMET Panel (Missing, Exploitation and Trafficking) is a multi -agency meeting established and led by Swansea Council, meeting on a fortnightly basis, working within a Contextual Safeguarding framework, recognising and responding to the individual needs of young people that have been identified by partners (including South Wales Police, Community Safety, Youth Offending and third sector organisations) providing, or facilitating access to, specialist support services in relation to vulnerabilities such as substance misuse, mental health, homelessness and violence. It also focuses on identified hotspot locations across Swansea and peer groups, providing targeted outreach activity.

The CMET Panel enables young people to be diverted from the risk of exploitation, youth violence and serious organised crime and is critical to ensuring that there is no duplication and a clear referral pathway to specialist interventions.

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) has been commissioned by the VPU to assess the delivery of these approaches in Swansea collectively, to capture how they operate to identify individuals at risk of/ involved in violence, and the measures implemented to mitigate risk, and prevent further involvement in violence and crime. The evaluation will incorporate the wider approaches of key agencies (e.g. police and community safety partnerships), but with a specific focus on the CMET panel, a multi-agency arrangement to target hotspot areas, while also providing wrap-around support for children and young people at risk.

## Strategic Needs Assessments

146. A strategic needs assessment will enable a local partnership to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their area and, so far as is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence as required by the PCSC Act, providing information on current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and the cohorts most vulnerable to involvement in their partnership area. The SNA prepared for the Duty [may also / is likely to/is expected to] meet the requirements for an SNA relating to serious violence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; in this case, individual CSPs do not need to carry out separate SNA unless they choose to, or if this is the partnership arrangement chosen to deliver the Duty requirements. The SNA will provide a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues. An example outlining the overall aims and framework of an existing SNA is included as a case study below. A single SNA may cover more than one local government area, where all of the specified authorities from each local government area it covers choose to collaborate together to fulfil their duties under the PCSC Act 2022.

147. The SNA should be formulated following an evidence-based analysis of information relating to the violent crime types, the drivers of crime within the partnership area and the cohorts most vulnerable. This will require the gathering and analysis of data from all partners, so far as is possible, including (but not restricted to):

- Local and national crime data, (including Crime Survey of England and Wales (eg, police recorded crime by crime type, crime outcomes and profiles of victims and offenders),
- Anonymised hospital and primary care data on serious violence injuries,
- Education data (e.g. attendance, suspension and exclusion),
- Anonymised prison data (e.g. types of offences),
- Local data (e.g. census information),
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme data,
- MARAC data,



- Children's social care data,
- Outcomes of homicide reviews including in areas such as domestic homicide, child and adult safeguarding, mental health and offensive weapons homicide reviews,
- Input of organisational information and experience and where appropriate knowledge and useful information from specialist voluntary sector organisations and young people (e.g. data on violence against women and girls). The National Statement of Expectations and VAWG Commissioning Toolkit<sup>54</sup> set out data sources which could be considered when assessing the specific needs of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence,
- NPCC VAWG Performance Framework<sup>55</sup> will also outline data Police should collate,

148. Local areas may wish to seek additional analytical support and expertise in formulating their SNA. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have also published a useful resource for local areas on the development of local SNA.<sup>56</sup>

149. The SNA may also identify data or intelligence gaps, where the partnership is lacking information or knowledge and requires further information. Involving a range of staff and partners in the development of the SNA will improve the analysis and lead to a clearer picture of the local areas' problems. For example, incidents of domestic abuse and sexual violence are underreported to the police and other statutory agencies so other data sets will augment understanding of the local picture for these crime types. Partnerships may also find it useful to gather qualitative data as part of this process.

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<sup>54</sup> [Commissioning services to tackle violence against women and girls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-services-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls) The National Statement of Expectations provides guidance for local areas on how to commission effective support services for victims of VAWG. The NSE is underpinned by a separate Commissioning Toolkit, which compiles information in a practical way to demonstrate how commissioning VAWG services can be done to meet needs effectively.

<sup>55</sup> [Violence against women and girls: Outcomes and performance framework \(prgloo.com\)](https://prgloo.com/vawg-outcomes-performance-framework)

<sup>56</sup> [Serious Violence Duty: strategic needs assessment guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty-strategic-needs-assessment-guidance)

150. The results of the SNA should be used by the partnership to define their serious violence issues and formulate and prioritise bespoke actions to prevent and reduce serious violence that the partnership will take forward (the strategy).

151. A local area may consider that an existing multi-agency strategic needs assessment (produced by a VRU for example) already fulfils the criteria set out in this section, meeting the relevant duty obligations as required by the PCSC Act. They should only do so if said SNA matches the definition of serious violence that is agreed by partners in the consideration of implementation of the Duty in their area.

### **Case Study: Violence Prevention and Reduction Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, September 2019**

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership was set up using funding from the PCC and with the support of the police and health.

A joint police and health team work with organisations such as councils, hospitals and charities to help them to provide services that will prevent violence, using best practice and evidence of where violence takes place.

#### **Needs Assessment Aims:**

To identify, collate and assimilate existing data across partner agencies and associated systems with regards to violence prevention need:

- Epidemiological approach - time, person, place
- Comparative approach - regional and national comparators
- Corporate approach - compilation of any stakeholder consultation already undertaken at local authority level or qualitative research where it exists

To determine and understand current violence prevention provision across partner agencies in relation to need and to identify gaps in provision:

- Focus on violence with injury (except for domestic abuse and knife crimes)
- To enable triangulation with hospital data
- To consider the crimes associated with evidenced harm
- To complement other analysis underway that considered “all crimes”

### Needs Assessment Framework:

1. Primary prevention - Preventing involvement in violence
2. Secondary prevention - Preventing recurrence following early involvement in violence
3. Tertiary prevention - Reducing harm and preventing further violence where violence is established
4. Enforcement and criminal justice
5. Attitudinal change

**Data sources:** West Midlands Police data, Community Rehabilitation Company data, Youth Justice Board data, Public Health England Fingertips, Department for Education, Local surveys, Local authority-led consultation, Health and justice deep dive

## The Strategy

152. The strategy should be prepared by the specified authorities following the identification of the kinds of serious violence that occur in the partnership area and, so far as is possible to do so, identification of the causes of serious violence in that area through a comprehensive SNA. It should comprise a range of new and existing actions that the partnership will take forward to prevent and reduce the serious violence issues and drivers that have been identified.
153. The PCSC Act requires that the strategy is published, kept under review and revised from time to time. The strategy should be reviewed at a minimum on an annual basis and specified authorities should collectively decide if any new action is required or if a revised strategy is needed. There is nothing to prevent specified authorities from reviewing and revising their SNA and strategy (or part thereof) on a more frequent basis if required.
154. The strategy could usefully include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Arrangements being using to deliver the Duty and whether there is a named co-ordinator,

- b. Governance, including how the partnership will fulfil the requirements of the legislation (including those under the Crime and Disorder Act )<sup>57</sup>, regular meetings, monitoring arrangements and process and dates for review,
- c. Framework, for gathering and analysing data,
- d. Who (such as the voluntary and community sector, young people and communities) the partnership will work with; why they have been chosen; and how they will collaborate,
- e. Consultation arrangements with young people and communities,
- f. Geographical boundaries (especially if the arrangements operate across more than one local authority area) and how this links to Crime and Disorder Act requirements<sup>58</sup>,
- g. How engagement with education and prisons will be managed effectively to ensure their involvement,
- h. How appropriate links will be made with safeguarding arrangements,
- i. Roles and responsibilities of the local policing body (primarily the PCCs) , including arrangements for allocating funding to authorities
- j. Set out what the arrangements are for commissioning additional services under the strategy and how links are made to existing funding partnership for prevention and reduction activities,
- k. What the arrangements are for independent scrutiny of the strategy, including those under the crime and disorder committee,

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<sup>57</sup> Where the CSP decides to fulfil its CDA requirements through the Serious Violence Duty SNA and strategy

<sup>58</sup> Where the CSP decides to fulfil its CDA requirements through the Serious Violence Duty SNA and strategy”

- l. A high level (non-sensitive) summary of the SNA,
- m. Actions (including early intervention preventative action) to be undertaken by the whole partnership area, by sector/partners and wider actions (where appropriate – cross boundaries or nationally), how the identified actions enhance or complement existing actions/or arrangements within the local area,
- n. An executive summary of the serious violence strategy,
- o. Where applicable the annual assessment of the partnership's performance against the previous years' strategy.

155. Specified authorities may also want to be mindful of timing the development of their strategies and actions to coincide with budgetary or spending decisions within their local area – this will enable an evidence-based assessment of where funds are best diverted to. Any actions falling on educational authorities, prisons or youth custody authorities should be subject to an agreed cost assessment to ensure affordability alongside current spending obligations. Where funding is not available through local budgets, partnerships may want to consider pooling and/or directing resources to where they are needed most.

156. Prior to finalising the strategy, gathering the views and ideas of the voluntary and community sector, children and young people, adult victims service users and businesses operating in the area is strongly encouraged. Further advice and guidance on this process is outlined in Chapter 3 of this guidance. Specified authorities may also wish to refer to strategies published by neighbouring areas to check for consistency of approach if there is a need to work across local authority boundaries on common issues.

157. The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations, between persons with different protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. When developing their local strategies, which will include actions and

interventions for their local areas, specified authorities must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

158. Specified authorities should also monitor the impact of their local strategies on those with protected characteristics on an ongoing basis.

## Arrangements for publication and dissemination of the strategy

159. The Secretary of State has made regulations in connection with the publication and dissemination of the strategy<sup>59</sup>.

160. Each strategy must be published as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been prepared, with the first strategy for each local government area being published by the 31 January 2024.

161. Each strategy must be placed on the website of a specified authority or a local policing body for the local government area to which it relates and published in such other form as the specified authorities consider appropriate (which may include hard copies). Where specified authorities collaborate across local government areas, the shared strategy must be published on the website of a specified authority or local policing body for each local government area which forms part of the relevant area. This ensures that all strategies relating to a local government area are available in that area.

162. The serious violence strategies must be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department within 7 days of publication. It should be sent to: [Seriousviolenceduty@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Seriousviolenceduty@homeoffice.gov.uk). In addition, for areas covering all or part of a local Government areas in Wales, the strategy must be submitted to Welsh Ministers within 7 days of publication, by sending the strategy to [CrimeandJustice@gov.wales](mailto:CrimeandJustice@gov.wales). This should either be as a weblink to where the strategy is published or as an attachment (PDF or Word version).

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<sup>59</sup> These regulations The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022, were laid in Parliament on 12 December. [The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence \(Strategies etc.\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/1250/contents/make)

163. When publishing and disseminating their strategies specified authorities must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Specified authorities covering all or part of a local government area in Wales will also be required to publish a Welsh language version of their strategy.
164. Areas where work is already underway on preventing or reducing serious violence may wish to publish an interim strategy earlier but there is no obligation to do this.
165. Specified authorities may also wish to disseminate their strategy through their individual agency and partnership annual reporting processes, including their serious violence strategy, progress on actions and the outcome of subsequent reviews of their strategy.
166. Specified authorities may develop a bespoke individual strategy in response to the Duty or assessment can be incorporated into existing products if it is clearly identified. For example, specified authorities which form part of CSPs can comply with their new functions under the Crime and Disorder Act (in relation to preventing and reducing serious violence) by producing a stand-alone strategy covering prevention and reduction of serious violence, or by preparing one over-arching strategy covering this issue as well as the other issues which CSPs are required to formulate and implement strategies in relation to, identified in section 6(1)(a) to (c) of the 1998 Act. Specified authorities may also decide to use the CSP as the appropriate partnership to fulfil the Duty (under the PCSC Act), and so prepare one strategy fulfilling both the Duty and Crime and Disorder Act requirements. Where specified authorities prepare one strategy to fulfil both of these requirements, they strategy will need to clearly indicate that. It will also need to comply with the publication and dissemination requirements for the strategy under both the PCSC Act Regulations and the Crime and Disorder Act Regulations<sup>60</sup>. The requirements are closely aligned.
167. An example of a strategy and associated actions is included as a case study below. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have also produced a useful

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<sup>(60)</sup> The requirements for the formulation and implementation of strategies under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are set out in *The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007* (as amended) for England, and *The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) (Wales) Regulations 2007* (as amended) for Wales.

resource for local system leaders on partnership working for the purposes of serious violence prevention.<sup>61</sup>

### **Case Study: Hertfordshire County Community Safety Unit – Serious Violence Strategy**

Hertfordshire undertook a Serious Violence Needs assessment in 2018 in response to an increase in knife crime and county lines activity. This assessment formed the background for the first Serious Violence Strategy which was launched in 2018 and took a whole system approach addressing prevention, early intervention and enforcement.

The strategy was refreshed in 2021 following professional and public survey and an update of the Serious Violence needs assessment. The strategy was also informed by intelligence products such as Drugs Market Profile, Cuckooing and Drugs Supply Exploitation Briefing.

The strategy has four priorities:

#### **1. Criminal Exploitation of Young People**

Prevent children and young people from being involved in criminal exploitation and serious violence

#### **2. County Lines and organised drug supply**

Intervene as quickly as possible to reduce the opportunities for children, young people and adults' further involvement in County Lines and illegal drugs supply

#### **3. Criminal exploitation of adults including 'cuckooing'**

Support vulnerable adults who are at risk of criminal exploitation and having their properties used for criminal activity and illegal drug supply

#### **4. Availability of knives and other weapons**

Reduce the opportunities to obtain knives and other weapons involved in serious violence.

<sup>61</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/838930/multi-agency\\_approach\\_to\\_serious\\_violence\\_prevention.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf)



The governance for this strategy lies with the following boards:

- Community Safety Board
- Domestic Abuse Executive Board
- Drugs and Alcohol Strategic Board
- Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Adults Board
- Hertfordshire's Children's Partnership
- Integrated Offender Management Board

A Serious Violence Co-ordinating group was formed, with representatives of each of these boards, to ensure delivery of actions in line with the objectives of the strategy.

## Information Sharing

### Background

168. To recognise the importance of effective multi-agency information sharing, the Serious Violence Duty legislation includes specific provisions to support partners to share information, intelligence and knowledge to prevent and reduce serious violence (see sections 16 and 17 of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act). These provisions create information sharing gateways to permit disclosure to a specified authority of information held by specified authorities, local policing bodies and educational, prison or youth custody authorities and to enable local policing bodies to request information from specified authorities, educational authorities, prison or youth custody authorities within its police force area, or any other local policing body for the purposes of the duty.

169. The provisions will not replace existing data sharing agreements or protocols that are already established, including those under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The new information sharing gateways for the purposes of the Duty are intended to enable the sharing of relevant data where existing powers alone would not be sufficient.

170. Health and social care authorities should be aware that there are restrictions under the powers in sections 16 and 17 on the disclosure of patient information and/or

disclosure of personal information by a specified health or social care authority. These restrictions mean that generally they cannot be required to disclose confidential patient information.

171. In practice, local authorities already collate large amounts of pupil level and educational data so any additional education data required from education authorities for the purposes of the strategic need assessment would therefore be most practicably best collected through the local authority.

172. Each authority will already routinely collect information on a particular aspect of a local area's strategic needs assessment. The legislation enables such information to be appropriately shared with the partnership in order for all aspects of serious violence to be adequately considered. Information sharing can also help to support a partnership's aims by:

- a. Providing a shared understanding of the problem – information brought together from a range of organisations/agencies can be used to identify patterns and trends, geographical hotspots and vulnerable cohorts. Such information can also be reverted to for evaluation purposes;
- b. Fostering a multi-agency response – including a range of information sources in the initial strategic needs assessment will help to engender a natural multi-agency response as each organisation/agency will have a clear role to play in addressing local issues;
- c. Supporting partnership working – regular sharing of information may help to build and/or improve inter-agency relationships as partners will be working together on shared issues with a common goal.

173. Effective data sharing is also a key focus of the current Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), supported by funding from the Home Office. VRUs provide a dedicated resource, a clear place to coordinate information as well as strategic leadership to respond to the findings of any analysis. As set out in interim guidance<sup>62</sup> to VRUs, information and intelligence sharing should primarily consist of sharing anonymised

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<sup>62</sup>Violence Reduction Unit Interim Guidance. March 2020.

aggregated data to inform the strategic, tactical and operational response to serious violence.

174. It is acknowledged that the 'Information Sharing to tackle Violence (ISTV)' approach to information sharing should be adopted as a baseline and continually improved upon where possible. VRUs are currently working to achieve the following three levels of information usage in order to support their work to prevent and reduce serious violence:

- a. Level 1 – Information used to inform the strategic needs assessment in order to understand local issues;
- b. Level 2 – Information used to better identify hotspot locations and support a targeted approach;
- c. Level 3 – Information used to better identify individuals at risk for high-intensity support programmes. Level 3 data would not apply for healthcare data under the Duty.

## The legislation – Disclosure of Information (Section 16)

175. Section 16 of the PCSC Act provides a permissive information sharing gateway that enables specified authorities<sup>63</sup>, local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities to disclose information to each other for the purposes of their functions under the Duty. Information sharing to support effective collaboration with partnerships should be considered carefully and in line with data protection requirements ensuring that any disclosure is necessary and proportionate for the proposed purpose. See paragraphs 152 onwards for further information.

176. The powers permit requests to be made for sharing information, or for information to be shared pro-actively, but do not oblige any specified authority to share information (either pro-actively or following a request). For example, an Integrated Care Board may choose to respond to a request under section 16 to disclose aggregated management

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<sup>63</sup> As defined by section 11 and Schedule 1 of the PCSC Act.

information about hospital attendances where serious violence was suspected, which could support the development of a local problem profile / strategic needs assessment.

177. Personal information<sup>64</sup> may be disclosed under section 16 by specified authorities (with the exception of health or social care authorities), local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities. Any sharing of personal information must comply with data protection legislation (most importantly, the Data Protection Act 2018).
178. Disclosure of patient information by specified authorities, local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities is not authorised under these powers (section 16(4)(a)), nor is disclosure of personal information by specified health or social care authorities (section 16(4)(b)).
179. Anonymous information may be disclosed under section 16 by all specified authorities, including health or social care authorities, and local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities.
180. Section 16(3) provides that disclosures under section 16 do not breach any obligation of confidence owed by the person making the disclosure, or any other restriction on the disclosure of information (however, imposed). The disclosure must also be:
- a. in accordance with the data protection legislation<sup>65</sup> (section 16(4)(c), and
  - b. not prohibited by any of Parts 1 to 7 or Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (section 16(4)(d)).

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<sup>64</sup> Personal information or 'personal data' means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person". UK GDPR.

<sup>65</sup> Primarily the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018

181. Section 16(7) provides that this information sharing gateway does not otherwise affect existing powers to disclose information. Personal data may still be shared where appropriate and consistent with the existing legal frameworks and mechanisms that are already established between local partners (e.g. MARAC and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements).
182. Health and care practitioners must follow the information sharing guidance of their professional regulator when deciding whether they may disclose confidential patient information to local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents) or other authorities in reliance on alternative information sharing powers. Further information on disclosures for the protection of patients and others under these existing mechanisms can be found in the GMC guidance on Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information<sup>66</sup>

### **Supply of information to local policing bodies etc (Section 17)**

183. The PCSC Act also creates a power under section 17 for local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) to request any specified authority and any educational, prison or youth justice authority within its police force area to supply it with such information as it may specify for the purpose of its functions relating to the Duty.
184. The purpose of this power is to enable or assist local policing bodies (PCCs or equivalents) to assist a specified authority in the exercise of its function to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence and monitor the local strategy and its effectiveness.
185. Where a request is made under section 17(1), the person or body to whom it relates must comply and supply the requested information, subject to the limitations in subsection (6). The information requested must be held by the person to whom the request is made and must relate to that person, a function of that person, or a person in respect of whom a function is exercisable by the person requested to supply the information.

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<sup>66</sup> General Medical Council. Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information, paragraphs 50 - 76.

186. Personal information may be disclosed under section 17 by specified authorities (with the exception of health or social care authorities), local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities.
187. Disclosure of patient information by specified authorities, local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities is not authorised under these powers (section 17(6)(a)), nor is disclosure of personal information by specified health or social care authorities (section 17(6)(b)).
188. Anonymous information may be disclosed under section 17 by all specified authorities, including health or social care authorities, and local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities.
189. Section 17(5) provides that disclosures required by section 17 do not breach any obligation of confidence owed by the person making the disclosure, or any other restriction on the disclosure of information (however imposed). Disclosure must be:
- a. in accordance with the data protection legislation<sup>67</sup> (section 17(6)(c)), and
  - b. not prohibited by any of Parts 1 to 7 or Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (section 17(6)(d)).
190. Section 17(7) provides that any information supplied to a local policing body under this section must be used only by that body for the purpose of enabling or assisting it to perform its functions under section 14 and for purposes of preventing and reducing serious violence in relation to the Duty. Nor can information be further disseminated outside of that local policing body. This means it can only be used for purposes connected with assisting and monitoring specified authorities in the exercise of their functions under the Serious Violence Duty. For example, it could not be used, or shared with the police or other law enforcement agencies, for other purposes.

## Regulation making powers (section 10)

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<sup>67</sup>Primarily the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018.

191. Section 10 of the PCSC Act provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations conferring powers on specified authorities to collaborate with prescribed persons (and vice versa). Prescribed persons could be in the public, voluntary or private sectors. These will be put in place when local areas experience legal challenges working together. Section 10 also provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations authorising the disclosure of information between a prescribed person and specified authorities, local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents), educational, prison and youth custody authorities. Any such information sharing gateway would be subject to similar limitations on what can be disclosed to those found in sections 16 and 17.

## Data protection

192. All responsible authorities should already have arrangements in place that clearly set out the processes and principles for sharing information internally. In addition, these arrangements may cover sharing information within the local partnership and with external bodies, including processing personal data in order that it can be anonymised for sharing purposes. Where relevant, such arrangements should include the purpose for sharing the data, what is to happen to the data at relevant points and clarity on respective roles. Data sharing agreements may need to be established where they are not already in place. These should include effective safeguarding measures to make it clear that the purpose of the data is to ensure the appropriate support and interventions for individuals can be put in place. Guidance on data sharing arrangement sharing for people who provide safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers can be accessed here [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-advice-for-safeguarding-practitioners).

193. Disclosures of personal information (excluding patient information and/or personal information for health and care authorities) under sections 16 and 17, and under any regulations made under section 10, will only be permitted if they do not contravene data protection legislation as defined in section 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018<sup>68</sup> This includes Part 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018, for law enforcement processing, and the UK-GDPR, for general processing.

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<sup>68</sup> Primarily the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018

194. In circumstances where health and care authorities consider that disclosures of personal data not authorised by this legislation are required to support the prevention and reduction of serious violence, this should be done in accordance with existing guidance<sup>69</sup> and data sharing gateways and the relevant data protection frameworks.
195. Specified authorities should design privacy into their partnerships from the beginning of the process and before exercising the relevant functions under the PCSC Act, including for example, having all appropriate data protection or sharing agreements and notices in place and being able to exhibit good evidence of compliance with the data protection legislation.
196. When disclosing personal data or otherwise processing personal data in order that effectively anonymised data might be shared, all responsible authorities:
- a. Must comply with the processing conditions under data protection legislation - including being transparent about the purposes for which your organisation processes personal data and the circumstances in which you might do so when complying with the Serious Violence Duty.
  - b. Should be aware of the exemptions from certain UK GDPR provisions contained in Schedule 2 to the Data Protection Act 2018, to the extent that the application of those UK GDPR provisions would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. Where those purposes would not be likely to be prejudiced, any processing must comply with the UK GDPR as normal.

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<sup>69</sup> General Medical Council. Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information



### **Case study: Example of effective data-sharing model (influencing and impacting mainstream delivery)**

The Essex Violence & Vulnerability (V&V) Partnership is a forum which successfully brings together agencies and organisations across Southend, Essex and Thurrock to develop joint strategies and direction for tackling serious violence across Essex. This includes the effective sharing of data to ensure approaches are delivered in response to identified needs. The Partnership enables organisations to identify issues so that a joint approach can be taken to solving them. As part of the Partnership's work on data-sharing, one of the issues identified across the partnership has been the timely sharing of information across the criminal justice (CJ) agencies, compounded by Covid. The Partnership has considered how this issue has impacted on how young people enter the criminal justice system, who are involved in serious violence and gangs and at risk of exploitation in the pre-court period (and recognising that this period can be over many months). The Partnership engaged with relevant teams from Essex Police, Probation, and Youth Offending Services to understand the issues being faced by the individuals and the agencies involved. The Partnership developed a plan which met the needs of all services by ensuring:

- Prompt and secure dissemination of bail / 'released under investigation' (RUI) data
- Appropriate training and guidance in information sharing to teams across the agencies
- Review of information sharing processes between the agencies

This led to the identification of aspects of the system which were causing blockers between agencies, and measures were put in place to improve information sharing between the teams. Following on from this, tailored approaches in Southend, Essex and Thurrock, have been developed, designed to build on the increased intelligence and information sharing between Essex Police and other multi agency partners from this work. An example of this in Essex, is a pilot "Reroute" which aims to work across Essex Police and Essex Youth Offending Service, to support, protect and enforce against those young people who are either released under investigation or are on police bail.

## Chapter Three: Engagement

### Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London

197. Local policing bodies, being Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Common Council of the City of London, have an important part to play as a lead convener for local partner agencies as they are responsible for the totality of policing in their area, as well as services for victims of crime.
198. Whilst not subject to the Duty themselves, local policing bodies will have a key role in supporting delivery. As with PCCs and the MOPAC's existing functions in relation to Community Safety Partnerships, they may choose to assist specified authorities in the exercise of their functions. This may include collaborating with local partnerships and taking a lead convening role to support the development and implementation of the local strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.
199. They may also monitor specified authorities' exercise of their functions under the Duty.
200. This also applies to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
201. Regulations conferring functions on local policing bodies have been made under section 14 of the PCSC Act<sup>70</sup>, to enable them to assist a specified authority in relation to the Duty. This includes making grants to specified authorities, convening and chairing meetings, requiring representatives of the specified authorities, relevant authorities (educational, prison or youth custody authorities) or such other persons as

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<sup>70</sup> These regulations The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 were laid in Parliament on 12 December 2022. [The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence \(Strategies etc.\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2022/1212/contents/make)

they consider appropriate to attend such meetings, and providing administrative and management support to the specified authority.

202. Grant funding for specified authorities will be administered, on behalf of the Home Office, by local policing bodies. Specified authorities may approach their local policing body for relevant guidance.

203. Local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) may also monitor specified authorities exercise of their Serious Violence Duty functions. Specified authorities must co-operate with a local policing body in relation to the Duty when a local policing body requests it to do so, however the local policing body should consider the proportionality of additional requests and anticipated costs to specified authorities before making any such requests. This includes requests for information made under section 17 of the PCSC Act in order to fulfil their role of enabling and monitoring the effectiveness of local strategies.<sup>71</sup> Such requests must only be for information held by the authority to whom the request was made, and the information must only relate to that authority, a function of that authority except where functions are contracted out. There must also be sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that information is disclosed in line with relevant data protection legislation.

### **Serious Violence Prevention in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly**

In February 2020 the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable jointly established a Serious Violence Prevention Programme (with £1M per annum funded by local taxpayers through the council tax precept) to tackle serious violence using a public health approach. A programme director was appointed to lead the portfolio across both organisations and the wider partnership, hosted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

### **Developing the Evidence Base**

During the programme's initiation, the OPCC and Police worked with Crest Advisory, alongside the Social Care Institute for Excellence, to build an evidence base for tackling serious violence through a multi-agency joint strategic needs assessment. Research looked at violence across four thematic areas: (1) violence in public spaces, (2) violence in

<sup>71</sup> As set out in section 14 of the PCSC Act.

the home, (3) violence associated with other criminality (including organised crime and gang culture/ criminal exploitation) and (4) violence against emergency workers.

Publicly available data and local datasets from partners were analysed across the force area, plus extensive stakeholder engagement via interviews, focus groups, workshops, events and Board meetings. This resulted in the strategic needs assessment, homicide and serious case reviews, best practice guide and a series of stakeholder events.

### **Refining the Strategy**

An evidence based strategy was produced with an aim to take a preventative, partnership approach to victims, offenders, and locations to reduce the risk of involvement in violence thereby making the area safer and more resilient.

Three core priorities make up the programme's strategy:

**PEOPLE:** Ensure quality support is available for young people under 25 on the edge of violence.

**PARTNERSHIPS:** An ambitious partnership that works together to prevent serious violence by holding each other to world-class standards.

**PLACES:** Home is a safe place to be and public spaces where there is more likelihood of violence will be prioritised.

### **Implementing targeted interventions**

The partnership delivers through policing and externally commissions a range of services aimed at supporting vulnerable young people under 25.

Interventions focus on preventing violence in young people, their family and intergenerational networks. Parents, guardians, and wider family members are also able to access support for themselves.

The programme has demonstrated considerable success since its launch. It has supported just under 1,400 young people, with almost 140 wider family interventions delivered across over 30 projects, including 6 community projects, 8 police led projects and 19 partnership projects driven by 9 Community Safety Partnership's (CSPs).

Community Safety Partnerships and their respective Local Authorities have already received an investment of £800k from the programme over the last two years to help them prepare for implementation of the Duty in their local areas and to co-design projects to meet the strategy.

A 'Theory of Change' was built with Crest Advisory to connect each project back to the overarching strategy and to lay the groundwork for evaluation and data collection.

### **Clear accountability**

The programme has both internal and external governance boards to oversee the work and the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty.

PCCs are uniquely placed to bring agencies and organisations together to oversee the totality of work taking place towards the prevention and reduction of violence particularly in complex geographical areas with multiple partners who are not coterminous. The PCC, together with the Chief Constable, led two senior leader events to brief, enthuse and galvanise strategic leaders from across the peninsula to ensure that key specified authorities can connect and progress key ambitions relating to not only the programme but the Duty. During these sessions, it was agreed:

- Partners from across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will adopt the programme's shared approach to guide their own organisational responsibilities to the Serious Violence Duty and to sign up to a partnership concordat.
- The programme will lead a Task and Finish Group to coordinate and steer peninsula wide priorities and workstreams with each participating organisation nominating a primary point of contact.
- Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) would act as the lead local delivery mechanism for the new Duty with many CSPs choosing to set up a specific serious violence delivery group to steer activities and the Duty's implementation locally. These groups connect at the force level via the Task and Finish Group.

For further information on the approach, please see this blog post co-written by Crest Advisory and the Devon and Cornwall OPCC team following a national showcase event.

## Violence Reduction Units

204. Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) are non-statutory, collaborative partnerships. Currently there are 20 VRUs<sup>72</sup> that have been established with the help of Home Office funding in areas of England and Wales that experience highest volumes of serious violence, though other areas may also independently choose to set up similar partnerships.
205. VRUs implement a ‘public health’ approach to tackling serious violence, which follows the 5Cs; Collaboration, Co-production, Co-operation in data and intelligence sharing, Counter-narrative, and Community Consensus.<sup>73</sup> This approach aims to support long-term reductions in serious violence by understanding the root causes and intervening with both short and long term solutions to prevent those most at risk from becoming involved in serious violence in the first place.
206. A VRU’s core function is to lead and co-ordinate the local response to serious violence in their areas. As systems leaders, VRUs bring together insights and expertise from key local partners to identify the drivers of violent crime, defining the populations and areas most at risk, and work in collaboration with them, using the current evidence-base, to determine, agree and deliver the targeted activity that can best prevent and impact on serious violence.
207. VRUs bring together mandatory membership from, the Chief Constable for the area, the Police and Crime Commissioner, local authorities with responsibility for the geographical areas principally targeted by the activities of the VRU, the Integrated Care Boards, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities/Wales and the Youth Offending Team. Representatives of local education institutions, community groups including young people and the voluntary sector are also key partners in many VRUs.

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<sup>72</sup> The 20 areas in receipt of a VRU funding allocation from the Home Office are as follows: Metropolitan Police, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Northumbria, Thames Valley, Lancashire, Essex, Avon and Somerset, Kent, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Hampshire, South Wales, Cleveland (since 22/23 and Humberside (since 22/23).

<sup>73</sup> As set out in ‘A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention’ by Public Health England (now OHID):  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/838930/multi-agency\\_approach\\_to\\_serious\\_violence\\_prevention.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf)

208. Specified authorities through local partnerships and/or CSPs will wish to work closely with VRUs (if there is one present in their area) in the development of the Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy. Specified authorities may wish to incorporate, align or refer to these products in the development of their strategy. However the geographical areas covered by VRUs are at police force or regional level and as such may be too broad to act in place of a local needs assessment on behalf of the specified authorities for the local area (which may be carried out by CSPs/local partnerships).
209. As VRUs also commission local services to deliver interventions and, in fulfilling their core function, are expected to hold significant information about the current provision in the region. Through their co-produced Strategic Needs Assessments, VRUs will also hold information about the impact of violence on local communities including the impact of health inequalities.

## Voluntary and Community Sector

210. Throughout England and Wales, there are many voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations working to tackle serious violence or serious violence related issues and ultimately improve outcomes for young people.
211. These organisations are often highly skilled and knowledgeable on specific local issues and communities. The voluntary sector can provide essential expertise, often from people with lived experiences of violence. Locally based organisations are often very trusted in communities, and as such can engage with people within the community, in a way that public bodies may not be able to. This may also be further enhanced through the recruitment of individuals with lived experience. By engaging with the voluntary and community sector, specified authorities may therefore gain a richer understanding of the serious violence issues within their local areas.
212. The VCS comprises a range of organisations, including but not limited to; community groups, voluntary organisations, faith and equalities groups, charities, social enterprises, housing associations and the specialist violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence sector. All of which may be relevant to engage with as part of the initial identification of the local strategic needs assessment, the development of the response strategy, its subsequent implementation and review.

## What to consider when engaging with the VCS

213. Collaborative working with the VCS is key to delivering policies that tackle the issues that matter to communities and to strengthen the resilience of this sector in addressing these issues. In order to achieve better outcomes, statutory partnerships and VCS organisations should work together to build effective working relationships. However, it is important that VCS organisations maintain their independence in order to uphold their role as advocates for their beneficiaries and the community and preserve the trust of their service users.
214. Early engagement ensures that the key stages of policy development can reflect the expertise of this sector and can provide valuable insight into how policies are likely to impact communities. Expectations should also be set in line with the capacity of the organisation in question.
215. It is also important to give proper notice of funding opportunities or decisions and ensure that funding terms are fair and enable local organisations to participate.
216. The Compact is a voluntary agreement<sup>74</sup> which may be used as a vehicle to foster strong, effective partnerships between statutory partnerships and VCS organisations. Its principles apply to all relationships between VCS organisations, local authorities and public bodies that are distributing funds on behalf of the government. Many local areas in England also have a local Compact or other arrangement to promote effective partnership working.

**Case study: Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector - Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Violence Reduction Network (VRN)**

<sup>74</sup> The agreement which governs relations between the government and civil society organisations in England. [Government, voluntary and community sector agree new Compact for working in partnership - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-voluntary-and-community-sector-agree-new-compact-for-working-in-partnership)



When the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland VRN was established in September 2019, the principle of ‘with and for communities’ was embedded within their core approach. The term Network, rather than Unit, was used to reflect the need for all groups, organisations and communities to work collaboratively to tackle the complex causes of violence. This inclusive approach means that communities were considered as partners from the outset.

Through the allocation of resource, in terms of time and money, and an unwavering commitment to continuously advocate for the involvement of communities in the work of the VRN, the following activity has been achieved:

- A dedicated role within the VRN central team to engage, support and involve communities and provide additional capacity to pursue initiatives and projects.
- Universal and targeted insights work – including surveys, focus groups and Network Events for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) –to ensure that the Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy is co-produced with communities and young people.
- Learning and development opportunities for grassroots community groups to increase capacity including the design and delivery of a Community Leadership Programme.
- Board membership extended to include representation from charities and grassroots community groups to enable joint decision-making and resource allocation.
- Co-designing VRN interventions with young people and communities, and building experiential feedback into evaluation for continuous improvement.
- Partnering with and funding grassroots community groups to increase youth involvement and to deliver services with and for young people.

This broad and inclusive partnership has enabled the VRN to continuously extend its reach and increase its relevance and impact in relation to reducing violence affecting young people. However, it is recognised that further progress is required to secure the cultural change necessary for the VRN to be a fully community-focused and community-driven partnership and this work is continuing in preparation for the new Duty.

## Children and Young People

217. Children and young people under 18 have a different legal status and a range of different vulnerabilities to adults in the context of youth violence<sup>75</sup>. A child is up to the age of 18 and a young person is between the ages of 18 – 25.
218. Engaging children and young people is important to make sure they have a say on the issues which affect them and that they care about. This is especially important for those who are in receipt of services and support that the agencies and bodies involved in the partnership provide and who also may be particularly vulnerable, for example, children or young people and those involved in the criminal justice system, out of mainstream schooling, and children in care and/or victims of crime. Those causing serious violence may be victims themselves which may impact on their criminality and offending. In addition, it should be recognised that young people from Minority Ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately disadvantaged in many areas including education, housing, health, and poverty so are over-represented at most stages of the youth justice system.
219. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right and places a duty on tier 1 local authorities to provide support services for them, as well as their parents, in safe accommodation and to consider the full range of existing legislation and safeguards to protect children.
220. The Government has carried out comprehensive research into the drivers of violent crime and the characteristics of perpetrators and victims.<sup>76</sup> We know that there are overlapping risk factors of becoming a victim and/or perpetrator of serious violence and these risk factors apply at an individual, family and community level. Partnerships should be mindful of this overlap when engaging with children and young people and developing interventions which are targeted at or may affect them.
221. It is also important to consider how safe children and young people feel when going about their daytime and evening activities, to address their concerns and ensure that they are aware of the work being undertaken in their local area to prevent and reduce serious violence and improve their safety in the community. Most local authorities or

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<sup>75</sup> [Youth violence \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence)

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

areas have a local youth council or other youth engagement forums which provides opportunities for children and young people to work with decision-makers on a range of issues, such as the prevention of knife crime. Some areas also have young mayors, youth police and crime commissioners and youth forums within VCS youth organisations which could all be engaged. Schools, colleges and where appropriate, universities, often have relevant consultation and engagement forums and groups as well.

222. The quality of engagement is extremely important to support young people when they are volunteering their time to improve their communities. Young people are diverse, and this should be reflected in efforts to seek views on evidence and issues for the partnership. Some young people may need their support workers (youth workers, mental health worker, personal advisor etc.) to be involved alongside them in order to effectively engage in consultations and community planning. Specified authorities may also want to consider allocating an appropriate budget for out of pocket expenses prior to engagement.

223. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) was established in 2019 following a £200m endowment from the Home Office. The 10-year programme aims to support this Government's response to serious violence by developing the evidence base on what works to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence and making this accessible to front-line policy-makers and practitioners. The YEF have developed a Toolkit which summarises the best available research evidence about different approaches to preventing serious youth violence. It is based on real life data about what has happened when these approaches have been used before. It provides an insight on a growing number of different approaches, with more to be added in the future. For each approach it explains what it is, how effective it's likely to be, how confident you can be in the evidence of its impact, as well as indicative costs and links to related resources and programmes.

**Case study: Example of effective engagement and collaboration with communities**

The Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit provides leadership and the strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence, bringing together various partners to achieve this outcome. In addition to significant co-working with a variety of partners, the VRU places great importance in community engagement and ensuring the needs of local young people shape both strategy and delivery. Community voices are therefore incorporated within the VRU structure, with representatives joining the Oversight Board in 2021.

In 2020, the VRU worked with the Police Gangs Superintendent to establish a County Lines Reference Group, where representatives from community organisations meet with the Gangs Team leadership and the VRU Directors. Community representatives have the chance to hear about and comment on the work being carried out to tackle County Lines and the associated exploitation, and the forum is where they can hold decision makers to account.

As well as community organisations, the group has representatives from education and faith groups who are able to contribute to the discussion and ensure that their views are heard. In 2021, the work of the group led to the VRU providing additional funding to parent support groups for those parents whose children have been exploited by county lines. Parents now attend the Reference Group, and their experience helps shape the planning for future work, and the VRU meet with the parents outside of the group to follow up on discussions.

The community representatives of the Reference Group have two seats on the VRU Oversight Board, which ensures that the discussions within the Board and the planning of the work of the VRU reflect the needs of local communities. The community representatives are often the most active and vocal of the Board members and ensure that decisions are informed by the needs of the communities that they reflect.

# Chapter Four: Sector Specific Guidance

## Police

224. The police have a critical role to play in enforcing the law to protect the public.

However, the requirements relating to the Duty make clear that a partnership response to serious violence, involving a range of lead agencies, is required. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence which are crucial in reversing the increase in harm largely caused by and against young people. Existing work to investigate, disrupt, deter and enforce using the full range of policing powers and tools available (for example, stop and search) should still continue as well as work undertaken within statutory safeguarding arrangements to support vulnerable children and young people, referring to support and healthcare services where appropriate.

225. The Duty applies to the Chief Officer of police for all police force areas in England and Wales. Chief Officers of police are specified authorities under the PCSC Act. The Chief Officer should ensure that there is appropriate representation to all partnerships operating within their force area. This representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with local partnerships, including by establishing and maintaining the use of anonymised information from NHS emergency departments regarding the locations in which people are injured in violence and weapons used
- Share relevant police data and information to inform the strategic needs assessment for the local area (for example; data on numbers and trends in violence against the person including knife crime, gun crime<sup>77</sup>, homicides and drugs as well as domestic abuse or sexual violence related incidents, , information on local serious violence hotspots including people and places, information on county lines drug dealing etc.)

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<sup>77</sup> General Medical Council provide data sharing guidance on reporting gun shots and knife wounds.  
[Reporting gunshot and knife wounds - ethical guidance - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical/guidance-reporting-gunshots-and-knife-wounds)

- Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified
- Facilitate the use of a relevant risk assessment tool
- Support work to deliver prevention and early intervention activities and explain to partners how their data can help inform this work

226. The Duty does not apply to ports policing, nuclear policing, the Ministry of Defence Police or British Transport Police, however where such forces operate within a local area, the Chief Officer could usefully consider how to engage such forces where necessary.

## Justice

### Prisons

227. Prisons help to protect the public and play an important role in the rehabilitation of people who have committed violent offences. People in prison and people on probation include those that can contribute to violence both in the prison, and in the wider community, through demand for drugs and contraband and participation in organised crime. The prison population also includes people who are at risk of being a victim of violence, particularly domestic abuse in the case of females.

228. There are a number of different categories and types of prison, containing different cohorts of individuals and therefore not all will have relevance for the local partnerships. Many may also house a population that has very little connection with the local authority area in which they are located. Whilst prison authorities are not core duty holders, specified authorities must consult them in the preparation of the local strategy, but prison authorities may also choose to collaborate with a specified authority or another prison authority, a youth custody authority or an educational authority in that area of their own volition, or any of those other bodies may require them to collaborate. Where prisons choose, or are requested, to actively collaborate with the partnership, they should be asked to input into the development of the strategic needs assessment and consent to any actions in the strategy which may apply to them.

229. Where and when requested, a prison must comply with actions in a local strategy, so long as they:

- are compatible with any other statutory duties;
- would not have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions;
- are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally; and
- would not mean that the prison authority incurred unreasonable costs.

230. Local partnerships should engage prisons in their area early and regularly throughout the development of the strategy, to ensure that:

- There is a shared understanding about the relationship between the prison and serious violence in the local area.
- There is an informed view about how partners can support in-prison efforts to reduce violence and rehabilitate people in prison.

231. When considering the evidence that a prison can contribute, local partnerships should try to look beyond the headline violence data. This may be supported by involving prison staffing groups, Prison Group Safety leads in the consultation process.

232. Prisons co-operate closely with wider law enforcement in investigating criminality, pursuing suspects, and ensuring the security of prisons and the protection of the public. Insight from these institutions can inform the work of the local partnership, although the ongoing co-operation through existing structures should continue in any case.

233. The governor or director of the prison is responsible for complying with the Duty<sup>78</sup>. They may wish to identify a suitable representative, who should be able to:

- Engage with the relevant partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence.
- Share and contextualise anonymised aggregate prison data that is published or collated for business as usual purposes by the prison or HMPPS nationally.

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<sup>78</sup> As set out above, their duties under the PCSC Act include collaborating with specified authorities or other relevant authorities in the area (where requested to), carrying out any actions specified in the strategy and responding to requests for information.

- Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified.
- Communicate the role of prisons in cutting crime and the rehabilitation of people in prison, and work with community partners to develop work in this area.
- Identify impacts of serious violence within the local community e.g. violence against staffing groups and people within establishments.

234. Prisons already work alongside police and probation through existing multi-agency partnerships, such as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Schemes, to assess and manage eligible violent offenders at a strategic level. Prisons also have a responsibility to work with police and other law enforcement agencies to share information on criminal activity such as serious violence impacting communities from inside custody establishments. Some prisons also participate in local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). However, many prisons are not routinely involved in the partnerships that may be chosen to deliver this Duty. Partnerships should consider this in how they support prisons' involvement and take a pragmatic approach to how prisons are involved in partnership arrangements.

## Children and Young People Secure Estate

235. The Children and Young People Secure Estate (CYPSE) settings protect the public and have a critical role to play in the care and rehabilitation of children who have committed or may be at risk of becoming involved in serious violence. Working with other agencies and organisations they can plan and deliver evidence-led child centred approaches which can help to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes violence reduction within secure establishments themselves, and in the wider community.

236. The Duty will apply to youth custody authorities in the same manner as prisons (detailed above).

237. Governors of Young Offender Institutions, Governors or Directors of Secure Training Centres, Registered Managers of Secure Children's Homes and Heads of



Secure Schools are responsible for complying with the Duty. Governors of Young Offender Institutions and Governors of Secure Training Centres may wish to identify a representative. The representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with the local partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence both in the community and within secure establishments
- Support the development of the evidence-based strategic needs assessment and publication and implementation of the strategy to address the drivers of serious violence within establishments and within the local partnership area
- Identify opportunities for agencies to work across local authority boundaries to tackle specific serious violence issues
- Share relevant aggregated and anonymised data, operational knowledge and experience transparently (for example; data and trends in drug dealing, resettlement needs, security issues, violence against staff and contraband, insight and experience relating to children and young people who have offended, useful information which may support crime prevention, and, where appropriate, insight and information from resident children and young people themselves)
- Review and build upon existing partnerships wherever possible (e.g. Youth Offending Teams, Children's Social Care, Secure Children's Homes<sup>79</sup>, NHS and Education providers)
- Identify impacts of serious violence within the local community e.g. violence against staff and children within establishments

238. Local Partnerships need to support the work of secure establishments and recognise the needs of children in custody and resettling them back to the community, within the context of their life experiences. To jointly recognise that the vulnerability and complexity of needs amongst the cohort of children and young people is not mutually exclusive from the risk they may pose to others and that addressing the former is key to mitigating the latter. It is important that Local Partnerships help every child and young person involved in offending behaviours to feel safe, to support them in healing

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<sup>79</sup> For the purposes of the duty, all types of residential care for looked-after children, including secure children's homes, will be the responsibility of the local authority in which they are located. The onus will therefore be on the local authority to ensure engagement between the partnership and such institutions where necessary.

from trauma and to develop more positive identities, where they can be celebrated for the positive contributions they can bring to local communities.

## Youth Offending Teams

239. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are multi-agency teams responsible for helping to cut crime and for the supervision of children subject to pre-court interventions and statutory court disposals.

240. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, YOTs have a duty to co-operate as a multi-agency entity to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area and drive a strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people. They play a critical role as they are well placed to identify children and young people known to relevant organisations and agencies who are likely to be involved in perpetrating serious violence. Through existing partnerships, they collaborate with partners to aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence.

241. The YOT must comply with the Duty, as specified authorities under the PCSC Act, and should nominate a representative from the team who should be able to:

- Engage fully with the relevant local partnership to prevent and tackle serious violence, and where applicable, as a core member of the local Violence Reduction Unit
- Share relevant aggregated and anonymised data, where practicable, to support the development of the evidence-based problem profile/strategic assessment (for example; information on local serious violence hotspots, information on county lines drug dealing networks and wider child criminal exploitation etc.)
- Support publication and implementation of the strategy to address the risks identified, ensuring that children and their interests are fairly represented in such discussions
- Identify and act to ensure children's best interests, including safeguarding requirements and reducing vulnerability to criminal exploitation, are kept at the forefront of any strategic planning

- Advise on appropriate responses to increase levels of safety within the local partnership area and enable children to be able to move beyond their offending behaviour and status.
- Assist in the delivery of prevention and early intervention initiatives where possible, and explain to partners how their input can help enhance this work
- Work across local authority areas and organisational boundaries where children are not located in the partnership area (for example, when leaving custody, transitioning from youth to adult custody or in county lines drug dealing cases where children may be far from their home area)

## Probation

242. Probation helps to protect the public and reduce reoffending, with a focus on overseeing the rehabilitation activities for those on licence or serving community sentences. For those sentenced to prison, the aim is to address the factors linked to their offending behaviour whilst in custody and prepare them for release on licence to the community. Once released the Probation Service is responsible for supervising the individual and initiating recall where necessary for public protection, as well as managing risks, continuing the rehabilitative process and helping the individual to reintegrate successfully. For those serving community sentences, the Probation Service is responsible for ensuring the individual meets the requirements ordered by the courts.

243. Alongside the distinct role the Probation Service has in reducing and preventing re-offending through the delivery of rehabilitative activities and interventions amongst those convicted of violent offences, they are responsible for communicating with and prioritising the wellbeing of victims of violent offences, when an individual has received a prison sentence of 12 months or more, or is detained as a mental health patient.

244. The Probation Service also work alongside police and prisons through existing multi-agency partnerships, such as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Schemes, to assess and manage eligible violent individuals at a strategic level.

245. The Duty applies to a provider of probation services under section 3(6) of the Offender Management Act 2007, who are specified authorities under the PCSC Act. Local Delivery Unit (LDU) heads who represent the Probation Service at Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) should be responsible for ensuring that there is appropriate representation to the partnership. The representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with the local partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence
- Share currently collated and/or published data and information to inform the strategic assessment for the local area (for example; Offender management quarterly statistics – key statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision and/or Criminal court statistics – National Statistics on cases in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court)
- Use relevant aggregated Risk-Need-Responsivity Data to inform the design and commissioning of interventions aimed at reducing reoffending (The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model<sup>80</sup>)
- Support the development and implementation of the local strategy to address the risks identified
- Collaborate with local partners to help reduce instances of re-offending amongst violent offenders and protect vulnerable groups (for example, victims of domestic abuse)

## Health

246. Violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing, and is related to the difference in health status, social determinants of healthcare and health related behaviours between areas and communities; it is strongly related to inequalities. Data has shown that the poorest fifth of people in England have hospital admission rates for violence five times higher than those of the most affluent fifth.<sup>81</sup> It affects individuals

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<sup>80</sup> [The Risk-Need-Responsivity Model \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

<sup>81</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/216977/Violence-prevention.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216977/Violence-prevention.pdf)

and communities and is a drain on health services, the criminal justice system and the wider economy.

247. One of the key ambitions of the NHS's Long-Term Plan is to prevent illness and tackle health inequalities. Core20PLUS5 is a national NHS England approach to support the reduction of health inequalities at both national and system level. The approach defines a target population cohort and identifies '5' focus clinical areas requiring accelerated improvement. The approach, which initially focused on healthcare inequalities experienced by adults, has now been adapted to apply to children and young people.
248. Preventative interventions aimed specifically at reducing inequalities to prevent violence and address its root causes, especially those in early childhood, improve multiple long-term outcomes including the prosperity for violence, education, employability and health.
249. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are partnerships of health and care organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up services and to improve the health of people who live and work in their area.
250. They exist to achieve four aims:
- **tackle inequalities** in outcomes, experience and access
  - enhance **productivity and value for money**
  - help the NHS support broader **social and economic development**
  - **improve outcomes** in population health and healthcare
251. Each ICS comprises of an:
- Integrated care partnership (ICP): the broad alliance of organisations and representatives concerned with improving the care, health and wellbeing of the population, jointly convened by local authorities and the NHS.
  - Integrated care board (ICB): bringing the NHS together locally to improve population health and care and establish shared strategic priorities within the NHS, connecting to partnership arrangements at system and place.
252. The Health and Care Act 2022 put ICBs on a statutory footing. ICBs have a key role

to play in joining up services within the NHS and across public health, social care and education.

253. The ICB is specifically subject to the Serious Violence Duty and must collaborate with other duty holders to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area.
254. The ICB is required to produce an integrated care strategy which should describe how the assessed needs of the local population are to be met through the exercise of functions by the ICB, local authorities and NHS England. It must address integration of health and social care and should address integration with health-related services.
255. The ICB is also required to produce a 5-year joint forward plan (JFP) in conjunction with their partner trusts and foundation trusts. The JFP should reflect the collective ambitions of the ICB, local NHS partners, local authorities and wider system partners to meet the health needs of the ICB's population, as well as describing the delivery of ambitions articulated in the integrated care strategy.
256. Under the Health and Care Act 2022, the ICB has a particular duty to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse and of children and young people are specifically addressed in their JFPs.
257. In meeting the Duty, the ICB should consider these existing plans and strategies when developing strategies to reduce serious violence. They should also consider how existing structures and partnerships within the ICS could facilitate implementation of the strategy.
258. To meet the legislative requirements of the Duty, the accountable officer of an ICB should ensure that there is appropriate representation to the partnership of specified authorities. As part of the partnership, this representative will be expected to:
- Facilitate the sharing of relevant anonymous health data and information to inform the problem profile/strategic needs assessment for the area (for example, number of violent injuries treated within NHS urgent care settings),
  - Support the development and implementation of a strategy to identify and mitigate the risks identified and agree an approach to preventing serious

violence, managing related health problems, and improving wellbeing/resilience of the community.

259. The implementation of the strategy may include facilitating appropriate commissioning within the local health system to prevent, treat and manage serious violence as set out in the strategy. Where possible, an ICB should (co-)commission support services for those at risk of or involved in serious violence (including from the voluntary and community sector).
260. Depending on the geographic boundaries of the partnership(s) in their commissioning area, ICBs may need to engage directly with all serious violence partnerships in their area. In some areas, there will be more than one ICB per partnership area. Although each ICB must comply with the Duty, they may consider it appropriate to nominate a 'lead' or consider a 'hosting' arrangement for input and active engagement into the serious violence partnership on behalf of other ICBs. In this case, the serious violence lead should ensure the input of all ICBs in the geographical footprint.
261. Health is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in Chapter 1 'Delivery in Wales'. The Duty applies to Local Health Boards as specified authorities in Wales.

## Sharing of patient and personal information

262. Under the Duty there are specific limitations under section 16 and 17 of the PCSC Act on the disclosure of information by health and social care authorities. Patient information and personal information (i.e. information that can be used to identify a person either directly or indirectly) is not permitted to be disclosed and health and social authorities can only share anonymous data. Further details can be found in the Information Sharing chapter of this guidance.
263. If patient or personal information that can be used to identify an individual is shared by a health or social care authority in reliance on alternative legal powers, such disclosures must be consistent with the existing legal framework, which includes both

the common law duty of confidence, as well as the Data Protection Act 2018. The General Medical Council (GMC) have produced guidance on this<sup>82</sup>.

## Local Authority

264. Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of a range of vital services for people and businesses in a local area, including but not limited to, children's and adult's social care, children and adult safeguarding, schools, housing<sup>83</sup> and planning, youth services, business support, alcohol licensing, leisure, substance misuse, community safety as well as public health commissioning and commissioning of support services for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls crimes<sup>84</sup>, so will have an essential role to play in partnership arrangements.

265. Local authority Chief Executives should ensure that there is appropriate representation to the partnership to fulfil the local authority's duties. This representation may be delegated to an appropriate senior officer.

266. Within the Local Government landscape, specified authorities subject to the Duty are:

- A district council
- A county council in England
- A London borough council
- The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
- The Council of the Isles of Scilly
- A county council in Wales
- A county borough council in Wales

267. Local authorities are well placed to complement the work of other agencies and contribute to the prevention and reduction of serious violence by:

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/confidentiality>

<sup>83</sup> Registered providers of social housing are not included within the Serious Violence Duty

<sup>84</sup> The [National Statement of Expectations](#) and commissioning toolkit provide guidance on how to commission effective services to tackle violence against women and girls



- Sharing a range of relevant aggregated data sets for the development of the strategic needs assessment (for example data already collected from local schools and social care services),
- Conducting wider preventative work addressing general factors that contribute to risk and vulnerability (e.g. poverty, housing<sup>85</sup>, family challenges, environment),
- Leading on wider public health commissioning to support prevention and address risk factors or impacts of trauma (e.g. substance misuse services including alcohol treatment services),
- Providing information on availability/pressures on local resources including housing, community support, children's social care, etc., and
- Effectively commissioning and supporting early intervention initiatives such as Keeping Children Safe In Education<sup>86</sup> which could be required in response to issues concerning child criminal exploitation, gang activity, sexual violence, domestic abuse.

268. Local authorities should also be mindful of settings or locations falling within their jurisdiction which may have a specific risk or issue relating to serious violence, particularly when carrying out the initial local strategic needs assessment. This may include residential care facilities for children in care, including secure children's homes, supported accommodation and domestic abuse accommodation- based services. Other public spaces such as parks, for which local authorities are responsible or Anti-Social Behaviour areas as locations of vulnerability, should also be considered as these may be areas where specific forms of serious violence are prevalent.

269. Mayoral Combined Authorities are able to participate in partnership arrangements to support the prevention and reduction of serious violence, however there is no legal obligation for them to do so.<sup>87</sup> This is due to the different functions a combined

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<sup>85</sup> Existing local authorities duties under the Housing Act 1996 are relevant here and should be considered as part of the work to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.

<sup>86</sup> [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

<sup>87</sup> An exception to this is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority which is subject to the duty, but only in respect of its role as a fire and rescue authority and only in the exercise of those functions. This applies to any future Mayoral combined authorities formed which perform fire and rescue authority functions.

authority might perform, not all of which are likely to be relevant to tackling serious violence. Constituent authorities may choose to collaborate through the overarching structure of a combined authority however they remain individually accountable for their participation.

270. For the purposes of the Duty, local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are a separate specified authority, and so are treated as independent to the local authority. YOTs will therefore be responsible for engaging with the partnership in their own right.

271. Local Government is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in chapter one, Delivery in Wales.

## Housing and homelessness

272. Local authorities will be best placed to provide a strategic overview of and information about housing and associated issues in the local area. Existing requirements under housing legislation should be considered as part of the work to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty. It is essential that this includes recognising and protecting the cohorts most at risk of involvement in serious violence.

273. Section 195 of the Housing Act 1996<sup>88</sup> places a duty on housing authorities to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help prevent them from becoming homeless – ‘the ‘prevention duty’. Section 189B of the 1996 Act<sup>89</sup> requires housing authorities to help people who are homeless to secure accommodation – the ‘relief duty’. Under these duties, the housing authority is obliged to take reasonable steps to help the applicant either remain in their existing accommodation (where applicable) or secure alternative accommodation. These duties apply when the housing authority is satisfied that the applicant is both homeless (or at risk within 56 days) and eligible for assistance.

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<sup>88</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/68/section/195)

<sup>89</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/68/section/189B)

274. Section 177(1) of the Housing Act 1996<sup>90</sup> defines violence as violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out. This is in relation to whether it is reasonable to continue to occupy accommodation and the circumstances to be considered as to whether a person runs a risk of violence are the same.
275. Section 177(1) of the 1996 Act<sup>91</sup> provides that it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to violence against:
- a. the applicant;
  - b. a person who normally resides as a member of the applicant's family; or,
  - c. any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant.
276. It will usually be apparent from the homelessness assessment whether the applicant has had to leave accommodation because of violence or threats of violence, which can include non-contact forms of abuse. An assessment of the likelihood of a threat of violence being carried out should not be based on whether there has been actual violence in the past. Assessments must be based on the facts of the case and should be devoid of any value judgements about what an applicant should or should not do, or should or should not have done, to mitigate the risk of any further violence.
277. Certain categories of household have a priority need for homelessness assistance. A person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out, or who is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse, has a priority need as set out in section 189 of the 1996 Act<sup>92</sup>.
278. The prevention and relief duties are owed to all eligible applicants who are homeless irrespective of 'priority need'. However, if homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved, a housing authority will owe the main housing duty to applicants

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<sup>90</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>91</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>92</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally. If the local authority has reason to believe the applicant has priority need, they also have a duty to provide interim accommodation during the relief duty.

279. Section 193(2) of the 1996 Act<sup>93</sup> requires housing authorities to secure that accommodation is available for occupation for applicants who have a priority need for accommodation and, as set out in section 176 of the 1996 Act<sup>94</sup>, the accommodation must be available for occupation by the applicant together with any other person who normally resides with them as a member of the family, or might reasonably be expected to reside with them. Further information on priority need can be found at Chapter 8 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance<sup>95</sup>.

280. There are a number of potential accommodation options for victims of serious violence, and housing authorities will need to consider which are most appropriate for each person on a case by case basis taking into account their circumstances and needs. This may include safe temporary accommodation and/or a managed transfer. Housing authorities may, for example, provide temporary accommodation whilst action is taken to exclude or to arrest and detain a perpetrator.

281. Account will need to be taken of any social considerations relating to the applicant and their household that might affect the suitability of accommodation offered to them to prevent or relieve homelessness, or under the main housing duty.

282. Section 208(1) of the 1996 Act<sup>96</sup> requires housing authorities to secure accommodation within their district, in so far as is reasonably practicable. However, in circumstances where there has been serious violence or threats of serious violence in a particular locality, there may be clear benefits for the applicant of being accommodated outside of the district to ensure their safety.

283. In some circumstances, housing authorities may need to consider the need for accommodation that would not be found by a perpetrator (which may involve an out of

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<sup>93</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>94</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>95</sup> [Chapter 8: Priority need - Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<sup>96</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

district placement) and which has security measures and appropriately trained staff to protect the occupants. Housing authorities may consider implementing a reciprocal agreement with other housing authorities and providers to facilitate out of area moves for applicants at risk of violence.

284. In terms of determining the appropriate authority to take a homelessness application (local connection referrals), a housing authority cannot refer an applicant to another housing authority where they have a local connection if that person or any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them would be at risk of violence in that other district. The housing authority is under a positive duty to enquire whether the applicant would be at such a risk and, if they would, it should not be assumed that the applicant will take steps to deal with the threat of violence. For further guidance on local connection see Chapter 10 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance<sup>97</sup>.

285. It is vitally important that housing authorities work together with other services including youth offending teams, educational authorities and national probation services to provide support for victims of serious violence and their household. To ensure applicants who have experienced actual or threatened violence get the support they need, housing authorities should also inform them of appropriate specialist organisations in the area as well as agencies offering counselling and support.

286. While not subject to the Serious Violence Duty, Private Registered Providers of social housing (PRPs) have a duty under s.170 of the Housing Act 1996<sup>98</sup> to cooperate with housing authorities – where the authority requests it - to such extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's allocation scheme. This includes lettings allocated to those requiring urgent re-housing as a result of violence or threats of violence.

287. Similarly, s.213 of the 1996 Act<sup>99</sup> provides that, where a PRP has been requested by a housing authority to assist them in the discharge of their homelessness functions

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<sup>97</sup> [Chapter 10: Local connection and referrals to another housing authority - Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>98</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>99</sup> [Housing Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

under Part 7, it must cooperate to the same extent. Statutory guidance<sup>100</sup> on allocations issued in 2012, to which local authorities must pay due regard, reaffirms this.

288. Housing is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in chapter one, Delivery in Wales.

## Family support or early help

289. 'Family support, or 'early help', aims to identify vulnerable families and help build their resilience to divert them from crisis and improve their outcomes in the long-term. This approach works to tackle the root causes of a range of problems, including serious violence and offending. An effective family support system looks to identify the needs of all the family, taking into account both the needs of parents, children and carers. It provides a range of interventions to reduce the risk of families' needs escalating towards acute services, such as children's social care, A&E, the police or justice system.
290. Family support is best delivered in a multi-agency way, ensuring that all relevant partners (education, health, police, justice, voluntary and community sector, and others) are jointly working together, sharing information and best practice to help support families. This coordinated style of working means that many local areas will have existing arrangements and partnerships between family support services, Violence Reduction Units and Youth Offending Teams, among others. Areas should look to utilise these existing partnerships and consider the role of family support services when delivering towards the Duty.

## Education

291. Engagement in education is a strong protective factor against children and young people's risk of involvement in serious violence. Through engaging in good quality education, children and young people feel a sense of belonging, achievement

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<sup>100</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60df2d0de90e0771784b991f/Current\\_allocation\\_of\\_accommodation\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60df2d0de90e0771784b991f/Current_allocation_of_accommodation_guidance.pdf)

and are equipped with skills and resilience they need to be safe and to succeed in life. Education providers have a vital role in preventing and reducing serious violence by facilitating early intervention, prevention and safeguarding children and young people in their care as a relevant agency within the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. In England, the Department for Education provides the key guidance for schools and college<sup>101</sup> setting out the legal duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in schools and colleges.

292. Effective collaboration between the local partnership and educational authorities in the local area has the potential to improve police, school and college partnerships and provide support for any existing or planned institution-level interventions involving wider services for children and young people e.g. youth work or social care. This close collaboration may also add to children and young people's sense of safety in school, college and their local community as they will be more alert to the work taking place in their local area to prevent, reduce and safeguard children and young people against serious violence.
293. In recognition of the vital role schools and colleges play in safeguarding children and young people, specified authorities must consult educational authorities<sup>102</sup> including; local authority maintained schools, academies, independent schools, free schools; including primary schools, alternative provision education and further education providers located within the partnership area in the preparation of the local strategy.
294. Educational authorities may also choose to collaborate with a specified authority, a prison or youth custody authority or another educational authority in that area of their own volition. Or, if requested by the specified authorities or another prison, youth custody or educational authority, educational authorities must collaborate with other partners in the preventing and reducing serious violence in the area (the preparation and delivery of the strategy).
295. Educational authorities, defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act, are:

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<sup>101</sup> [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

<sup>102</sup> As defined in section 12 of and Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act.

- Governing bodies of maintained schools, further education colleges and sixth-form colleges in England and further education institutions in Wales
- Proprietors of academy schools, free schools, alternative provision academies and non-maintained special schools<sup>103</sup>
- Proprietors of independent schools
- Management committees of pupil referral units

296. A strategic education representative(s) or representative group for the local area should be chosen by the partnership to provide a link between the responsible authorities and individual education institutions. If a representative group is chosen, this can be made up of educational authorities across all age ranges and school or college types.

297. The role of the strategic education representative(s) or representative group may include:

- Representing the voice of education providers in discussions on serious violence locally
- Assisting the partnership to better understand the education risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by children and young people

298. The partnership and the strategic education representative(s) or representative group should:

- Use existing safeguarding structures or other approaches, to consult with the wider group of schools and education providers to gain qualitative insight into the impact of serious violence on the education sector more broadly.
- Collectively agree the ways in which the education sector can support the implementation of the strategy to address the local factors that put a child or

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<sup>103</sup> In the case of academies and free school trusts, the proprietor will be the trust itself. Multi-academy trusts spanning more than one local area will need to consider whether it is necessary to engage with one or multiple local partnerships.



young person at risk of being either a victim or perpetrator of serious violence or both.

299. Individual education providers must be consulted by the specified authorities and the strategic education representative(s) or representative group in the preparation of the local strategy, and as responsible authorities, they should:

- Provide data, as required by existing statutory duties, to Local Authorities. This data will feed into the evidence-based analysis of the risk profile of young people and the causes of serious youth violence for the local serious violence strategy. Examples of this data include data on school provision, exclusions and persistent absence. Personal (non-anonymised) data about a specific child held by schools should only be shared for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. More detail on data sharing in the context of safeguarding can be found in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and corresponding Information sharing: advice for practitioners
- Engage with the partnership via the strategic education representative(s) or representative group to provide qualitative insight into the impact of serious violence on the education sector  
Engage with the partnership via the strategic education representative to provide insight into the risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by children and young people in the local area
- Support the development and implementation of the strategy to address the local factors that put a child at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of serious violence
- Where required deliver at an individual institution level actions that are specified in the strategy which have been agreed by the partnership in collaboration with the strategic education representative(s) and wider consultation.

300. Educational authorities may be required under the Duty to carry out actions specified in a strategy which have been agreed by the partnership in collaboration with the strategic education representative(s) and wider consultation. Where and when

requested, educational authorities must comply with actions in a local strategy, so long as they:

- are compatible with any other statutory duties;
- would not have an adverse effect on the exercise of the education authority's functions;
- are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally; and
- would not mean that the education authority incurred unreasonable costs.

301. Serious violence may also occur in higher education residential accommodation or licensed premises, such as student union facilities. If a local higher education institution considers serious violence to be an issue that is pertinent to them then they are encouraged to feed into the partnership where appropriate.

302. Education is devolved to Wales and the relevant guidance is contained in chapter one, Delivery in Wales.

## Fire and Rescue

303. Fire and Rescue Authorities are responsible for the oversight and delivery of Fire and Rescue Services in their area. As of January 2022, there are currently 44 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, and three in Wales (where Fire and Rescue Services are a devolved responsibility).

304. Fire and Rescue services have a tradition of engaging with local communities to promote fire safety as well as wider models of community and individual engagement to support citizenship, community cohesion and direct support to vulnerable individuals and communities. Work with children and young people, safeguarding as well as fire reduction strategies, such as the sectors work to reduce deliberate fires, should be recognised as part of the Duty.

305. The Duty applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas, including Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners<sup>104</sup>, metropolitan Mayors and the London Fire Commissioner solely in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions. Fire and Rescue Authorities are specified authorities under the Duty. The Fire and Rescue Authority may wish to identify a representative, which may be the operational Fire and Rescue Service for the area, as this may be the body that will have the greatest local knowledge, however the Authority as the duty holder will remain responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Duty. The Authority should, therefore, ensure that any suitable representative has responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the partnership arrangements.
306. Emergency Services are already subject to a statutory duty in England to collaborate with one another and Fire and Rescue Services have a key role in these partnerships, often occupying a very trusted position by some community groups.
307. Fire and Rescue Services should be supported to deliver trauma informed interventions, engagement activities and safety education to targeted children and young people which supports the personal development and social and emotional learning of the child to reduce their vulnerability and increase their resilience in line with current practice and evidence of what works to reduce serious violence.
308. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence which are both crucial in reversing the increase in harm which may be caused by and against children and young people in the local community. Fire and Rescue Services should continue to develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse. Safeguarding within the fire sector is immersed in collaborative approaches with the majority of fire and rescue services represented at Local Authority Safeguarding Children and Local Authority Safeguarding Adult Boards and this should be developed as a core function of all Fire and Rescue Services.

**Fire and Rescue Service involvement in the Princes Trust Teams programme**

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<sup>104</sup> PFCCs role as Fire and Rescue Authorities is set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended.

The Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) are part of the Princes Trust (PT) Teams programme which is aimed at between 16-25 years old and is an opportunity to gain new skills, take a qualification and meet new people. The FRS has worked in partnership with The PT for over 45 years working with some of the UK most disadvantaged young people.

Through a range of PT programmes, the FRS works with young people aged between 11-30 from the following target groups: The unemployed – particularly the long term unemployed and NEET young people, educational underachievers – typically those young people who struggle with numeracy and literacy, offenders and ex-offenders including serving prisoners, young people in and leaving care, asylum seekers and refugees, young people from ethnic diverse communities, lone parents and young people with a disability. 47% of young people who attend Trust programmes delivered by the FRS have an offending background, 57% report a mental health need.

Kyle, 17, one of the participants, was referred to the programme by police after he started associating himself with people thought to have a negative influence on his behaviour and getting into trouble for anti-social behaviour. He wanted to gain some work experience to help get a job or into a course by the end of the programme. Kyle spent some time at his local fire station where he learnt about road traffic collisions and one of the team was picked to be cut out of a car, whilst the firefighters explained all their procedures. The experience has made Kyle think more seriously about the consequences of fast driving. Since leaving the programme, Kyle has secured a full-time job and has aspirations in the future to be a property developer.

The aim of all PT programmes is to deliver young people into a positive outcome of further education, training, employment and to continue to volunteer in the community. Recruitment and referrals typically come from pathway partners connected to the target groups and include Job Centre Plus, Young People's Services, homeless hostels, the Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams, police officers and many others.

# Chapter Five: Monitoring and Compliance

## Successful partnerships

309. Three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence 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; and homicides recorded by the police. In establishing success measures for local serious violence strategies, we expect specified authorities to include a focus on serious youth violence in public spaces and they may wish to include a focus on domestic abuse and sexual offences. Outcomes may also be based on: data on police recorded violent offences included in the local areas' strategic needs assessment, this could include (but is not limited to) offences involving firearms, robbery and possession of weapons offences, and may also include data on violent crimes such as sexual offences and domestic abuse where those offences were incorporated in that area's strategic needs assessment. Data on causal factors of violence may also be of interest.

310. Police data on charge rates for serious violence offences, like robbery, and Ministry of Justice statistics for offenders cautioned/convicted for knife and weapons related offences are also useful sources of information for measuring the success of a partnership.

311. The success measures specified above do not prevent local areas from adopting additional success measures to help track progress in dealing with local serious violence issues. In any event, partnerships will want to tailor the success measures to suit the local strategic needs assessment.

## How will partnerships be monitored?

312. Partners are required to work together to establish the strategic needs assessment and prepare and implement a strategy, which should be reviewed on an annual

basis.<sup>105</sup> In doing so, partnerships are expected to be able to self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the local strategy. Partnerships may wish to seek additional support from an external evaluator, such as a university research group, to support them with this process. Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London, will also have a discretionary power to monitor the performance of the local partnership against its shared objectives. Government departments may also monitor progress in relation to the Duty requirements and provide advice/support to local areas where required. A cross-Whitehall board will deliver national oversight, act as a central point for resolving strategic delivery challenges and consider published strategies and the impact of the Duty.

313. CSPs have a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to keep the implementation of their strategies under review for the purposes of monitoring effectiveness and make any changes to such strategies where necessary or expedient and to publish the outcomes of each review. This includes their strategies for preventing people becoming involved in, and reducing instances of, serious violence in their area (following the amendments made to the Crime and Disorder Act by the PCSC Act 2022).

314. Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 also requires every local authority to have a crime and disorder committee in order to oversee the work of the members of the CSP. In particular, crime and disorder committees have powers in connection with the work of the local CSP to address local crime and disorder matters under section 19. The amendments made by the PCSC Act (section 21) to section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 adds a third statutory local crime and disorder matter, namely serious violence.

315. Routine inspection programmes undertaken by individual inspectorates may also consider the organisational response to local serious violence issues.

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<sup>105</sup> By the provisions in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act.

## Secretary of State powers

316. Where the Secretary of State considers that a specified authority, educational, prison or youth custody authority has failed to discharge certain duties imposed under the PCSC Act<sup>106</sup>, for example following an inspection as set out above, the Secretary of State may issue directions to the responsible authorities for the purpose of securing compliance with the duty (section 18 of the PCSC Act). This power does not apply to probation services provided by the Secretary of State or to governors of prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres or the principal of a directly managed secure school. For such institutions, the Secretary of State for Justice may use existing mechanisms to secure compliance with statutory duties, if required.
317. Directions given under section 18 of the PCSC Act may require the relevant specified authority to take such steps as in the opinion of the Secretary of State are necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with the Duty. This direction can be enforced by a mandatory order, that is an order granted on application to the Administrative Court in England and Wales, to compel a public body to comply with a legal duty. The Secretary of State must obtain consent of the Welsh Ministers before giving a direction to a devolved Welsh authority.
318. We believe that where a direction is required local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) have a key role in instigating this process. We expect these powers to be seldom used and will only be utilised where all other means of securing compliance have been exhausted.
319. Where local policing bodies (PCCs and equivalents) exercise their powers under section 14(2) of the PCSC Act to monitor the exercise by specified authorities of their serious violence duty functions, section 14(3) provides local policing bodies with the power to report their findings to the Secretary of State. In exercising this power local policing bodies should initially contact the Secretary of State for the Home Department in writing to [SeriousViolenceDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:SeriousViolenceDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk). Depending on the specified authority in question, the Secretary of State would either consider the report or would

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<sup>106</sup> In relation to a specified authority a duty imposed by section 8, 14(6), 15(3) or 17(4) of the PCSC Act, and in relation to an educational, prison or youth custody authority a duty imposed by section 15(3), (4) or (5)(b) or 17(4) of that Act.

liaise with her counterpart in the relevant Government Department.



# Chapter Six: Community Safety Partnerships – Serious Violence Strategies

## Introduction

320. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), formerly known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to help tackle crime and reduce reoffending. There are around 300 CSPs in England and 22 in Wales.<sup>107</sup>
321. CSPs are made up of ‘responsible authorities’ which are: Chief Officers of police, probation services, local authorities, health (Integrated Care Boards in England, and Local Care Boards in Wales) and fire and rescue authorities. These responsible authorities are responsible for developing strategies for reducing crime and disorder, combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reducing re-offending in their areas.<sup>108</sup> Following the amendments made by the PCSC Act, strategies for preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence, and reducing instances of serious violence in their areas, must also be prepared. There has also been a mutual duty on PCCs and CSPs to cooperate on reducing crime and offending since the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.<sup>109</sup>
322. The responsible authorities have a statutory duty to work together to: reduce re-offending; tackle crime and disorder; tackle anti-social behaviour; tackle alcohol and substance misuse; tackle any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local environment; and, now, to prevent people from becoming involved in, and to reduce instances of, serious violence.<sup>110</sup> CSPs may also work with any other local partners

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-crime-prevention/2010-to2015-government-policy-crime-prevention>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/part/I/chapter/I/crossheading/crime-and-disorder-strategies>

<sup>109</sup> As set out in section 10 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

<sup>110</sup> As set out in section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

they wish to, including business representatives and the voluntary and community sector.

323. In carrying out their statutory duties, CSPs also have further obligations including: setting up a strategic group to direct the work of the partnership; to regularly engage and consult with the community about their priorities and progress achieving them; to set up protocols and arrangements for sharing information; analyse a wide range of data, including recorded crime levels and patterns, in order to identify priorities in an annual strategic assessment to set out a partnership plan and monitor progress; produce a strategy to reduce reoffending; and commission domestic homicide reviews.

## Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence

324. Alongside the Serious Violence Duty, the PCSC Act also amends the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to include a requirement for CSPs to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent people from becoming involved in serious violence, both as victims and perpetrators, and to reduce instances of serious violence in the area. This will ensure CSPs have an explicit role in escalating issues to a strategic level where necessary.<sup>111</sup>
325. Should specified authorities consider the CSP to be the most appropriate local multi-agency structure through which they intend to fulfil the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty, then the strategic needs assessment and strategy produced by the CSP may account for both the Serious Violence Duty and Crime and Disorder Act requirements. If this is not the proposed partnership model for delivery of the Duty requirements, the CSP will need to ensure that the serious violence strategy required by the Duty is delivered elsewhere. The PCSC Act allows for wider co-operation between CSP members and specified authorities subject to the Serious Violence Duty, including the sharing of data and information, for that purpose. It may be that the delivery of the Duty strategy elsewhere also meets the obligations of the CSP under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (to prepare and implement a strategy to prevent

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<sup>111</sup> These regulations The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 were laid in Parliament on 12 December 2022. The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk))

people from becoming involved in, or reducing instances of serious violence), but this will need to be determined by responsible authorities on a case by case basis.

326. In recognition of a CSPs wider remit in relation to community safety, and that many issues concerning violent crime can be interrelated, a CSP may choose to incorporate their strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence [under the Crime and Disorder Act and/or, potentially also under the Serious Violence Duty], into a wider plan which also encompasses their other priorities. This will also help to ensure that individual strategies are aligned without being duplicative.

327. There are also amendments to section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. Section 19 requires every local authority to have a crime and disorder committee in order for the work of the membership of the CSPs is fully scrutinised. In particular, crime and disorder committees have powers in connection with the work of the local CSP to address local crime and disorder matters under section 19. The amendments made by the PCSC Act will add a serious violence as a third statutory local crime and disorder matter. CSPs will need to incorporate this requirement into their existing crime and disorder committee arrangements.

### **Case study: London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)<sup>112</sup>**

Putting community and young people at the heart of our work to have a sustainable long-term approach towards reducing violence is one of 3 strategic aims of London's VRU.

The VRU Partnership Reference Group has been set up to provide strategic direction, support and challenge the work of the Unit. The group is chaired by the Mayor is made up of representatives from community groups and specialists in health, education, police, probation and local government.

One of the first actions of the London VRU is establishing a young people's action group which will be resourced and empowered to lead on parts of the VRU's work programme. Young people will have a stake in all of the Unit's work but particularly on changing the message around violence, ensuring the youth voice is properly representative and by supporting peer-to-peer engagement.

<sup>112</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/838930/multi-agency\\_approach\\_to\\_serious\\_violence\\_prevention.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf)

The Unit has also brought together a group of 30 community stakeholders to form a Community Involvement Planning group which has supported the Unit in planning engagement and shaping priorities. In January 2019 approximately 150 community organisations came together to discuss the establishment of the VRU and were able to input ideas.

Through a series of formal and informal meetings, workshops and discussions with various community partners the Community Involvement Planning Group has worked with the VRU to develop a set of commitments for the VRU in its operations across London, with Londoners:

- Work with a wide range of community voices
- Be as accessible as possible and create meaningful opportunities for involvement
- Recognise where communities are coming from
- Amplify community voice
- Ensure community involvement is sustained over the long term
- Involve young people
- Tackle stereotypes

# Interaction with existing duties

## Statutory duties

328. Relevant duties in Wales are covered in the Delivery in Wales chapter of this guidance.

329. Responsible authorities will want to be aware of the following statutory duties in exercising their functions under this duty:

- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, The Police Act 1996, the Police Reform Act 2002 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017 underpin the core operational duties of police officers which include; maintaining law and order, protecting the public, prevention and detection of crime, protection of property and the maintenance of civil order. Each police force is overseen by the Secretary of State, and the Chief Police Officer (Chief Constables, Commissioner of the City of London Police and Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police) is held to account by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, in relation to the Metropolitan Police and the Common Council of the City of London as police authority in relation to the City of London.
- Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) were established by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') to be directly accountable for a police force for their area. Their constitution, powers and duties are set out in Part 1 of the 2011 Act.
- Integrated Care Boards<sup>113</sup> are clinically-led statutory NHS bodies in England, responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area, including mental health services, urgent and

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<sup>113</sup> Clinical Commissioning Groups were replaced with Integrated Care Boards from 1 July 2022 as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

emergency care, elective hospital services, and community care. Their statutory functions are set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

330. The duties and functions of local authorities are set out in numerous Acts of Parliament. Particularly relevant functions include:

- The Local Government Act 1972 ('the 1972 Act'), Part IX which prescribes the functions of local authorities, including public health functions and social services functions. The 1972 Act also provides the framework for Local Government in Wales (as amended, including by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994)
- Functions and duties are further prescribed in section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the NHS Act 2006 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Core social services, duties and functions are set out in the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. Additional duties and functions are set out in the Children Act 1989 (in respect of children) (safeguarding duties at sections 27 and 47), Children Act 2004 (safeguarding duty at section 11), the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Care Standards Act 2000, the Childcare Act 2006 and the Mental Health Act 1983.<sup>114</sup>
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (section 16) includes the duty placed on safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area. The local authority is named as a safeguarding partner, alongside the chief police officer for a force operating within the local area and the Integrated Care Board operating within the local area.

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<sup>114</sup> [Safeguarding guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

- Community safety duties and functions are set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ('the 1998 Act') and Police and Justice Act 2006. Under section 17 of the 1998 Act, local authorities are under a duty to consider the crime and disorder implications of all their day-to-day activities. Youth Justice Offending service duties are also set out in the 1998 Act. Criminal Justice duties are set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.
- Education duties and functions are set out in the Education Reform Act 1988, the Education Act 1996, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Children Act 1989, Education Act 2002 and Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Child Poverty Act 2010. The proprietors of schools have various duties in relation to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, including co-operation with other schools and with other relevant bodies. Guidance on these various functions is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance 2018 and Keeping Children Safe In Education Guidance 2022.
- Core housing duties are set out under the Housing Act 1996.
- Fire duties and functions, predominantly relating to fire safety, are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Local Authority duties, relating to provision of support for all victims of domestic abuse within 'relevant' accommodation, as set out in Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The core functions and legal duties for adult prisons are set out in the Prison Act 1952 and the Prison Rules 1999.
- The core functions and legal duties for under 18 Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) are set out in the Prison Act 1952 and in the Young Offender Institution Rules 2000 and the Secure Training Centre Rules 1998.

- The National Probation Service supervises high-risk offenders released into the community. Its functions, on behalf of the Secretary of State, are to ensure sufficient probation provision is provided including the supervision and rehabilitation of persons remanded to bail, given conditional cautions or charged with or convicted of an offence and giving assistance to courts in determining the appropriate sentences to pass. This is set out in sections 1 and 2 of the Offender Management Act 2007.
- Youth Offending Teams are established by local authorities under section 39(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Their statutory duty is to co-ordinate the delivery of youth justice services in the authority's area, and to carry out functions assigned in the youth justice plan formulated by the local authority.
- Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) core functions are set out in The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ('FRSA 2004') and include extinguishing fires in their area, protecting life and property in the event of fires in their area, rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision and rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies. FRAs must also comply with the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework.
- Local Authorities in Wales are required to operate in the unique legislative and policy framework in Wales. As such the following apply: In Wales the duties and functions of local authority social services and of regional Safeguarding Boards are set out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and aligned statutory guidance.<sup>121</sup>
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 made the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child part of the domestic law in Wales. This ensures that children's rights are included in all policy making in Wales.



## Non-statutory duties

- [From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

A 10-year drug strategy which set out a whole-system response to tackling drug misuse. It is underpinned by a record investment of nearly £900 million of additional funding, taking the total investment on combatting drugs over the next three years to £3 billion. Commitments are made across government to break drug supply chains at every phase while simultaneously delivering a world-class drug treatment and recovery service to support those suffering from addiction, and achieving a generational shift in demand for drugs.

- [Drugs strategy guidance for local delivery partners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This guidance sits alongside the drugs strategy to outline the structures and processes through which local partners in England should work together to reduce drug-related harm.

It sets out the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework, which will provide a single mechanism for monitoring progress across central government and in local areas towards delivery of the commitments and ambitions of the 10-year drugs strategy to level up the country. The outcomes and metrics included in the framework aim to provide a link between action and the impact experienced by individuals, families and neighbourhoods across the country and in local areas.

## Useful guidance and resources

331. Responsible authorities may also wish to refer to the following links to guidance, documents and resources:

- [Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and guidance on using special measures 2011, Ministry of Justice](#)
- [Advice to parents and carers on gangs 2014, Home Office](#)
- [Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence 2013, Home Office](#)
- [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#)
- [About the toolkit - Youth Endowment Fund](#)
- [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(the Victims' Code\)](#)
- [Children and Young People strategy 2016 \(npcc.police.uk\)](#)
- [Commissioning services to tackle violence against women and girls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines 2018, Home Office](#)
- [Caldicott principles as defined in 'The Information Governance Review'](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [DH – Code of practice on protecting the confidentiality of service user information](#)
- [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance: NULL](#)

- [Draft Coercive and Controlling Behaviour Statutory Guidance](#)
- [From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives: a 10-year plan to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system.](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulations/ Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [GMC 'Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information guidance' \(May 2018\)](#)
- [Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2018, HM Government](#)
- [Information sharing for community safety: Guidance and practice advice 2010, Home Office](#)
- [Keeping Learners Safe, Welsh Government](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2020, Department for Education](#)
- [Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales \(under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015\) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland](#)
- [Multi-agency public protection arrangements \(MAPPA\) 2012, Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service](#)
- [NHS England Safeguarding Policy 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement](#)
- [National protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked-after children 2018, Department for Education](#)
- [Police Race Action Plan: Improving policing for Black people \(college.police.uk\)](#)
- [Preventing serious violence: a multi-agency approach 2019, Public Health England](#)
- [Preventing offending and re-offending by children 2019, Public Health England](#)

- [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in the NHS: Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement](#)
- [Serious and Organised Crime Toolkit: An Interactive Toolkit for practitioners working with young people 2021, Home Office](#)
- [Supporting Families Programme guidance 2022 to 2025](#)
- [Supporting Male Victims: Position Statement on Male Victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#)
- [Safeguarding guidance | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Social services codes of practice | GOV.WALES](#)
- [Supporting male victims - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Children and Young People Secure Estate National Partnership Agreement 2018-2021, HM Government and NHS England](#)
- [The Early Intervention Foundation](#)
- [The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction](#)
- [Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence: strategy 2022 to 2026, Welsh Government](#)
- [Violence Reduction Unit interim guidance 2020, Home Office](#)
- [VAWG commissioning toolkit \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government](#)
- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

- [Youth Endowment Fund Evidence and Reports, Impetus and Home Office](#)

# Glossary

Term	Definition
Local Area	The primary area within which specified authorities will collaborate in discharging the duty. This may be, as a minimum, a local authority area and, at a maximum, a police force area.
Local Policing Bodies	Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
Partnership	An arrangement through which specified authorities will work together to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.
Responsible Authorities	All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies and/or organisations and institutions with a duty to co-operate with specified authorities when requested to do so. As defined in sections 11 and 12 of, and Schedule 1 and 2 to the PCSC Act.
Serious Violence	Serious Violence in the local area is violence that is serious in that area, taking account of: the maximum penalty which could be imposed for the offence (if any) involved in the violence, the impact of the violence on any victim, the prevalence of the violence in the area and the impact of the violence on the community in the area. Serious Violence should include such violence as

defined in the Serious Violence Strategy<sup>115</sup> 2018, HM Government. The scope of the strategy is concerned with specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country which amount to serious violence, such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon. For the purposes of the Duty, violence includes domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence but does not include terrorism.

Serious Violence Duty

A Duty placed on local organisations to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. As set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022.

Strategic Needs Assessment

An analysis of current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and the cohorts most vulnerable to involvement in a local area undertaken to provide a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues.

Strategy

A high-level plan outlining the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to prevent and reduce serious violence in the specified local area.

Specified Authorities

All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies, as defined in section 11 of and Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act.

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<sup>115</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

Violence Reduction Unit

Non-statutory partnerships which offer leadership and strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence by bringing together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them.