

SAFER, STRONGER MERSEYSIDE



Police Crime Sentencing
and Courts Act 2022



Serious Violence Duty Strategy Merseyside



EMILY SPURRELL
MERSEYSIDE POLICE
& CRIME COMMISSIONER



**MERSEYSIDE
POLICE**



Merseyside and Cheshire
Integrated Care Board



**MERSEYSIDE
FIRE & RESCUE
SERVICE**



**HM Prison &
Probation Service**

Sefton Council



Liverpool
City Council

ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Knowsley Council

WIRRAL

Probation Service
North West

Foreword



Our region has come a long way in reducing and preventing violence in recent years.

Gun and knife crime and serious violence are all decreasing, but there is still more we can all do.

This Strategy is an important document because it sets out our ongoing commitment to working together with the shared goal of preventing and tackling serious violence and the harm it causes, preventing families from suffering the devastation and harm it brings.

Anyone can be affected by serious violence and sadly, our region is no stranger to the life-changing consequences - for victims, relatives, loved ones, friends and witnesses - when tragedies occur.

We know the police can't stop violent crime on their own and while enforcement is crucial, it doesn't tackle the root causes of why people get involved in violent crime.

To deliver lasting change, we must get upstream, intervene early, and stop violence from happening in the first place.

This approach is already bringing results. The recent decreases in violent crime are due to the hard work of a wide range of partners who are committed to prevention.

This Strategy details how we will continue to embed and enhance this work, taking a public health approach, across three crucial pillars all focused on making the biggest difference:

- ▶ **People** – building resilience and creating meaningful, valuable opportunities.
- ▶ **Places** – creating safer places and spaces.
- ▶ **Partnerships** – strengthening the bonds between our organisations to continue to improve our response.

This Strategy is the result of extensive consultation; we have listened closely to our communities. To bring about long-term, positive change, we must tackle the issues that make them vulnerable to violence - poverty, inequality, and deprivation. To do that, it's vital we also provide positive opportunities that steer people away from crime and create brighter futures.

Community cohesion is at the core of our approach. We are committed to empowering our communities to make sure they have an equal voice at the table and are actively involved in addressing and solving the issues that affect them and that they care about most.

We will support communities to develop new skills and equip them to deliver interventions which are sustainable; delivered by communities for communities. And we will take an approach which champions their strengths, as well as their needs - giving communities the tools to keep themselves safe.

The Strategy is focused on driving change. By working together, I firmly believe we can continue to build a safer, stronger Merseyside, free from violence and the fear of violence.

Emily Spurrell,
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside,
Lead convener for the Serious Violence Duty

Introduction

2019

In March 2019, the Home Secretary announced a £100 million Serious Violence Fund to help tackle serious violence. Of this, £35 million was invested in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in 18 police force areas deemed worst affected by serious violence (including Merseyside), to build capacity in local areas to tackle the root causes of serious violence. Since 2019, VRUs have been backed by £225 million and are now established in 20 areas. Hotspot policing is another critical part of the local and national approach to preventing serious violence and the same 20 police force areas supported by VRU funding have also received funding through the Grip programme to boost police forces capacity to take a data driven approach to tackling serious violence.

2018

In April 2018, the Government published its **Serious Violence Strategy** in response to increases in knife crime, gun crime, and homicide across England. The strategy called on partners from across different sectors to come together and adopt a multi-agency public health approach to tackling and preventing serious violence at a local level.

2022

On 28th April 2022, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act received Royal Assent. The PCSC Act introduced several measures to tackle serious violence, including a new Serious Violence Duty (the 'Duty') which sets out that partners including the police, fire and rescue, health, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services, must work collaboratively and share data and information in order to put in place a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.

2023

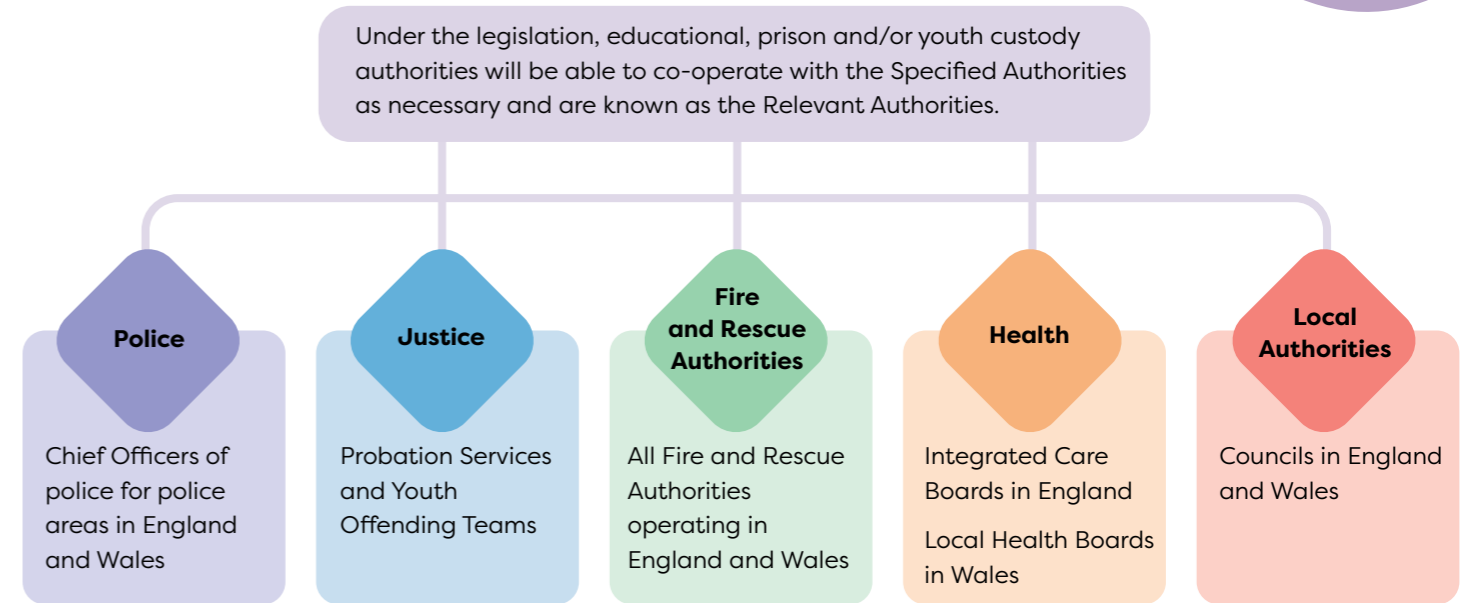
On 31st January 2023, the Serious Violence Duty commenced.

Serious violence is complex and multi-faceted, and with an estimated cost of over £185.4 million to the Merseyside region, partners have both a moral responsibility to protect and prevent further harm to communities as well as a financial imperative to do so. These lower-volume, higher-harm types of violence pervade society, causing significant harm to communities. However, violence is preventable, and this underlines the importance of partners working together in adopting a Public Health, Whole Systems Approach to violence reduction. It is within this context that the Government have introduced the Serious Violence Duty (the 'Duty').

Whilst this new law formalises the requirement for partners to work together to prevent serious violence, tackling serious violence has always been a priority for partners in Merseyside, and this strategy further solidifies our commitment to protecting our communities from harm.

Who must comply with the Duty?

The Duty requires the following Specified Authorities within a local Government area to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence.



This strategy has been produced to comply with the legislative requirements, setting out how public bodies operating in the local policing body area of Merseyside will collaborate locally to ensure a co-ordinated approach to preventing and reducing serious violence. It sets out the agreed definition of serious violence and the partnership arrangements which have been agreed locally to lead on the delivery of the Duty. It also provides an executive summary of the serious violence SNA produced by the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) (data covering the period April 2022 - March 2023), details of the consultation activity to engage communities, and the bespoke actions that have been agreed by the partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Specified and Relevant Authorities are referred to as the 'partnership' within this strategy, and include:



What is the Duty?

The Duty commenced on **31st January 2023** and is one of many provisions included within the PCSC Act 2022, forming a key part of the Government's commitment to reduce and prevent serious violence

It places a Duty on public bodies (known as Specified and Relevant Authorities) to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, ensuring relevant services work together to share data and knowledge, and target interventions to prevent serious violence altogether.

Under the Duty, partners must work together to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their local area, the causes of that violence, and use this evidence-based analysis to develop a local Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and prepare and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence locally.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

It means that partners, including police, probation, youth offending teams, fire and rescue authorities, health, and local authorities, are now required by law to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Preventing serious violence and harm has always been a priority for partners in Merseyside. This new law will formalise the responsibility the partners have to work together to prevent serious violence.

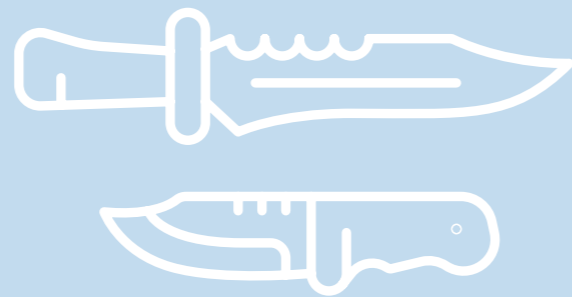


Definition of Serious Violence

For the purposes of the Duty, Merseyside have adopted the local definition of serious violence used for data recording purposes by Merseyside Police and subsequently adopted by the MVRP. This ensures consistency across the region in relation to understanding demand and impact and aligns with the existing partnership focus on violent offending in public spaces. The local definition is:

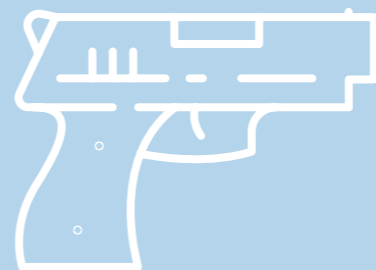
All knife crime or firearms enabled offences, including the following categories:

- Attempt murder
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm (wounding with intent to do GBH (S18 Assault), causing bodily injury by explosion or torture)
- Business and personal robbery
- Threats to kill
- Assault with injury
- Racially or religiously and other form of hate aggravated assault with injury
- Assault with injury on a constable
- Rape
- Sexual assault against a female
- Sexual assault against a male
- Endangering life
- Homicide



Non-knife crime or firearms-enabled offences:

- Homicide plus attempt murder
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm (wounding with intent to do GBH (S18 Assault), Causing bodily injury by explosion or torture)
- Arson with intent to endanger life
- Assault with injury on a constable (only including cause GBH with intent to resist, prevent arrest, wounding with intent to do GBH and wounding with intent)
- All other robbery



Domestic Abuse

Locally, the partnership agreed at strategic level that **domestic abuse will not form part of the serious violence definition for the purpose of the Duty**. The scale of domestic abuse cannot be underestimated, and the partnership recognise the impact of these incidents on victims, survivors, and their families, and will continue to support the pre-existing mechanisms in place across the region to oversee and govern activity to prevent domestic abuse and protect victims. Pre-existing mechanisms lie at the heart of the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** and its wider programme of work and further detail can be found at Appendix A.

The partnership will also continue to ensure preventative activity is directed at addressing underlying risk factors which are shared between domestic abuse and serious violence, to ensure a whole-systems approach to reducing risk and harm.

Whilst a shared definition of serious violence brings consistency, this will not prevent the local partnership from focussing preventative activity on other areas of violence outside the scope of the definition, however the local partnership acknowledge that this activity will not be the subject of the Duty.

Within the above definition, Merseyside Police recorded **45,543** serious violence incidents in 2022/23.

This is a 3% reduction on the previous year.



Purpose: Vision & Core Function:

Vision

Violence is preventable, not inevitable.

Aligning to existing partnership visions, objectives and deliverables, we want to create a safer, stronger Merseyside, where communities are free from violence and the fear of violence.

Community cohesion is at the core of our vision.

Community cohesion fosters a sense of belonging - connecting individuals to a place, a group, and a community. This promotes positive interactions within the local area, which can enhance feelings of safety. It improves how communities feel about where they live, cultivates positive feelings towards others, including towards statutory services, and most importantly improves overall wellbeing.

To create a safer, stronger Merseyside, we pledge to empower our communities to actively participate in matters that affect them and that they care about, providing support and capacity building to enable meaningful and mutually beneficial engagement.



The True Power of People - YouTube

With thanks to the children and young people at Knowsley schools, as well as the wider family and community members in Knowsley, who powerfully articulate the true power of people in contributing to a society free from violence and the fear of violence. This is the ethos of community cohesion.

Core Function

We want the prevention and reduction of serious violence related risk and harm to be everyone's responsibility.

We recognise that the causes and consequences of serious violence are complex and require well-coordinated approaches with clear policy directives and interventions that are implemented across all relevant partners at a local level.

As a partnership, we will provide strategic direction, coordination, and leadership across Merseyside to embed and integrate a multi-agency, whole systems, public health approach to serious violence prevention. **Working closely with key stakeholders and communities, we will create a culture which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration** - advocating for a system where everyone feels included and understands their role, and the role of others, in supporting communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

It means that partners and communities will work together to make Merseyside a safer place to live, visit, and work. Everyone will understand what they can do to support people who are affected by serious violence. It also means that as a partnership, we will be creating opportunities for people who are affected by serious violence so that they can tell us what is really needed to prevent serious violence from happening altogether.



“Let's say it together: 'All one and for all'. It could be perfect - None could deny it!”

Public Health Approach

A public health approach to violence prevention seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence.

Violence Prevention Alliance Approach (who.int)

To deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy, the local partnership will collaborate and plan within a whole-systems, public health framework, to support the implementation of effective policies, processes, and interventions which seek to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Adhering to a public health approach, the partnership will seek to align delivery across multiple tiers of intervention; primary (interventions to prevent violence from happening in the first place), secondary (interventions to address risk factors and prevent an emerging problem becoming established), and tertiary (managing an ongoing problem to reduce harm, focussed on reducing offending and reoffending) to address risk factors and build resilience across different stages of the life course.

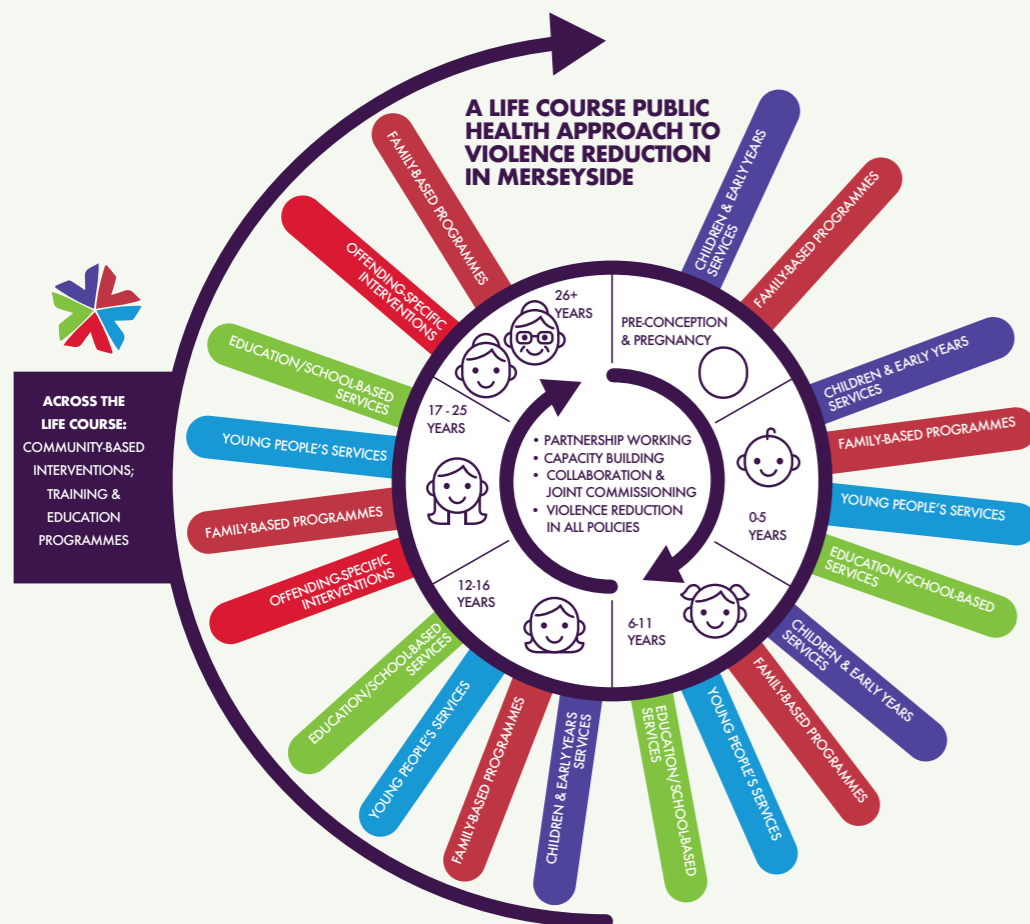
In doing so, this strategy will have a strong emphasis on addressing the root causes of serious violence, whilst integrating a strengths-based model of delivery which focuses on identifying the positives, as well as the needs, of communities, to build upon protective factors to reduce serious violence at a population level more effectively.

We will adapt evidence of what works locally to direct resource allocation to areas of high demand, need, and vulnerability, coordinating and aligning sustainable preventative approaches across geographical and organisational boundaries. This will promote progressive cultural change, encouraging whole systems to think and act more innovatively, and work together to achieve shared outcomes through local integrated delivery plans, pooled resources, and expertise to embed long-term change.



Violence is a public health issue because living without fear of violence is a fundamental requirement for health and wellbeing. It is also a public health issue because violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing and is strongly related to inequalities.

Violence-prevention.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)



The life course approach, championed locally by the MVRP, addresses health and social needs across all stages of the life course when developing universal and targeted violence prevention policy and activity.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

There are some factors which make people more vulnerable to serious violence. This means that some people may be more likely to be a victim or perpetrator of serious violence and may also be more likely to witness serious violence. It also means that certain places may have more serious violence than others. These factors can include, but are not limited to, poverty, deprivation, unemployment, friends that engage in violence, alcohol/substance misuse, and being a victim of child maltreatment/neglect.

A public health approach means that we will work together to understand these factors and work out how we can address them by stepping in early to prevent serious violence from happening altogether.

Where serious violence may have already happened, it means preventing violence from getting worse to reduce the risk and harm to individuals, families, and communities.

Focussing on what is good in our communities means that we will assess their needs and make plans that build on their strengths. This way, we strengthen the positive aspects - including people's skills, interests, and assets - instead of focussing on what is missing. Through this, we hope to empower individuals, families, and communities to make positive decisions and improve their life choices.

Why a Public Health Approach?

Violence is not something that just happens, nor is it normal or acceptable in our society. Many of the key risk factors that make individuals, families, or communities vulnerable to violence are changeable, including exposure to adverse experiences in childhood and subsequently the environments in which individuals live, learn and work throughout youth, adulthood, and older age. Understanding these factors means we can develop and adopt new public health-based approaches to violence. Such approaches focus on the primary prevention of violence through reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors over the life course.

Our Approach:

1 Defining the problem

It is important that we understand the extent and nature of serious violence within our local communities, including identifying who or where may be most vulnerable to serious violence.

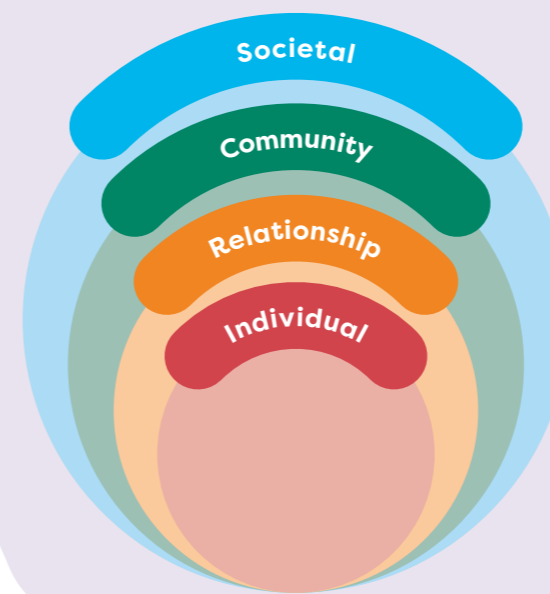
- ▶ Effective multi-agency data sharing is critical to this, and we will continue to work with partners to improve the quantity and quality of the data we collect to develop our understanding of serious violence and the burden it imposes on individuals, families, communities, and wider society.
- ▶ To truly understand the nature of serious violence, we must also ensure that the voices and lived experiences of our communities are central to our approach, and we will continue to work with and for our local communities to develop our understanding of local drivers.
- ▶ Identifying the societal costs of violence also serves as a useful starting point to demonstrate the 'size of the problem' to policy makers, providing an evidence base for investing in preventative activity at strategic and operational level. Using the current cost analysis commissioned by MVRP and produced by Liverpool John Moores University, we can begin to understand the longer-term impact of investment on preventing the realisation of the costs of violence and reducing the future economic burden.

2 Identifying risk and protective factors

There exists a wide range of interconnected factors relating to individuals, their relationships, and the communities and societies in which they live, which may increase ('risk factors') or decrease ('protective factors') vulnerability to violence. Identifying these factors and understanding the complex cumulative impact of risk and protective factors on victimisation and perpetration of serious violence is key to our approach as it enables us to identify at risk populations and target resource allocation to meet local demand or need.

- ▶ We will continue to work with key stakeholders and our communities, remaining cognisant to changing political landscapes, to understand existing and emerging factors. This will involve working closely with the MVRP Evidence Hub, as well as with the Integrated Care Board who are developing a violence and injuries dashboard to identify patterns and understand the risk factors to violent crime.

The ecological framework: examples of risk factors for violence at each level



Rapid social changes; Gender, social and economic inequalities; Poverty; Weak economic safety nets; Poor rule of law; Cultural norms that support violence.

Poverty; High crime levels; High residential mobility; High unemployment; Local illicit drug trade; Situational factors.

Poor parenting practices; Parental conflict; Exposure to intimate partner violence or domestic abuse; Low socio-economic household; Friends that engage in violence.

Victim of child maltreatment/neglect; Alcohol/substance abuse; History of violent behaviour; Psychological/personality disorder.

3 Develop and evaluate interventions

It is important that we understand the impact of our partnership approach on preventing and reducing serious violence. Considering evidence of impact does not mean we will suppress innovation; however, we will ensure the right balance between delivery with strong evidence of impact whilst creating the conditions to support partners in developing the evidence base for delivery which may have good potential.

- ▶ Using evidence-based resources, we will continue to develop and embed approaches which are known to deliver the highest impact for populations at risk of, or already involved in, serious violence.
- ▶ Whilst quantitative data is fundamental to evaluating effectiveness, we will also work closely with our key partners and communities to understand what works, where, and for whom, so that we can ensure strategic and operational activity is responsive to need at a hyper-local level.

4 Implementing effective policy and programmes

It is important that we monitor and evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of partnership activity over the short, medium, and longer term when implementing processes and interventions which seek to prevent and reduce serious violence related risk and harm. This enables us to build upon our understanding of 'what works' and crucially 'what doesn't work'. Not only does this reduce harm to communities by ensuring maximum impact, but it also makes the case for investing in preventative activity and provides partners with an evidence base to prioritise resources more effectively in the long-term.

- ▶ This will involve working closely with the MVRP to build the evidence base on 'what works' at a local level, utilising the many evaluations which have been conducted by Liverpool John Moores University at whole system and intervention level to identify how we can work at scale to deliver improved outcomes for our communities.

Violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing as well as a drain on health services and the wider economy. However, it is preventable using measures that save much more money than they cost to implement. Interventions, especially those in early childhood, not only prevent individuals developing a propensity for violence but also improve educational outcomes, employment prospects and long-term health outcomes. Abuse in childhood increases risks of violence in later life, but also risks of cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted infections, substance use, and a wide range of health conditions that are currently stretching health care resources.

Local examples of embedding a Public Health Approach



Since 2019, the **Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership** have been embedding a public health 'whole systems' approach to tackling the root causes of serious violence – seeing violence as preventable, not inevitable – and the evidence shows it's already having an impact.

The MRVP takes a multi-pronged approach. At strategic level, the MVRP provides leadership on the public health approach to violence reduction across Merseyside through a multiagency co-located delivery team and steering group, developing localised policy, practice, and targeted communications to support system change and capacity to prevent violence.

The MVRP also funds a suite of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to prevent violence with a focus on early intervention, life course, place-based, and community led approaches, delivered across five key priority areas: early years, education, health, whole family approaches, and preventing offending, with all decisions informed by the best available evidence.

Blue light datasets from the **Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group (TIIG)** provide the basis for all decision making. This data provides insight into demand, informing where and what interventions are prioritised. It's also used to monitor and evaluate the performance of interventions to measure success.

This work is led by the MVRP's Evidence Hub who have been embedded within the team for the past two years and whose work has been invaluable - driving improvements in processes, data capture, and evidence identification. This has all helped to further deepen the MVRP's understanding of the serious violence landscape in Merseyside and the approaches needed to continue to reduce serious violence.

This evidence-based approach is further enhanced by the frequent sharing of best practice, ideas and learning with local partners and other VRUs, as well as also using external data sources.



Key achievements of the MVRP

- ▶ A peer education programme - Merseyside Youth Association's Mentors in Violence Prevention - which provides young people with the language and framework to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of abuse, while building resilience and promoting positive mental health. By supporting a 'whole school' approach to early intervention and prevention of bullying, harassment and risky behaviours, this programme empowers pupils to identify and communicate concerns with both peers and school staff.



- ▶ Nearly 300 professionals from 13 different organisations received training to identify the underlying causes of offending to help ensure people with neurodiverse conditions get the support they need to prevent them from reoffending. This training was the result of research carried out by The Brain Charity to better understand the local landscape and potential for criminal justice reform for neurodiverse people across the region - [read the report here](#).
- ▶ Support for children born during the Covid-19 pandemic to help ensure they were ready to start school. With insight from the MVRP Evidence Hub, key hotspot areas were selected to receive targeted early years interventions, including Reading to Bump, Monkey Bob, and Look Say Sing Play, which seeks to deliver improved long-term population health outcomes.
- ▶ One of the first organisations in the country to hold a gambling harms event, featuring case studies and input from counselling services and senior police officers to highlight the breadth and scope of gambling-related harms, with a focus on prevention, early intervention, and treatment.

These results are testament to the strong partnership and collaborative approach adopted by the MVRP and the tireless work of the many organisations involved, all of which are committed to ensuring Merseyside is a place where people can live, work, and visit free from violence and fear of violence.

Spotlight

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Probation Service

Recognising the role that high quality employment and training opportunities can play in preventing prison leavers and those on probation from reoffending, the MVRP has forged strong links between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Probation Service with a focus on co-location. This includes being the first VRP in the country to have a member of DWP staff seconded into the core team. This move has reaped significant results. Through DWP Prison Work Coaches (PWC) working part-time in Probation Service offices, ex-offenders now have direct access to training and employment opportunities.

Local Partnership Arrangements

As a partnership, we want the prevention and reduction of serious violence related risk and harm to be everyone's responsibility.

Building on existing partnership infrastructure, strengths, and capabilities, we will create a system which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration so that everyone understands their role, and the role of others, in supporting communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.

Ensuring the principles of a public health approach are the golden thread through strategic, operational, and tactical delivery lies at the heart of our approach, and this strategy will provide the framework for partners to work together to implement whole-systems approaches to addressing serious violence. The public health approach is underpinned by community consensus, which recognises that the community's engagement in the serious violence response is essential, and the partnership will collaborate and co-produce with key stakeholders, including communities, to create a safer, stronger Merseyside.

What does a Whole Systems Approach mean?

A Whole Systems Approach is a term used to show that there is no one organisation, person, or part of the system that can achieve a reduction in serious violence. It means that all organisations, people, and parts of the system must work together to achieve this.

For example, when a mother is pregnant, she will be encouraged to be registered with a GP. The GP will register her with a midwife. The GP and midwife work together to make sure that the mother and baby are healthy, but also help the mother to access support if she doesn't have a safe place to live or enough money. Examples of the organisations who are part of this system of support might be DWP, Local Authority Benefits Maximisation Service, Housing Options, the local Children's Centre, Citizens Advice Service, or Domestic Abuse Support Services. All of these organisations working together to support an individual is a whole system approach.

Using the **5 C's principles**, the partnership will work to deliver a shared vision which addresses and responds to the specific needs of the local community, establishing Merseyside as a place where people are free from violence and the fear of violence, and where there are meaningful opportunities for all. We will empower local communities, sustainably building skills, resilience, and resource to tackle serious violence, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives within the community are not only heard, but amplified.

5 C's principles



Core Principles of Our Approach

By building our awareness on issues that are impacting our communities, we are better able to form a sustainable feedback loop to inform and focus partnership activity and improve the multi-agency approach to preventing and reducing serious violence. It will also enable the partnership to build effective and consistent approaches to serious violence communications, ensuring key messages are targeted and outcomes focussed so that partners and communities understand the actions being taken to prevent and reduce serious violence. This will play an important role in guiding the strategic direction of the partnership and will be underpinned by a shared set of core principles.

Innovative and Strengths Based

To ensure that our approach is responsive to the specific needs of the local community, building upon the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections, and potential in a community to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Apolitical and tailored to local need

To support a cultural shift around embedding a public health approach to serious violence prevention within organisational and partnership ways of working, ensuring resilience against any potential for the funding environment to change our focus.

Inclusive

To empower diverse voices and perspectives within the community, providing us with a broader perspective on local serious violence issues and expertise that only those most impacted by serious violence can offer, including people with lived experience.

Meaningful

To ensure that stakeholders, especially members of the community, can see their input within the local approach to serious violence, through robust feedback loops and direct involvement in key decisions around the design and delivery of activities.

Aspirational

To ensure greater alignment between organisations and communities, supporting communities to develop new skills to ensure that work on serious violence prevention is sustainable, delivered by communities, as well as ensuring that existing community work is amplified, well-resourced, and valued.

Trauma Informed

To understand that different life experiences can shape our behaviour and opportunities and ensure this is reflected in our interactions with partners and communities and influences our decision making.

Whole Systems

To develop a coordinated approach to tackle the root causes of violence, building capacity across organisations and communities so that everyone understands their role and contribution to the prevention of serious violence.

Sustainable

To develop cultural and financial sustainability, ensuring policies, processes, and funding models are focussed on improving population health outcomes to embed long-term change and are unaffected by political and contextual changes.



Working with communities

We are committed to working with communities to develop a coordinated and consistent approach to communications, supporting participatory approaches which meaningfully involve communities in the design, delivery, and evaluation of serious violence prevention work. Here are some examples of how we are doing that:

Liverpool Serious Violence Forum

Following several high-profile incidents of serious violence in recent years, particularly violence involving children and young people, the DISARM partnership wanted to establish a wide network of people involved at a grass roots level in combating the root causes of serious violence. The aims of the forum are:

- ▶ To share information in the wake of serious incidents
- ▶ To embed a collective sense of purpose and responsibility across the city
- ▶ To encourage collaboration between and with grass roots organisations
- ▶ To recognise and share good work and practices that exist
- ▶ To involve community groups in any funding opportunities that arise
- ▶ To create a consistent message and help co-ordinate violence prevention campaigns

The Liverpool Serious Violence Community Forum meets twice a year at different locations across the city which are convenient for the forum membership. There is a newsletter which goes out between meetings, and a mailing list is available for updates from the forum to be circulated between newsletters and meetings.

The principles of the forum are that it should be community/practitioner led and supported by the DISARM partners and there should be a two-way flow of information between DISARM and the Community Forum.

Although still in its relative infancy having been established in 2022, feedback from forum members includes:

Really good to check with other organisations to find out what other work is going on. Facilitated very well, council team going in very knowledgeable and supportive of work.

Thank you - much needed. Please also advertise what is happening to wider community so they know what is being done.

Thank you for today, really insightful and beneficial as always.

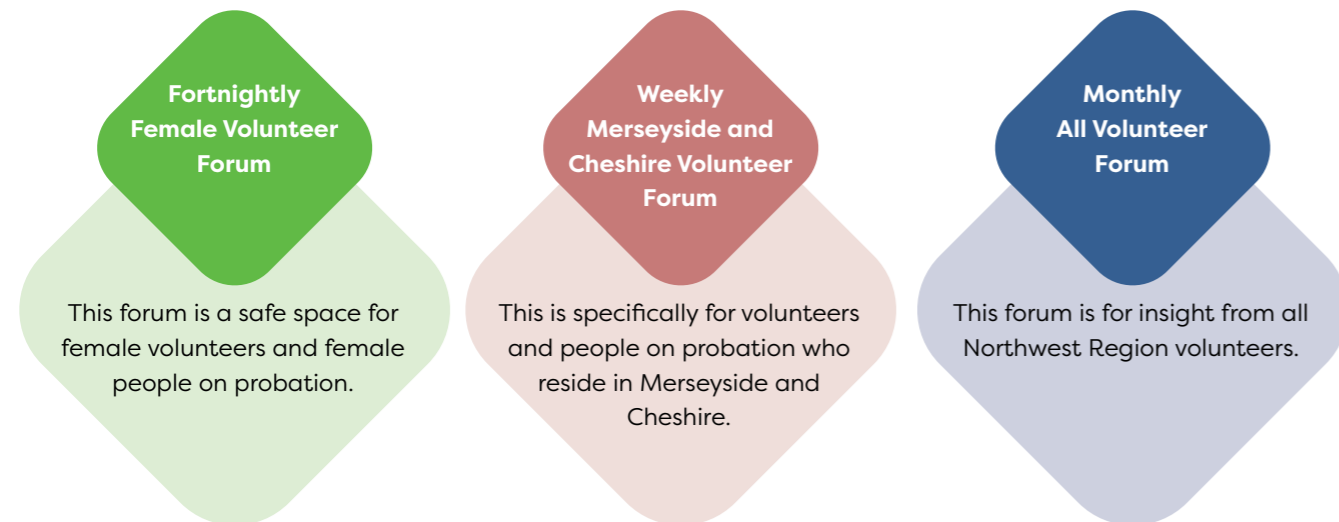
Really positive event – good opportunity for networking and keeping up to date with organizational developments.

Probation Engagement Forum

In order to ensure the views of those with lived experience are taken into account as part of the Probation Service Delivery model and in recognition of the impact of their voices on how we deliver all sentences of the Court, the Engaging People on Probation Team have developed a process map which includes the views of those with lived experience, to understand how we can achieve meaningful engagement.

There are processes in place to seek the views of volunteers with lived experience. This involves liaising with the Engaging People on Probation Manager to request volunteers support. This could be in the form of a one-off representation, attendance on a regular basis or to an agreed time frame. Additionally, where the views of those with lived experience are sought as part of a consultation process, one of the Engagement Forums currently in existence may be utilised.

Below are the forums available from which consultation can be sought:



What does this mean for Merseyside?

This means that we are committed to ensuring that our approaches are community led and that we focus on what is positive within our communities so that we can build on community strengths and abilities. This will ensure that communities have an equal voice in decision making and that we are able to communicate

with communities in an open and transparent way so that they understand what is available to support them if they are involved in serious violence, as well as to provide reassurance on the action which is being taken by the partners set out within this strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.

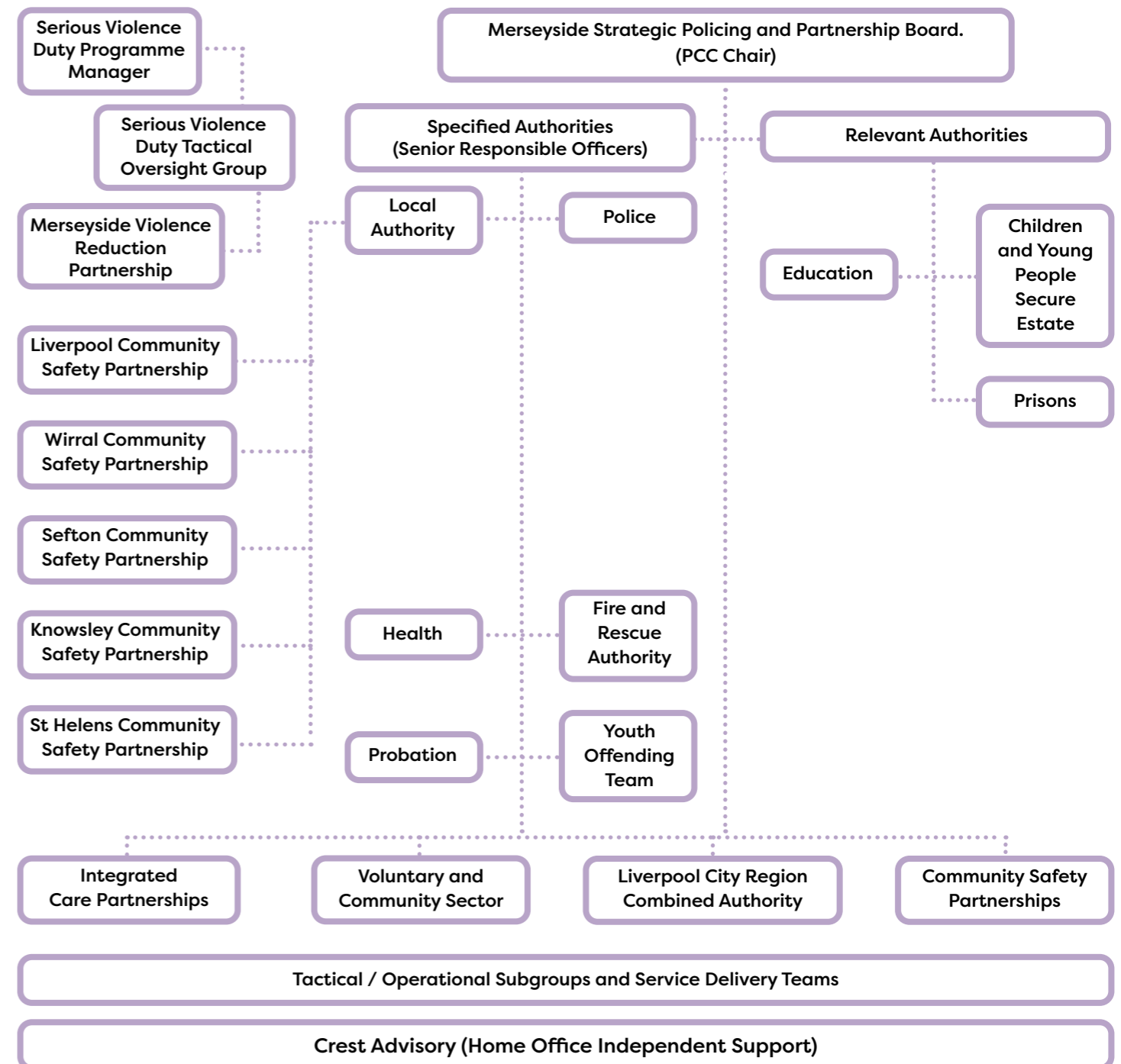
Governance and Accountability

victims. The Merseyside Strategic Policing and Partnership Board (MSPPB), chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner, will act as the governance mechanism for delivery of the Duty and the Commissioner will collaborate with the local partnership to provide strategic leadership, coordination, and support to ensure compliance and delivery of the action plans contained within this strategy.

The MSPPB brings senior leaders from all the partner organisations together to focus on key policing and community safety issues across Merseyside and ensure the priorities set out in the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan are being delivered. The Board acts as an oversight body for several existing sub-groups which focus on improving the effectiveness of the response to policing and community safety issues, including serious violence. Serious Violence Duty Senior Responsible Officers are key members of the Board and work across the partnership to ensure a safer Merseyside.

Merseyside Strategic Policing and Partnership Board

Merseyside's Police and Crime Commissioner, as lead convener for the Duty, will lead on supporting Specified and Relevant Authorities implementation and compliance with the Duty at a local level due to their responsibility for the totality of policing in their area, as well as services for





Serious Violence Duty Tactical Oversight Group

There is an established Tactical Oversight Group which drives local delivery of the Duty, with members including representatives from each of the Specified and Relevant Authorities and the wider partnership. The Group enables knowledge and information exchange, dissemination of operational learning, and maximises opportunities for collaboration and co-commissioning to enhance the service being delivered to communities. Using the Duty SNA, localised Strategic Intelligence Assessments, and consultation outputs, the Group seeks to understand implementation and impact to promote and maintain a high level of operational assurance that partnership activity is achieving anticipated outcomes. Membership is dynamic and we will continue to ensure that all partners have an equal voice in decision making, identifying where there may be gaps in expertise and creating opportunities for partners to collaborate to embed serious violence outcomes in delivery and governance.

What does this mean for Merseyside?

This means that there are processes in place to make sure that we are achieving what we say we are going to do to prevent and reduce serious violence. If we are not seeing a reduction in serious violence and our communities do not feel safe, we will continue to work together to understand what else we can do to support our communities.

Interdependencies

Local partnership arrangements were agreed to minimise adding complexity to the current landscape, recognising the effective partnership work already embedded across the region to address violence and vulnerability. There are multiple interdependencies and multi-agency strategies established nationally and locally that deliver on the objectives of this strategy, and the partnership are committed to ensuring alignment and consistency in approach. The below is not an exhaustive list but visualises strategies implemented by statutory partners which play a crucial role in preventing and minimising the impact of serious violence locally. See Appendix B.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

This means that there are already plans in place to prevent and reduce serious violence. These plans also focus on improving life outcomes for communities, including improved mental health and better access to healthcare, education, employment, and training opportunities. However, over the next year, we will be working together to improve how we join up our support so that we can establish Merseyside as a place free from violence and the fear of violence.

Serious Violence in Merseyside

(Summary of the Strategic Needs Assessment of Violence)

In order to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur, and so far as it is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence, the Duty requires that the partnership work together to establish the local SNA – identifying the drivers of serious violence acting in the local area and the cohorts of people most affected or at risk.

The SNA, produced by the MVRP (covering the period April 2022 – March 2023), has been used as a baseline product by the local partnership to meet the requirements of the Duty. It is a living document which provides an evidence-based, public health assessment of serious violence across Merseyside, within the definition set out above.

Specifically, the SNA:

- ▶ Highlights the prevalence of serious violence in Merseyside using multiple data and information sources to identify risks and opportunities for prevention.
- ▶ Provides an overview of the local context, as well as takes steps to identify the areas and populations most affected.
- ▶ Identifies the drivers of serious violence, as well as the risk and protective factors for violence in Merseyside. This includes an assessment of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.
- ▶ Explores perceptions of serious violence and wider health determinants through continued youth and community engagement efforts to provide a holistic understanding of serious violence as experienced by individuals, families and communities.
- ▶ Highlights the estimate cost of serious violence in Merseyside.



Context:



Home to almost **1.5 million people**, Merseyside comprises five boroughs, **Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Wirral**, and the **city of Liverpool**.



Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, two of Merseyside's Local Authorities are among the **10% most deprived in England**.

Knowsley (ranked 3) and **Liverpool (ranked 4)**.

St Helens is ranked at **40**, **Wirral** at **77** and **Sefton** at **89**.



The **most densely populated areas** of Merseyside are found in **Liverpool**, in the wards of Walton South, Wavertree South, Kensington, Anfield East, and Toxteth Park.

Knowsley continues to house the **highest number of 0-15 year-olds**.

Liverpool sees the **highest number of young adults (16-34)...**

...most older adults (35-64) are spread across **Sefton** and **St Helens...**

...and those of retirement age (65+) are spread across **Sefton** and **Wirral**.

There are **more females than males** in Merseyside, with the highest percentage of female residents in **Knowsley (52.2%)**.



There are **2 His Majesty's Prisons (HMP)** in Merseyside, **HMP Liverpool** and **HMP Altcourse**.

HMP Liverpool is a **Category B** local prison, receiving sentenced and remand adult male prisoners. For historical reasons it is known locally and indeed beyond as Walton prison, and it is situated to the North of the City Centre. The prison has the capacity to hold up to **870 males**.

HMP Altcourse is a **Category B** local prison, receiving sentenced and remand adult male prisoners as well as young offenders, from the Cheshire and Merseyside courts. The prison can accommodate up to **1,164 males** and all are housed across seven house blocks.



Most of the prison population are **White British Nationals** and are **aged between 30 - 39**.



Most of the prison population have been **sentenced**, with a significant proportion also on remand.



Both prisons received a **'good performance'** rating on the **annual prison performance rating**.



Extent:

Merseyside Police, Emergency Departments (ED), Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) and the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) all recorded a **reduction in incidents linked to serious violence** from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

	2021/22	2022/23
MerPol	46,953	45,543
	3.0%	
ED	4135	3683
	10.9%	
MFRS	3690	3660
	0.8%	
NWAS	920	785
	14.7%	



Merseyside Police data reveals that the **highest number of serious violence offences** fall into the category of **Violence Against the Person (87%)**, followed by **Violence Without Injury (58%)**.



0.05% of incidents are recorded as **homicides**, **0.5%** are linked to **firearms**, and **3.6%** are linked to **knives/bladed articles**.



Stop & Search data reveals that the **main residential** for those **stopped and searched** was **Liverpool (48%)**. The **main Act cited** was **Misuse of Drugs Act (79%)** and the **main object found** was **controlled drugs (71%)**.

Nature:

Police:



Merseyside Police data reveals that the Local Authority with the most recorded Serious Violence incidents is **Liverpool (39%)**. Serious violence incidents were fairly consistent throughout 2022/23, with **a slight peak in May (11%)**.

Ambulance:



The **highest percentage (40%)** of **NWAS and ED patients** reside in **Liverpool**.

Fire:



MFRS saw **3,660 deliberate fires** in 2022/23. The peak months include **August (16%)**, **April (13%)** and **July (13%)**. **Liverpool** sees the most **deliberate fires (37%)**, followed by **Wirral (22%)**. **1.4%** linked to **Organised Crime Group activity** and **0.3% domestic abuse**.

High Crime High Harm:



The **SNA** highlights specific **'High Crime High Harm' (HCHH) areas** within Merseyside, the **majority** of which are in **Liverpool**, followed by **Wirral, Sefton, and St Helens**. **Knowsley does not** have a 'high crime high harm' area. **38% of homicides** occurred in **Liverpool**, with **peaks in October and August**.

Prison:

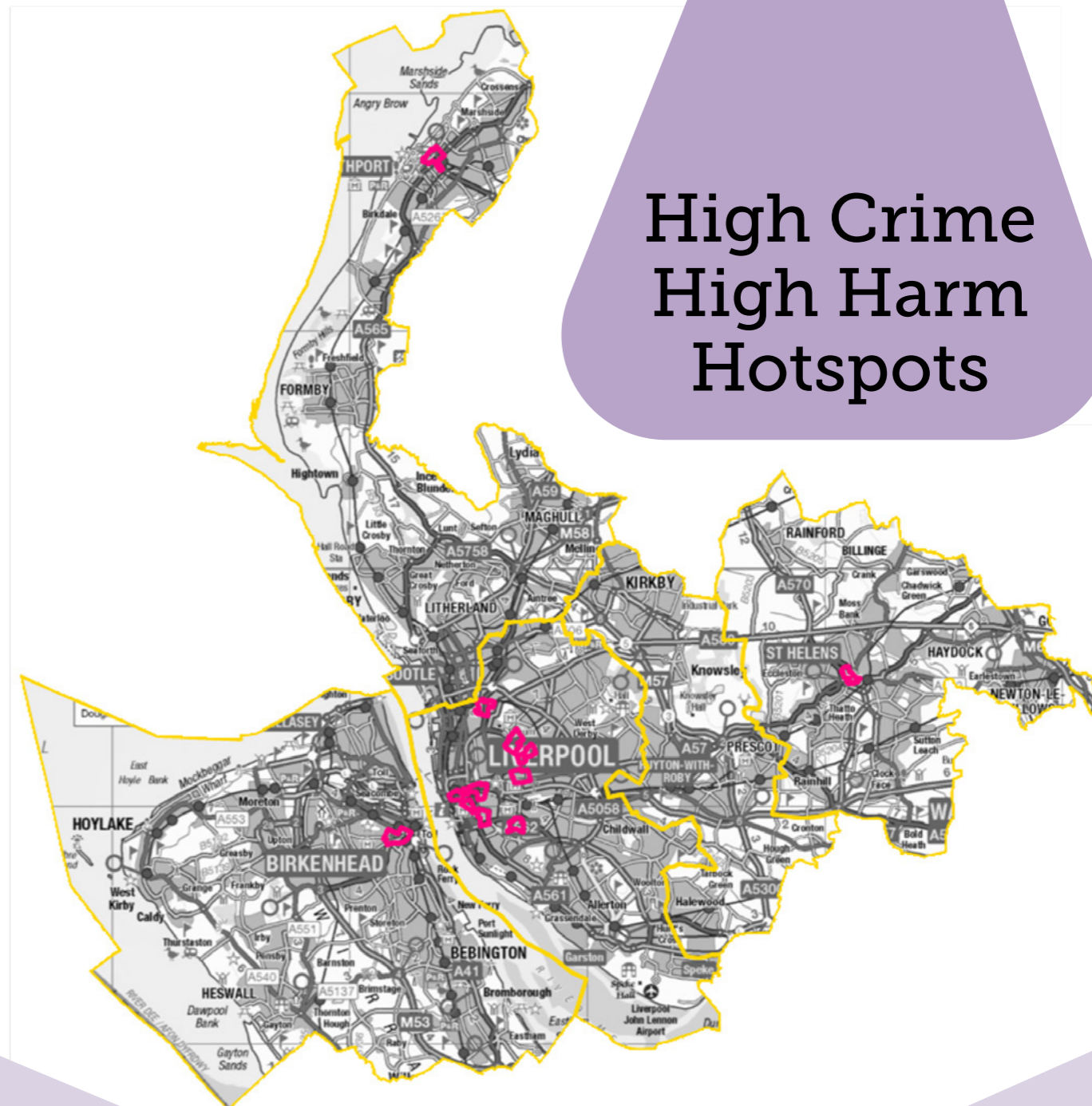


Drug offences and violence against the person are the most common recorded offence across both prisons. (**HMP Altcourse, 268 drug offences** and **315 violence against the person**) (**HMP Liverpool 210 drug offences** and **200 violence against the person**).

Who is involved in serious violence in Merseyside?

- ▶ Where age is recorded, those **involved in serious violence** are most often **aged between 20 – 35 years old**.
- ▶ **Across all BlueLight datasets**, where gender is recorded, those **involved in serious violence** are **mainly male**.
- ▶ When looking at **victim and perpetrator profiles** using **Merseyside Police data**, **victims of serious violence** were mostly **female**, and **suspects** were **mostly male**.
- ▶ The peak age for those **attending an ED** with a **serious violence related injury** is **20-24 years**, compared with **30-34 years** for those **requiring medical assistance** from the **NWAS**. **60% of ED attendees** for **serious violence incidents** were **male**. Of the people attending a **Merseyside based ED** with an **assault injury**, the relationship between victim and suspect was unknown. Of cases where it was known, the **majority said the suspect was a stranger**, **4.5%** said their **attacker** was an **acquaintance or friend**.

High Crime High Harm Hotspots



(With thanks to Strategic Analyst S. Thompson of Merseyside Police Corporate Support & Development)

Using the Cambridge Crime Harm Index¹ (for further information see here www.crim.cam.ac.uk/research/thecambridgecrimeharmindex), Merseyside Police identified 12 High Crime High Harm (HCHH) areas across the region. These HCHH areas make up just 0.5% of the force area but are responsible for 23% of serious violence crime and its associated harm.

Patrols are deployed to these identified HCHH areas to carry out normal police duties as well as a targeted response to serious violence.

Results show that there has been a **54% reduction in serious violence within these areas**, compared to a **31% reduction forcewide** (when compared to the same period in 2021). This response has seen a positive impact on other crime types too, for example, **Burglary Residential has decreased by 25% forcewide** but has **decreased by 49% in the HCHH areas**. This supports the importance of implementing place-based approaches, by targeting resources to areas of high demand, need, and vulnerability.

¹The Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI) | Institute of Criminology.

What have our local communities told us about serious violence?

Community consensus lies at the heart of the local partnership approach to preventing and reducing serious violence. To embed a truly place-based, multi-agency, public health approach to serious violence prevention, we recognise the importance of working with and for our local communities, empowering them to actively participate in matters that affect them and that they care about.

In adopting a strengths-based approach, we want to support our communities to co-design solutions, ensuring their voices are at the heart of decision-making processes at a local and central Government level. In developing this strategy, we have delivered a series of consultations over the past 12-months to understand how violence affects our communities, to establish what we can do as a partnership to improve feelings of safety amongst our communities and minimise the fear of violence.



What did we do?

Whilst we engaged **universally** with our communities pan-Merseyside, we recognise the importance of engaging with members of our community who may be in receipt of the services and support that the agencies and bodies involved in this partnership provide, and who also may be particularly vulnerable.

Adopting a two-tiered approach, we delivered **targeted** consultation at 'place' and 'organisational' level. This enabled us to develop our understanding of the nature and causes of violence in different populations, whilst broadening our understanding of the localised nuances within and between local authorities. These insights have enabled us to develop meaningful and achievable actions which will be taken forward by the partnership over the short, medium, and longer-term, to ensure responsiveness to local need.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

This means that we will actively engage our communities in the work that we are doing to tackle serious violence. It is only by listening to individuals, families, and communities most impacted by serious violence that we are better able to respond to local concerns, needs, and aspirations to prevent violence and harm.

Universal

“Your safety matters,”



Who did we speak to?

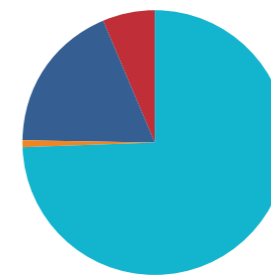
We engaged **over 750 people** from **across Merseyside**.

Perceptions

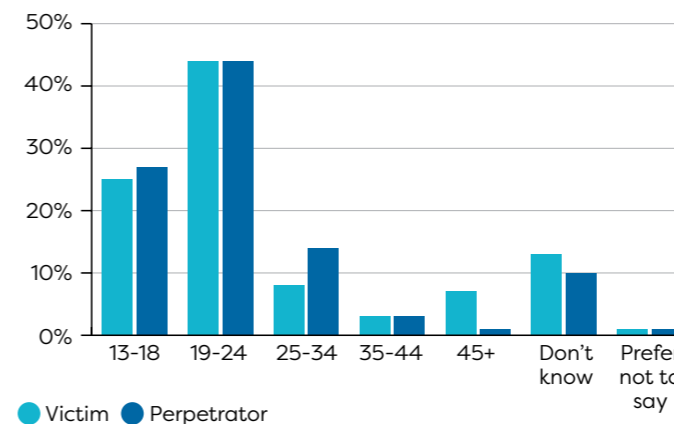
What did they tell us?

How do you think violent crime has changed in your area in the past year?

Increased	73%
Reduced	1%
No change	18%
Don't know	6%

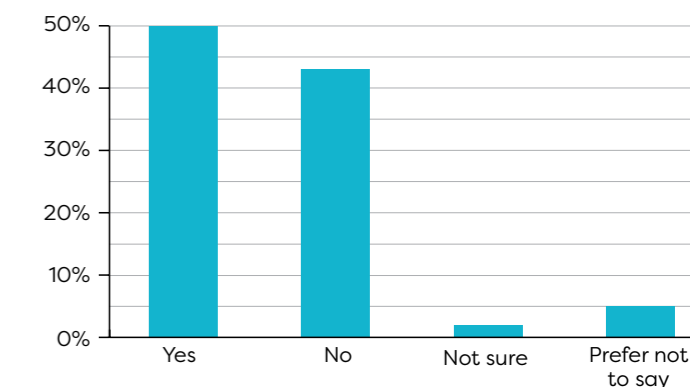


Which of the following age groups do you think are most likely to be a victim or perpetrator of violence?

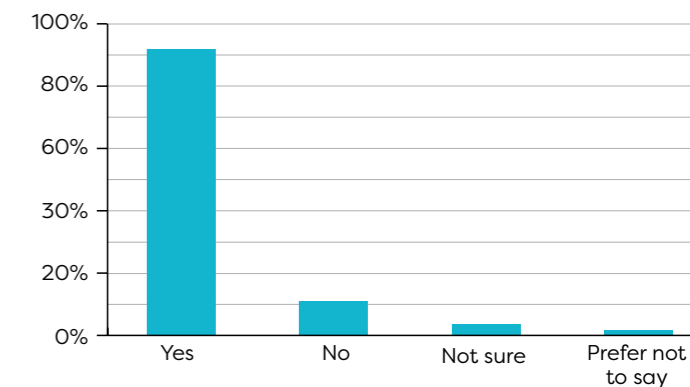


Merseyside residents witnessed violence mostly in the daytime other than in the city or town centre, where violence was witnessed more frequently at night.

Have you been a victim of violence?



Have you witnessed violence in person?



victim care
Merseyside

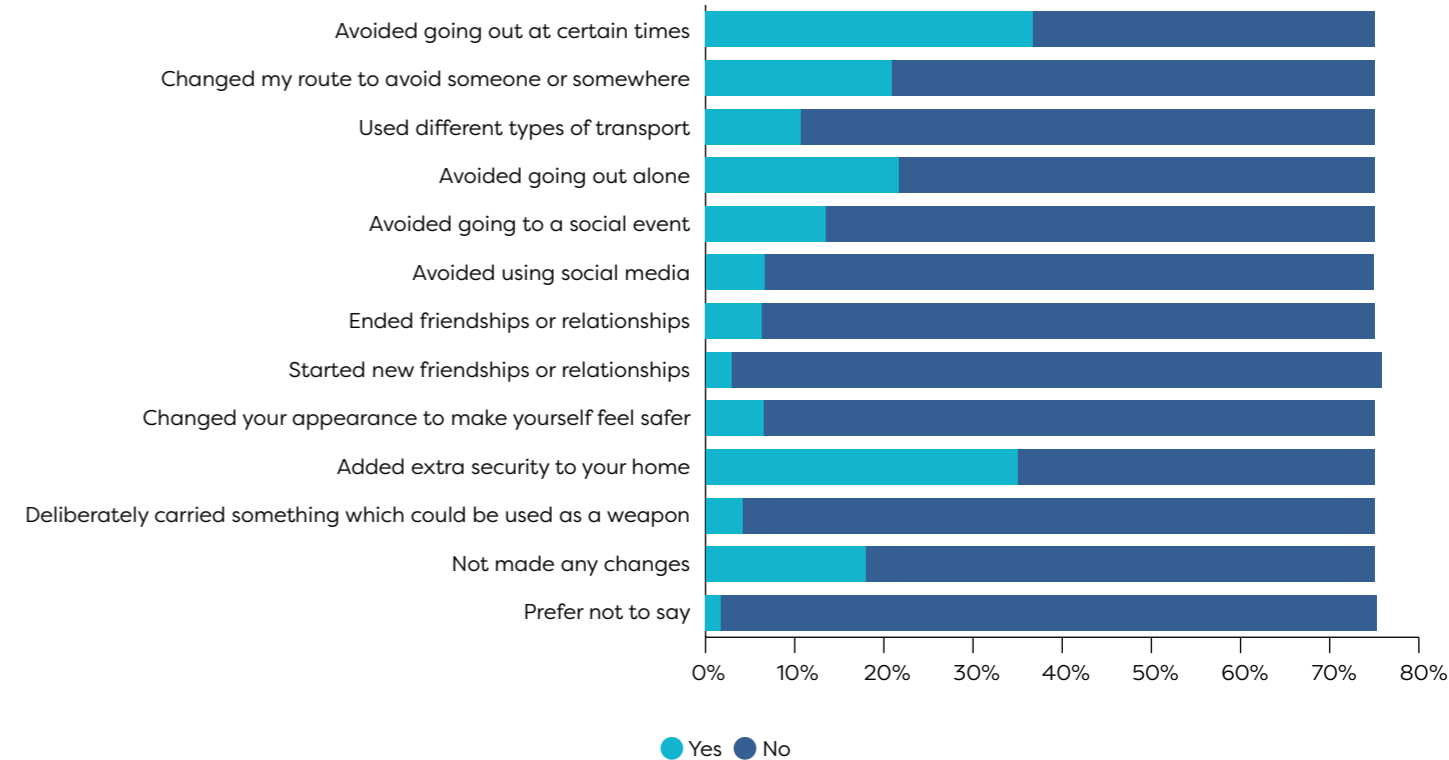
If you're affected by crime, you can contact Victim Care Merseyside for free, confidential, non-judgemental advice and support

www.victimcaremerseyside.org

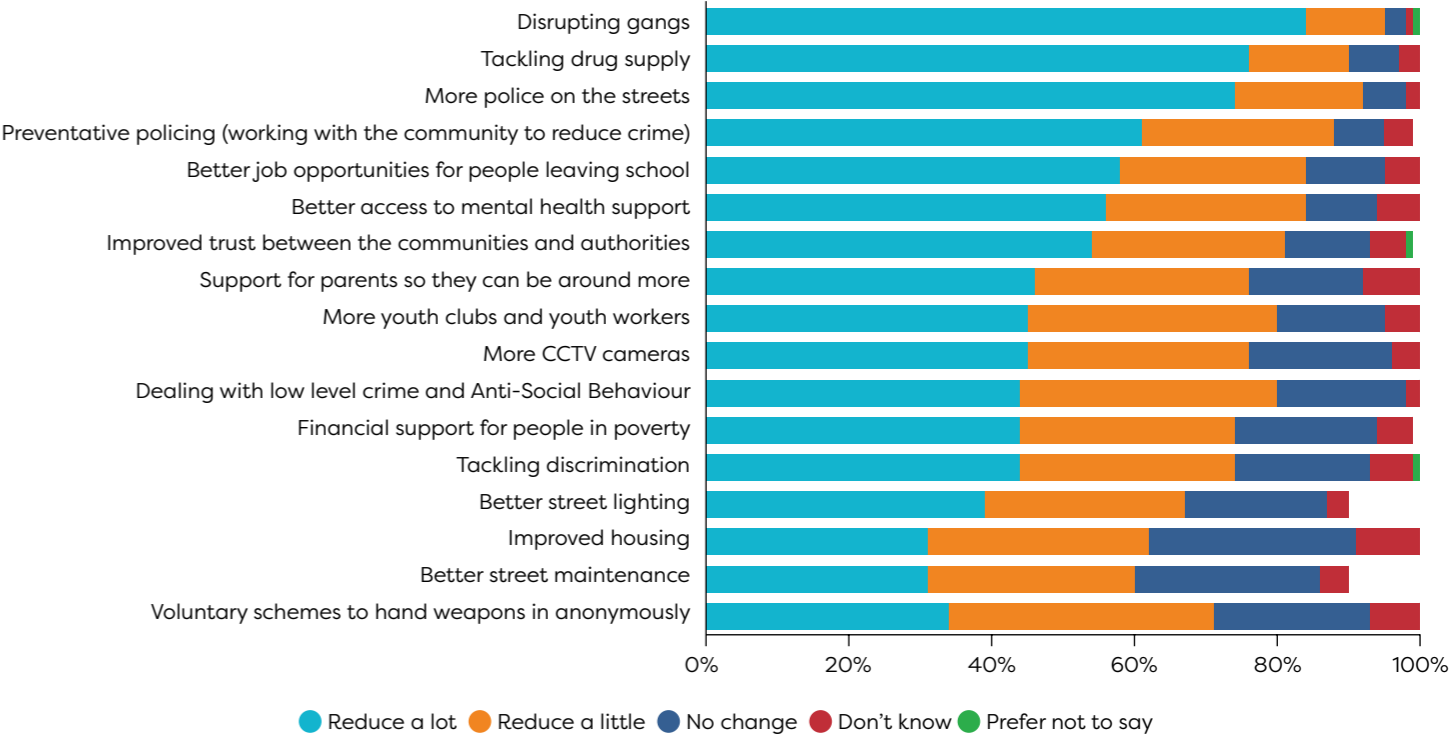


Impact

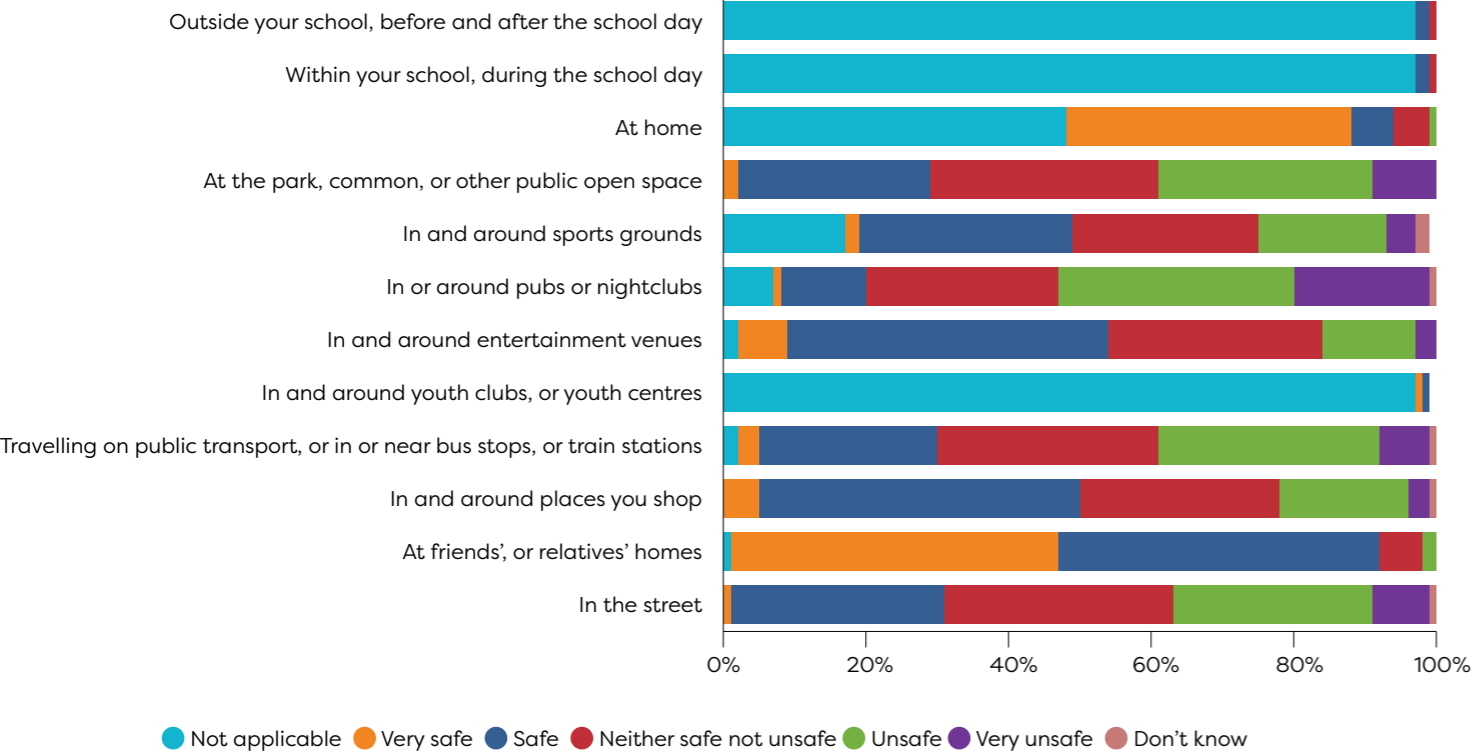
In the last 12 months, have you changed anything in your life to avoid or protect yourself from violence?



How much do you think the changes listed would affect violence in your area?



How safe or unsafe do you feel from violence in the following locations?



Merseyside residents told us that they feel least safe in or around pubs or nightclubs, at the park, common, or other open public spaces, and when travelling on public transport, in or near bus stops, and train stations.

Merseyside respondents prioritised policing initiatives overall as solutions which they felt would make the biggest reduction in violent crime where they live. In order of priority, solutions included:

- ▶ Disrupting gangs
- ▶ Tackling drug supply
- ▶ More visible policing
- ▶ Preventative policing

However, improving job opportunities for people leaving school, better access to mental health support, and improved trust between communities and authorities were also considered effective ways to reduce violent crime.

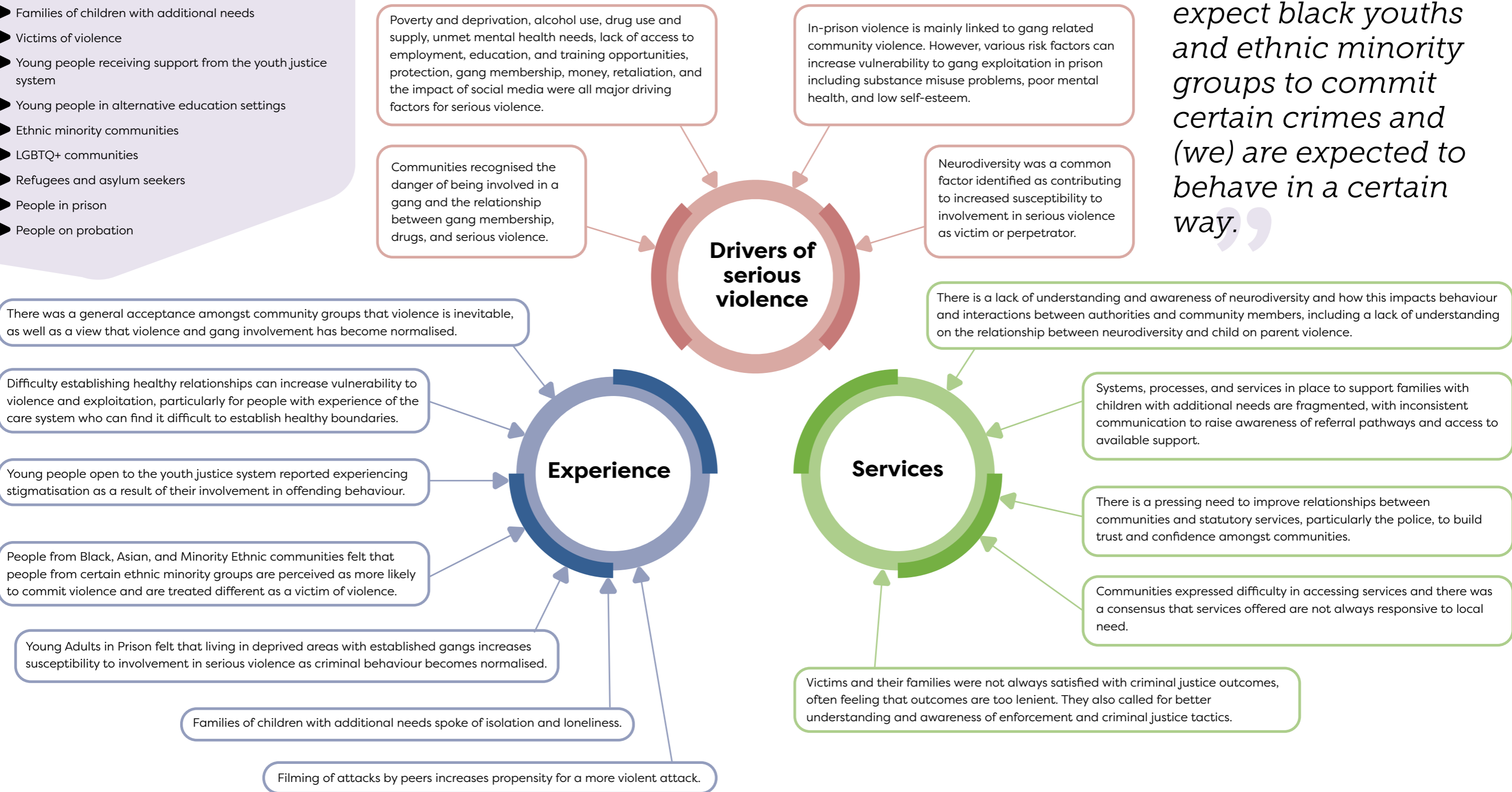
Targeted

Who did we speak to?

Community Safety Partnerships, Prisons, and the Probation Service, in collaboration with statutory and third-sector partners, delivered a series of targeted consultations with:

- ▶ Young people who have experience of the care system
- ▶ Families of children with additional needs
- ▶ Victims of violence
- ▶ Young people receiving support from the youth justice system
- ▶ Young people in alternative education settings
- ▶ Ethnic minority communities
- ▶ LGBTQ+ communities
- ▶ Refugees and asylum seekers
- ▶ People in prison
- ▶ People on probation

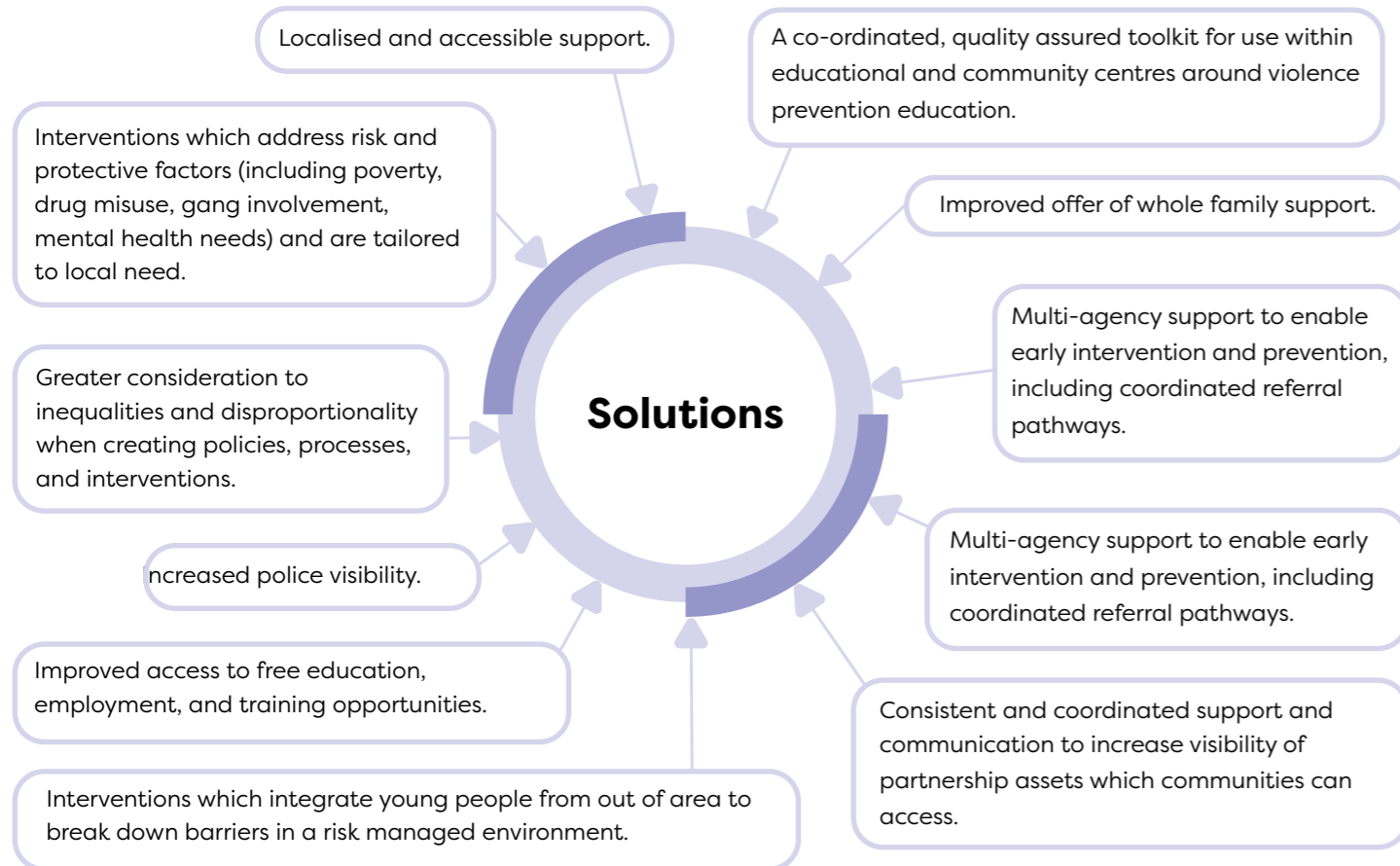
The following provides a snapshot of the views, needs, and experiences of the communities that we spoke to. Local authority specific reports are published on the PCC's website and provide a more in-depth assessment of the nuances within and between each locality.



“Living in deprived areas with established gangs means it’s easier to end up involved in criminal activity.”

“The general public expect black youths and ethnic minority groups to commit certain crimes and (we) are expected to behave in a certain way.”

Us as a generation have it rough. On a single person salary, you can't get a mortgage. It puts you in a difficult position. If you live life properly it seems you get less. Its understandable people get involved in criminality.



We discussed reasons for being involved in gangs and they (Young Adults Forum, HMP Liverpool) stated it just happens, if you grow up on an estate where there are already gangs and you become friends with them people you naturally end up involved in gangs. Some people raised the fact their families have been a part of gangs growing up and they naturally follow suit.



Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Taking account of the SNA and consultation with communities and partners, the local partnership has agreed the below strategic priorities, objectives, and actions, which we will take forward through this strategy over the next 12 months to prevent and reduce serious violence:

Priority 1: People

As a partnership, we want to ensure that individuals, families, and communities, are supported to be free from violence and the fear of violence.

Priority 2: Place

As a partnership, we want to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including our communities, to establish Merseyside as a place where people feel safe to live, work, and visit.

Priority 3: Partnerships

As a partnership, we want the prevention and reduction of serious violence related risk and harm to be everyone's responsibility, creating the right conditions for partners and communities to collaborate to take effective, co-ordinated action.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

Whilst incidents of serious violence are decreasing, we know that the harm and impact felt by our communities is increasing and that is why we are focussed on acting early to prevent violence from happening altogether. We will do this by:

- ▶ Improving life outcomes for the people of Merseyside by providing appropriate support to prevent and reduce the impact of risk factors, empowering communities to actively participate in matters that affect them and ensuring that community voice informs decision making on how we tackle serious violence and wider issues such as deprivation, inequality, established Organised Crime Groups, mental health problems, and access to housing, employment, education, and training.
- ▶ Creating safer places and spaces by ensuring that we identify those places and spaces where serious violence occurs and put in place resources to reduce risk and harm. This will include making sure that we work together to 'Design Out Crime' and that we listen to our communities to make changes to the environment which will make communities feel safer.
- ▶ Strengthen multi-agency partnerships so that we work better together by sharing information, data, and insight so that we are better able to identify individuals, families, and communities at risk and ensure that they are provided with appropriate support to prevent serious violence and harm.

Objectives

- ▶ **Work together to identify individuals, families, and communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence, and intervene to reduce risk and harm,** ensuring responsivity to identified need and a focus on addressing the root causes of serious violence. This involves bringing about long-term cultural, behavioural, and attitudinal change through challenging the acceptance of norms which promote violence as being inevitable.
- ▶ **Taking a multi-agency approach, partners will target resources on prevention and early intervention, rooted in evidence on 'what works' to prevent and reduce serious violence.** Using evidence-based resources, the partnership will commission and embed interventions across the region which are known to deliver the highest impact for people at risk of, impacted by, or already involved in, serious violence.
- ▶ **Partners will provide timely, coordinated support, and monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of interventions so that risk is reduced.** Monitoring and evaluating is key to a public health approach to reducing violence, as it feeds back into our understanding of what works to reduce violence most effectively (WHO, 2017a). Not only does this reduce harm to communities by ensuring maximum impact, as well as uncovering what does not work, it also enables partners to prioritise resources more effectively in the long-term.
- ▶ **Ensure that the experiences, strengths, and needs of individuals, families, and communities are understood and that these views are clearly recorded so that co-production is central to the multi-agency approach.** This will lead to greater alignment between organisations and communities and empower citizens to contribute towards a society free from violence and free from the fear of violence.

Objectives

- ▶ **Use information effectively to understand the prevalence of serious violence in their area to inform multi-agency strategy, planning, and actions, including targeting of resources in places and spaces to meet local need.** This will ensure resource, intervention, and harm recovery efforts are targeted at priority hotspots where serious violence occurs.
- ▶ **Embed a strengths-based approach which focuses on identifying the strengths or assets, as well as the needs, of communities, to prevent and reduce serious violence.** Adopting a strengths-based asset approach values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections, and potential in a community, enabling the partnership to build upon and strengthen protective factors in a community to more effectively reduce violence at a population level.
- ▶ **Partners will collaborate to ensure consistent delivery of key messages relating to serious violence, empowering communities to build their resilience and confidence to prevent and respond to serious violence.** The partnership is continuously striving to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower key stakeholders and communities, using data in communications to support open and honest conversations about the extent of serious violence in Merseyside.¹
- ▶ **Partners will take ownership of embedding strategic and operational delivery at hyper-local level, ensuring action plans are dynamic and adapt to changing risk and need.** This will enable partners to truly embed whole-systems, place-based multi-agency approaches which seek to improve long-term outcomes of the 'whole place' and not just individuals, whilst recognising that the impact of serious violence may be different in each local authority.

Objectives

- ▶ **Partners embed whole-systems, public health approaches to preventing serious violence at hyper-local level, with effective oversight and governance mechanisms to deliver improved outcomes.** Ensuring the principles of a public health approach are the golden thread through strategic, operational, and tactical delivery, facilitating an understanding of the interoperability within and between organisational and geographical boundaries to integrate preventative action which tackles the root causes of serious violence.
- ▶ **Increase the effectiveness of partnerships at preventing/tackling serious violence, creating a system which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration.** Partners collaborate to ensure efficient allocation of resources to maximise impact and reduce silo working and duplication, including coordination of funding decisions and agreement to invest and pool resources for the long-term.
- ▶ **Engage in critical reflection to challenge and support practice to act upon system learning more habitually, promoting continuous improvement in the multi-agency approach for communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.** Increasing public trust and confidence in the multi-agency approach to prevent and reduce serious violence related risk and harm.
- ▶ **Improve multi-agency data sharing and governance to enhance capacity and capability of the partnership in preventing and reducing serious violence related risk and harm.** Supporting collaborative efforts across the partnership to enhance data capability and embrace evidence driven approaches to implementing public health interventions which address the root causes of serious violence. Using this understanding, partners will be better equipped to ensure responsivity to local need through the targeting of interventions and resources.
- ▶ **Commit to ensuring trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership at all levels.** Ensuring partners have access to training and support so that they are confident, knowledgeable, and understand the impact of serious violence on health and wellbeing.

Action to Prevent and Reduce Serious Violence






The results of the SNA and consultation with partners and communities has been used by the local partnership to formulate and prioritise bespoke actions to prevent and reduce serious violence, that the partnership will take forward through this strategy. Actions are aligned to thematic priorities (people, places, and partnerships) and are set out under several key workstreams, including:

- ▶ Governance and collaboration.
- ▶ Data sharing.
- ▶ Evidence based and system learning.
- ▶ Targeted interventions and local implementation.
- ▶ Access to education, employment, and training.
- ▶ Training and awareness.
- ▶ Accommodation.
- ▶ Enforcement.
- ▶ Communications.



The below strategic actions are pan-Merseyside actions and have been arrived at through consultation, planning, and a review of local action plans to identify how we can use the Duty as an opportunity to bring about cultural change, encouraging partners to think and act more innovatively when collaborating to prevent and reduce serious violence. However, we remain committed to ensuring that we implement processes, systems, and interventions as locally as possible, whilst also understanding that some of the partners subject to this strategy may be better equipped to lead on driving change across the whole system. Please therefore see the PCCs website for localised delivery plans which have been developed by Specified and Relevant Authorities, highlighting detailed actions at strategic, operational, and tactical level. The actions contained within this strategy and within the localised delivery plans are closely aligned to thematic priorities and will be governed and overseen through the local partnership arrangements set up under the Duty. This will enable us to remain firm in our commitment to embed change across a whole system by delivering improved outcomes for a whole place, whilst taking account of the localised nuances.





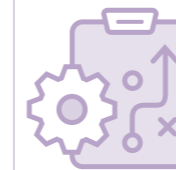
People

PRIORITY	
 Strategic Objectives	<p>Work together to identify individuals, families, and communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence, and intervene to reduce risk and harm.</p>
 Success Measures	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ More people aware of and accessing support and intervention.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ More people are identified who are at risk of or in need of support. ▶ More people are aware of and protected against serious violence risks. ▶ Reduced repeat involvement in serious violence, either as perpetrator or victim. ▶ Fewer people exposed to/witnessing serious violence. ▶ Decrease in risk and increase in protective factors.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reduced financial cost of serious violence.
 Strategic Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We will proactively identify populations and places susceptible to serious violence and intervene early to ensure appropriate interventions (universal and targeted) are in place to reduce serious violence offending, reoffending, as well as to build desistance for people on probation. ▶ We will continue to develop and improve the quality of support provided to victims and witnesses to mitigate the impact of serious violence and vulnerability. This will involve working across the partnership to identify those at risk of repeat victimisation, employing an early help approach to minimise risk and harm. ▶ We will continue to develop and support the implementation of interventions which address underlying risk and protective factors, to ensure a holistic approach to preventing and reducing serious violence by targeting resources to areas of high demand, need, and vulnerability. This includes developing interventions which address thinking, attitudes, and behaviours which lead to serious violence offending. ▶ We will explore outcomes from the Probation Young Adults Inspection for 18-20 year-olds on probation and devise appropriate actions and partnerships to deliver required actions. ▶ We will work across the whole system, including working closely with partners making referrals, to strategically map risk and protective factors and early indicators which are shared across multiple population health concerns e.g., serious violence, radicalisation, poor health. This will enable us to develop 'one system' to identify risk factors and support joined up efforts to provide those most at risk with appropriate support. ▶ We will build consultation and feedback into partnership activities and timelines to ensure stakeholders and communities are engaged in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Initial consultation on co-production. ▶ Development of the strategy, as well as annual consultation and feedback at the point of strategic review. ▶ Intervention commissioning, including feedback to beneficiaries as well as communities/organisations who do not fall within the commissioning plan. ▶ Delivery plan, including consulting stakeholders to identify opportunities for joint working. ▶ Commit to providing feedback to stakeholders and ensuring feedback loops are in place when planning all consultation with stakeholders. ▶ We will co-produce with communities in some way across the whole of Merseyside, not just in hotspots, to ensure equality of voice.



PRIORITY	
 <p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Taking a multi-agency approach, partners will target resources on prevention and early intervention, rooted in evidence on ‘what works’ to prevent and reduce serious violence.</p>
 <p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services offered reflect local and national best practice.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced risk of serious harm. Decrease in risk and increase in protective factors. Enhanced offer of whole family support. Improved health outcomes associated with wider determinants. Reduced health inequalities.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term change in attitudes and behaviours which contribute to a culture where serious violence occurs. Reduced financial cost of violence.
 <p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using evidence-based resources, we will commission and embed interventions across the region which are known to deliver the highest impact for people at risk of, or already involved in, serious violence. This will involve working closely with the Violence Reduction Partnership to ensure decision making is informed by the wealth of local evidence on ‘what works’ at primary, secondary, and tertiary level. We will continue to provide high quality interventions and targeted support for people under supervision, including people in prison and people on probation, who have unique needs, to improve outcomes across a range of areas, including accommodation, education, employment, and health, and address the thinking, attitudes, and behaviours that lead to reoffending. Where possible, statutory partners will link their HR and recruitment departments with local prisons to commit to advertising suitable posts. We will ensure there is sufficient provision of evidence-based interventions and effective partnership arrangements in place to support the transition from custody to community, maximising opportunities to deliver the Short-Term Sentence Function (SSF). The SSF is an enhanced approach to sentence management and is primarily needs focused with the intention of improving the continuity of provision from custody into the community. We will continue to support and commission whole family approaches to preventing and reducing serious violence, including providing support for people in prison to initiate and maintain family ties whilst in custody. By whole family, we mean that we will triage family members for their individual needs, but interventions are concurrently delivered. Improving simultaneous access and availability of support for all family members in need, we can maximise and sustain the impact of interventions. We will continue to deliver and develop educational programmes (universal and targeted) to engage and prevent serious violence, including working closely with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership and Safer Schools Officers to develop a suite of trauma informed preventative interventions for use within educational settings.



PRIORITY	
 <p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Partners will provide timely, coordinated support, and monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of interventions so that risk is reduced.</p>
 <p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More people aware of and accessing support and intervention. Services offered reflect local and national best practice.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved referral and referral pathways for people who are at risk of or in need of support. More people are aware of and protected against serious violence risks. Decrease in risk and increase in protective factors. Coordinated referral and support for the most vulnerable. Improved health outcomes associated with wider determinants.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People feel safer.
 <p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategic and operational processes and interventions, supporting the partnership to measure impact in the absence of significant funding required for robust evaluation. This will include regular reviews of policies and procedures, review of performance data, and consultation with partners and communities to understand the impact. We will continue to build the local evidence base on ‘what works’, collating and sharing best practice spotlights, to develop a repository of local evidence. We will conduct a mapping exercise to increase the partnerships’ awareness of the occurrence and effectiveness of strategic and operational assets in place across the region to prevent and reduce serious violence, and use the output to inform our collaboration and planning going forward, ensuring resources are targeted effectively to reduce risk and harm felt by communities as a result of violent offending in public spaces. We will establish clear referral pathways and ensure that statutory and third sector partners are equipped with knowledge of the referral processes, making it easier for partners to connect people most in need to other services and resources which address public health needs and risk and protective factors for serious violence (e.g., mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, housing services, and employment and education opportunities). We will work across the whole system to raise community awareness of the support available to those involved in, or impacted by, serious violence. This will include raising awareness of wider interventions as well as criminal justice and enforcement activity (such as Out of Court Disposal processes) to provide victim reassurance. We will work across the whole system to monitor and evaluate levels of engagement and attainment in disproportionately represented groups open to services, including those open to the Youth Justice System, to develop improvement, including for children with an Educational Health Care Plan, children with Special Educational Needs, children permanently excluded from school, out of court disposal cases, and children released under investigation. We will work closely with partners to understand the impact of school exclusion policies on serious violence, including monitoring the extent of school exclusion in the youth justice system cohort, as well as the extent of additional support provided to children with Special Educational Needs, ensuring that every child with an Educational Health Care Plan has this reviewed on an annual basis.






PRIORITY	
<p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Ensure that the experiences, strengths, and needs of individuals, families, and communities are understood and that these views are clearly recorded so that co-production is central to the multi-agency approach.</p>
<p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Community engagement and co-production is a priority. ▶ Community voice embedded in strategy to inform action planning at a local level.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ More people demonstrating positive engagement with services referred to. ▶ Individuals, organisations, and communities work together to prevent serious violence. ▶ Individuals, families, and communities are supported to feel safe. ▶ Communities challenging acceptance of violence. ▶ Reduced fear of violence within the community.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Long-term change in attitudes and behaviours which contribute to a culture where serious violence occurs. ▶ Co-production is habitual. ▶ People feel safer. ▶ Increased reporting of serious violence.
<p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We will conduct a strengths-based asset mapping assessment and use the output of this to inform planning and collaboration to prevent and reduce serious violence, focussing on what is important to local communities and how system partners can help to build and expand the assets and resources within communities, including those which are led by communities for communities. ▶ We will work across the whole system to drive a cultural shift around co-production to embed it within organisational and partnership ways of working as 'business as usual', ensuring that the views and needs of those most impacted by serious violence feed into strategic and operational planning, delivery, decision making, and review. ▶ We will develop a consistent system of collaboration between workstreams, to keep operational approaches the same and ensure strategic join-up around who is engaged, how they are engaged, and priorities for engagement. ▶ We will amplify the voices of those most impacted by serious violence, ensuring meaningful opportunities for communities to actively participate in matters that affect them and that they care about, particularly those who may not always be listened to. ▶ We will utilise and build upon the success and impact of existing lived experience forums such as Liverpool City Council's Serious Violence Forum and the Service User Forum which is part of the strategic governance across the Probation Service, to develop and embed a permanent lived experience forum as part of the governance structure under the Duty to ensure that experts by experience can positively influence decision making at the highest level.






PRIORITY	
<p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Use information effectively to understand the prevalence of serious violence in their area to inform multi-agency strategy, planning, and actions, including targeting of resources in places and spaces to meet local need.</p>
<p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improved identification of hotspot locations and trends to better target resource and intervention. ▶ Ensure a coordinated, adaptable approach to the targeting of organised crime groups by the partnership.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Risk of serious violence in hotspots is reduced. ▶ Resource, intervention, and harm recovery efforts targeted at priority hotspots where serious violence occurs.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Mature model of early identification embedded to respond to emerging need and risk to prevent and reduce serious violence.
<p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We will review practical interventions, working closely with Designing Out Crime Units, to ensure regeneration plans effectively work to prevent serious violence and the opportunities for crime within the built environment. ▶ We will continue to implement place-based approaches, using multiple data sets to identify the High Harm High Crime hotspot locations across Merseyside where serious violence occurs and ensure these areas are subject to intensive support, including enhanced police visibility / patrolling, targeting of interventions to provide support and advice to those most in need, and continued efforts to problem solve with key partners to reduce risk and harm. ▶ We will continue to build upon data capability and digital resources to develop integrative systems which identify any areas of Merseyside at risk of becoming a hotspot for Serious Violence, overlaying crime and environmental data, to intervene early and mitigate emerging risk. We will develop innovation in the way that this is visualised to support partners in embedding effective policies, processes, and interventions across the whole system. ▶ We will continue to establish and build on learning from the roll out of the multi-agency partnership tactic called Clear, Hold, Build, which has been designed and part-funded by the Home Office to rescue and regenerate areas most affected by serious and organised crime. ▶ We will work with Merseyside Police and Local Authority licensing teams to ensure there are suitable systems in place to deal with repeat issues of serious violence at locations.



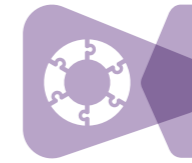
PRIORITY	
 Strategic Objectives	<p>Embed a strengths-based approach which focuses on identifying the strengths or assets, as well as the needs, of communities, to prevent and reduce serious violence.</p>
 Success Measures	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding, recognition, and use of community assets.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved visibility and awareness of partnership assets to prevent and reduce serious violence, including awareness of operational programmes and initiatives.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths-based approaches embedded and contribute to driving change and system level transformation at a local level.
 Strategic Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will conduct a strengths-based asset mapping assessment which identifies, describes, and visualises strategic, operational, and community assets that are available within the Merseyside region to support the partnership and communities in preventing and reducing serious violence. This will be used as an empowerment tool to build upon existing capacity, empowering meaningful co-production with communities to understand and respond to their concerns and ideas. In line with building upon tangible and intangible assets within the community, we will ensure that serious violence prevention and reduction remains a priority for Community Cashback and participatory budget schemes, providing communities with the skills, tools, and resources to deliver their own serious violence work, sustainably amplifying the wider system coming together.



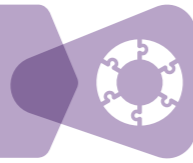
PRIORITY	
 Strategic Objectives	<p>Partners will collaborate to ensure consistent delivery of key messages relating to serious violence, empowering communities to build their resilience and confidence to prevent and respond to serious violence.</p>
 Success Measures	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared understanding of current opportunities to build and develop communications capacity. Consistent and aligned communications plans across the partnership to deliver key messages, improving perceptions of safety.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased local community awareness of serious violence and risk mitigation. Coordinated and consistent messaging which builds awareness of the local approach to serious violence prevention. Increase the partnerships' awareness of the occurrence and effectiveness of prevention and intervention activities implemented across the region to tackle serious violence. Increased community cohesion through communities working together to address serious violence related concerns.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities are equipped with the tools to build confidence and resilience in preventing and responding to serious violence.
 Strategic Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will map and review current communications approaches, identifying examples of best practice and opportunities to engage communities with the serious violence agenda using an aspirational, strengths-based approach. We will develop innovative ways to communicate the important role of public health approaches to serious violence prevention and to evaluate their effectiveness to provide future whole systems approaches that will support efforts across Merseyside. We will raise awareness of the impact of serious violence on individuals and develop a strengths-based approach which challenges the acceptance of norms which promote violence as being inevitable, highlighting the tangible and intangible partnership and community assets which can support in bringing about long-term cultural, behavioural, and attitudinal change. We will develop coordinated and consistent messaging, which is targeted and outcomes focussed, to build awareness of the local approach to serious violence prevention, instilling trust and confidence in the work being done by the partnership to tackle and prevent serious violence. We will share positive news with communities to further strengthen community resilience and provide transparency around activity undertaken to impact on serious violence. We will ensure that messaging is tailored to local need and shared at hyper-local level through various channels, informed by data and community insight to understand how to consult communities where fear of violence may be a bigger problem than the actual threat of violence. We will act as champions within our own organisations to deliver key messages relating to serious violence to embed a public health approach to serious violence prevention. We will create a communication and campaign strategy with long-term and intermediate objectives to guide how the partnership will inform the community, co-produced with communities. We will develop our understanding of how visible the partnership is to key population groups. We will support the community to develop new skills to ensure that work on prevention and reduction is sustainable and allow the community to deliver interventions and their own serious violence work, ensuring existing work done by community members and groups is amplified, well-resourced, and valued. We will champion the positive contribution made by communities to counteract the risk and harm felt as a result of violent offending in public spaces, and support community asset approaches which build community cohesion. We will enhance our connectivity to communities, considering all partnership activity in terms of its inclusivity and accessibility, identifying and removing barriers to participation and ensuring that we build opportunities for engagement so that partnership engagement is held at times and places where individuals and groups can attend and participate.






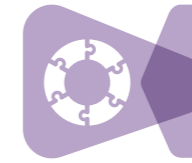
PRIORITY	
<p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Partners will take ownership of embedding strategic and operational delivery at hyper-local level, ensuring action plans are dynamic and adapt to changing risk and need.</p>
<p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hyper-local strategy and action plans developed tailored to local need, with robust accountability and governance structures at hyper-local level to drive key actions.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localised strategies and approaches implemented. Ensuring that local delivery to reduce serious violence is underpinned by mature co-production with communities, particularly those who are most adversely affected by violence.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy and delivery embedded at hyper-local level in response to local need.
<p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to ensure that the priorities and actions contained within this strategy align with the wider strategic and political context, and form part of an ongoing process of review and co-production with key stakeholders, including local communities, to support local ownership of the strategy and ensure that it is implemented as intended. To monitor the impact of the multi-agency public health approach to serious violence prevention, we will continue to use community insight data where possible to better understand impact, community confidence, and levels of reassurance, enabling us to adapt to changing risk and need. We will ensure this strategy is owned at place, meaning that we will drive the actions contained within this strategy through local place-based strategic, tactical, and operational partnerships, to ensure that decision making is kept as local as possible and that we are able to respond to localised nuances within and between local authorities which may see the impact of serious violence differ.






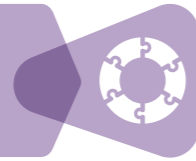
PRIORITY	
<p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Partners embed whole-systems, public health approaches to preventing serious violence at hyper-local level, with effective oversight and governance mechanisms to deliver improved outcomes.</p>
<p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment across local and national strategies and delivery plans to ensure a symbiotic approach.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the public health approach and translate this into practice, recognising the link between serious violence and wider determinants of health and embed serious violence outcomes into planning and delivery. Partners are confident and equipped to implement proactive, preventative approaches to serious violence, as opposed to implementing solely reactive approaches.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners work together to enable cultural change and achieve a sustainable approach to tackling serious violence. Effectiveness of oversight and governance of serious violence prevention work locally, including an understanding of the senior leadership structure, funding landscape, and interoperability between partners at all levels to support a whole system, public health approach to serious violence prevention.
<p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will develop our understanding of existing governance arrangements for strategic and operational serious violence prevention work, identifying interoperability with cross cutting local and national strategies, delivery plans, operating systems, and existing partnerships. We will streamline governance mechanisms and establish clear lines of reporting and accountability to deliver improved outcomes through a multi-agency, public health approach, ensuring the right people have a seat at the table to drive long-term, sustainable change to processes, systems, and interventions, and reflect this in revised partnership terms of reference where appropriate. We will review how the partnership supports the workforce to embed multi-agency, public health approaches, and develop a programme of training for the whole system so that partners have the right skills, knowledge, and working conditions to embed a public health approach to serious violence prevention, enabling improved and earlier identification of populations and places vulnerable to the impact of serious violence. We will work collaboratively with partners to develop and deliver training and awareness raising of what is available in the community to prevent serious violence offending and reoffending, including what assets are available to support with resettlement for prison leavers and people on probation.






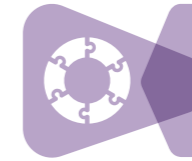
PRIORITY	
 <p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Increase the effectiveness of partnerships at preventing/tackling serious violence, creating a system which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration.</p>
 <p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specified and relevant authorities feel included and understand their role, and the role of key stakeholders, in supporting those at risk of involvement in serious violence. Partners demonstrate shared ownership, accountability, and collective responsibility in preventing serious violence. Partners are aware of the funding landscape and assets across partnerships to deliver against serious violence strategic priorities, ensuring alignment of relevant funding streams.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners are demonstrating maturity in co-production, engaging key stakeholders and communities in the Serious Violence Duty programme, including co-design and delivery of strategy and intervention. Partners more effectively coordinate funding decisions and investments.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved joint working, decision-making, and commissioning. Resources are targeted effectively, maximising impact, and reducing duplication. Improved co-commissioning arrangements, including longer-term pooling of resources and agreement to invest for the long-term.
 <p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver against a shared vision, and collaborate to ensure that partners understand their role, and the role of others, in violence prevention, including a common understanding of what the local multi-agency approach is currently and what each organisation's role within the collaboration is or can be. We will continue to work collaboratively with partners to target delivery of services, maximising co-commissioning opportunities, to achieve the priorities set out in the Duty Strategy and deliver shared outcomes. A key focus in the first phase of strategy mobilisation is to explore co-commissioning opportunities between partners to reinstate the local evidence-based practice of the Departure Lounge in HMP Liverpool. We will strive to develop serious violence and public health outcomes focused funding models, prioritising making greater resources available for prevention, and reflecting this within grants and commissioning contracts to move beyond payment for activity to investment in longer-term population outcomes. We will develop our understanding of the funding landscape to identify funding streams available across the partnership which can be used to resource serious violence prevention activity, highlighting where we can pool budgets, and where funding streams enable longer-term funding which is not restricted to financial year funding cycles. We will develop a coordinated, regional approach to serious violence across Prisons and Probation, aligning partnership work across the Duty strategy and Regional Reducing Reoffending Plans. This is an area of specific focus as we understand there are a number of people held in prison locally who are from out of area, thus requiring us to further join up efforts at regional level.






PRIORITY	
 <p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Engage in critical reflection to challenge and support practice to act upon system learning more habitually, promoting continuous improvement in the multi-agency approach for communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.</p>
 <p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners have a shared vision and are committed to actively engaging and sharing learning across the partnership.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capacity for partners to share and act upon data and system learning more habitually.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners work together to enable cultural change and achieve a sustainable approach to tackling serious violence.
 <p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will conduct an asset mapping assessment of strategic and operational serious violence prevention work to enable the partnership to facilitate a deeper understanding of the existing multi-agency response to serious violence at whole-system and intervention level, identifying gaps and opportunities to deliver improved outcomes. The output will be part of a broader iterative process of continual system learning which will be driven by the Tactical Oversight Group. We will collaborate to share learning and examples of good practice that other partners can adopt, which we will collate and present in the form of an iterative toolkit which will be regularly updated and published on the Police and Crime Commissioner's website, supporting the partnership in sharing advice, expertise, and intervention awareness to address local serious violence issues. We will continue to work closely with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to develop system learning and sustainably embed a public health approach at whole-systems and intervention level, building on the evidence legacy from the work undertaken to date to inform and sustain ongoing violence prevention policy and activity. We will build a shared understanding of current opportunities to evaluate and quality assure the impact of interventions, using our collective resources and expertise to support organisations to develop more robust evaluation of projects through applications to the Youth Endowment Fund and other local evaluation partner opportunities, and provide organisations with income generation support to sustainably resource initiatives. We will work across the partnership to prepare for national His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services inspections relating to serious violence, and review and act upon any recommendations and areas for improvement. We will establish a multi-agency response structure and framework to support the whole system in preventing and responding to serious violence and emerging risk, empowering communities to sustain serious violence preventative activity.



PRIORITY	
 <p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Improve multi-agency data sharing and governance to enhance capacity and capability of the partnership in preventing and reducing serious violence related risk and harm.</p>
 <p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners have an increased understanding of the nature, extent, and impact of serious violence and related risk factors, using shared data and intelligence to identify support pathways and target resources. Serious Violence analysts meet regularly.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved individual data capacity and capability to support partnership understanding of population and pathway needs. Partners have a better understanding of population need and risks, population receives more appropriate referral and support.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources are targeted effectively, maximising impact, and reducing duplication. Improved multi-agency data sharing with improved system-wide governance.
 <p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will establish a Serious Violence Analyst network, comprising of analysts from across Specified and Relevant Authorities, to enable us to support individual data capacity and capability and provide a 'one picture' of the truth. We will establish a Data Protection / Information Governance Network among data leads in partner agencies to improve data sharing, providing reassurance on legislation and compliance around what can be shared, unblocking barriers, developing information and data sharing agreements to enable effective sharing of data. We will continue to work across the partnership to improve the quantity and quality of data we collect, ensuring training is in place to support front line professionals in accurately recording serious violence offences and injuries within the definition set out in this strategy. We will build our data capability across the partnership to improve joint working to identify populations and places most susceptible to serious violence, including identification of risk and protective factors operating at a local level, as well as to enable an effective flow of information and intelligence to support rehabilitation and resettlement planning for high-risk populations. We will further develop our understanding of causal factors driving in-prison violence to inform resettlement and welfare services for prison leavers moving from custody to the community, and to mitigate the impact of in-prison violence on communities. We will ensure processes and information sharing agreements are in place to facilitate the sharing of multi-agency data and information to inform the ongoing development of problem profiles and strategic needs assessments which we will use to inform resource allocation to maximise impact for communities. In the long-term, we will work towards developing a system which enables us to track patients presenting to Emergency Departments, to develop an understanding of emerging and repeat risk and vulnerability, as well as to understand the impact of interventions on repeat victimisation and/or perpetration. We will support the development of the Violence and Injuries Dashboard being developed by the Integrated Care Board, to develop our understanding of violent injuries and associated population health risk factors. We will ensure that this complements and supports the work of the Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group Data Hub.



PRIORITY	
 <p>Strategic Objectives</p>	<p>Commit to ensuring trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership at all levels.</p>
 <p>Success Measures</p>	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All partners demonstrate trauma informed awareness.
	<p>Medium Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All partners become trauma informed organisations, ensuring trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership at all levels so that staff can identify early indicators of trauma and adversity and prevent re-traumatising those who are most vulnerable.
	<p>Long Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership.
 <p>Strategic Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work to embed trauma informed training across the workforce to ensure partners at all levels are trauma informed and embed trauma informed practice. To support this, we will undertake a review to identify which partners have undertaken appropriate training and enrol staff where gaps are identified. We will develop multi-agency relationships and partnership working to embed a trauma informed approach across all partners, increasing access to a range of expertise for communities presenting with the most complex needs, developing an asset-based approach to community development. We will develop our understanding of neurodiversity in the criminal justice system, including understanding how neurodiversity may serve as a driving factor for vulnerability to serious violence. We will use this understanding to establish how we can embed a cohesive offer across the partnership to minimise serious violence related risk and harm which is linked to neurodevelopmental needs.

Understanding and measuring impact

The three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence, as mandated by the Home Office, 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.

Whilst measuring impact against three key success measures is important, we are committed to understanding the lived experiences which sit behind the data to develop a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of our partnership approach on mitigating risk and harm caused by local serious violence issues.

Our data tells us that serious violence is on a downward trend, however, we know that the harm and impact felt by our communities as a result of violent offending in public spaces is increasing.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

Whilst reductions in serious violence offences and injuries will help us to understand whether we are having a positive impact, it is of utmost importance that we listen to individuals, families, and communities most impacted by serious violence to understand what they need to feel safe and to be free from serious violence and the fear of violence. It is only by working with and for our communities that we can make a difference.

We will be working together to understand and measure the impact over the long term so that we can improve our approach to reduce the harm caused by serious violence, but also the cost that serious violence causes to society. By doing this, we hope to be able to establish Merseyside as a place where people feel safe to live, work, and visit.

As such, we will ensure that whilst impact is measured through quantitative offence and injury data, we will place a strong emphasis on obtaining qualitative feedback from key stakeholders and communities regarding what's working, where it's working, and for whom.

Where possible, we will seek to develop processes and systems to enable tracking over the longer-term, to identify where preventative action has realised positive outcomes for populations through reduced risk and harm, as well as reducing future economic burdens by investing to save. This will also enable us to develop a solid performance framework, which looks at implementation and impact indicators, to create a clear understanding of the key contextual factors working to create the intended impact, and how we can adapt to embed long-term financial and cultural sustainability to serious violence prevention work.

In adhering to a public health framework, we are committed to embedding a long-term approach to the prevention and reduction of serious violence, and therefore whilst we acknowledge that there will be some impact in the short-term, we anticipate much of our impact to be over the medium to longer-term. However, we cannot underestimate the importance of reviewing short term measures to maximise longer-term outcomes. By understanding short term outputs, we are able to act quicker to positively impact longer-term change, using evidence on what works within our local context to adapt to changing risk and need.



What does this mean for Merseyside?

It is important that we understand whether what we are doing is working and we are committed to regularly reviewing our approach to make sure it is having a positive impact for our communities.

A Public Health Approach means that we may not see results for a long time but we will look at short term indicators to make sure that we are heading in the right direction. For example, reductions in serious violence offending and reported injuries, feelings of safety, and improvements in other life outcomes such as educational attainment, mental health, employment opportunities – all of which are crucial in giving our communities the best chance at life and which contribute to preventing serious violence in the long-term.

What have we done so far?

As a region, we are relentless in our commitment to preventing and tackling serious violence, to minimise the harm caused to individuals, families, and the wider community.

Prevention is at the core of our approach, and we are steadfast in embedding a public health approach to tackling serious violence, investing in processes and interventions which seek to **prevent serious violence from happening altogether**.

Working in a preventative way enables us to work together in partnership to understand and address risk and protective factors which make populations and places more susceptible to serious violence, and over the past few years we have collectively supported a cultural shift towards being proactive instead of reactive.

There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream to find out why they are falling in.

Desmond Tutu

To embed whole system change, this has required the commitment from partners at the most senior level, ensuring that prevention underpins and guides the partnership response to serious violence at a hyper-local level. It also requires strong co-production with communities to ensure that work on prevention and reduction is sustainable and responsive to local needs, concerns, and aspirations, supporting communities to deliver interventions and their own serious violence work which is well-resourced and valued.

Locally, we have seen some powerful examples of partners working together to prevent and reduce serious violence within a public health framework, as set out in this section, with examples of participatory approaches which actively involve community members in the design, delivery, and evaluation of serious violence prevention work. However, we recognise that this is only the start, and we are committed to continuing a positive trajectory to influence

whole system change to support the implementation and embedding of a public health approach to violence prevention.

From investing in our staff to ensure that they have the right training, skills, and working environment to embed long-term public health approaches, to creating meaningful and impactful opportunities for co-production with communities, as well as developing a robust evidence base to inform preventative policy and activity, we will continue to empower partners and communities to have direct involvement in key decisions which impact them and which they care about.

There is no doubt that we can more effectively prevent and reduce serious violence by working together, pooling our collective knowledge and expertise to respond to local need, demand and vulnerability – bolstering community cohesion and increasing feelings of safety.



Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership

Merseyside is one of several areas allocated funding by the Home Office since 2019 to establish a multi-agency violence reduction unit. Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) aims to take a whole system public health approach to prevention that complements existing multi-agency partnerships and brings together partners to develop a coordinated approach to tackle the root causes of violence. The MVRP provides strategic leadership on the public health approach to violence in Merseyside through policy, practice, and targeted communication. MVRP also funds a suite of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to prevent violence with a focus on early intervention, life course, place-based, and community led approaches. MVRP works across five priority areas: early years, education, health, whole-family approaches and preventing offending.



Trauma Informed Training

Trauma is a global public health crisis according to the Centre for Disease Control and its prevention should therefore be a priority for everyone. Being 'Trauma Informed' requires an understanding that different life experiences shape the options available to us and our way of being and we can use this understanding to influence our interactions and decisions, both in work and in our daily life.

The MVRP have developed (and evaluated) a multi-agency in-person training package to support Public Services in embedding Trauma Informed Practice. These trauma informed training sessions are being run across all 5 boroughs in Merseyside, with a focus on supporting public and third sector organisations to understand how psychological trauma can impact individuals. This in turn provides mechanisms as to how they can support

individuals they come into contact with, whilst also ensuring that they consider the implications for their individual services.

Training takes place over 4 separate sessions and on consecutive weeks, with an emphasis on a multi-agency approach. Over these four sessions, practitioners gain an understanding of the neuroscience as to how individuals learn and develop, providing them with tools to best meet the needs of individuals and their communities. With a focus on the neuroscience of how we learn, the rationale is clear regarding the delivery of training over a number of sessions, practitioners learn then practice the techniques provided, thus embedding the Trauma Informed principles. Practitioners feel empowered to support their clients in the most appropriate manner and also to deliver change across their organisations.



Merseyside Police Preventative Policing Strand.

In 2021, Merseyside Police invested in a new Prevention Strand which brings together a number of key teams including the Community Engagement Unit, a new Rural Wildlife and Heritage team, the Early Help team, and the Missing Persons Unit, as well as a Prevention Hub, to help officers and staff deliver prevention across Merseyside. This strand has instilled a whole force approach to prevention through shared responsibility and collaborative effort and bolstered two-way engagement with communities to encourage community involvement in local policing activity. Not only has this strand helped to reduce harm and offending, it has also created the conditions for partners to work together identify people and places of highest demand, ensuring effective problem solving approaches and interventions are implemented to address risk and protective factors in populations and places.



Safer Schools Officers

Merseyside Police Safer Schools Team work with schools to keep young people safe. Every day Safer Schools Officers are interacting and engaging with the young people of Merseyside in a non-police related environment. They provide safeguarding and pastoral support, as well as personal, social and health education. They help to tackle truancy and instances of bullying, creating, and maintaining positive relationships with the school and young people. Safer Schools Officers also assist in early identification and support for victims and vulnerable individuals, working with schools and partners to improve outcomes for all, intervening early to prevent unnecessary criminalisation.



Operation Interface

A co-ordination cell that enhances police activity across the force relating to 3 distinct areas of Policing; Project Medusa, which focuses on County Lines drug activity and associated vulnerabilities; Project Adder, working across partnerships, ensuring more people are signposted to drug treatment providers and Operation Target, providing a focus on preventing serious violence and knife crime, affecting young people.

Operation Blue

Enhanced approach to Test Purchase operations focusing on preventing the sale of knives / weapons to underage individuals.

Weapons carrying

In Merseyside, there has been a focus on early intervention and education around weapons carrying and the consequences for children and young people, as well as many high-profile campaigns launched by activists in our communities over the years.

Many of this work has been focused on delivering messages to those under the age of 20 as they are a captive audience in education settings and/or youth services. This is part of a longer-term plan stop those who are children now from carrying a weapon in the future into their later 20s and beyond. However, more recent data shows that weapons offences are most likely perpetrated by those aged 25-34, but that victims tend to be younger.

Therefore, although continued investment in early intervention and education for under 20s remains important, resource is clearly required to tackle weapons carrying in this older cohort. We acknowledge this is much more difficult, as behaviours and attitudes are more entrenched. Interventions through the Prisons and Probation service are important tools in establishing culture change for the young adult and 25-34 cohort.

We are committed as a Merseyside partnership to delivering changes in weapons carrying culture across all ages and will remain focused on using the best evidence-based interventions available to achieve this.

Mersey Forensic Psychology Service

Highly specialist psychology service that provides individual therapy and group interventions that contribute to the reduction of risk of violent and sexual offending. The model uses a trauma informed approach to individuals who may have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences.

EVOLVE - Clear, Hold, Build



Merseyside Police is rolling out a multi-agency partnership tactic called Clear, Hold, Build, which has been designed and part-funded by the Home Office to rescue and regenerate areas most affected by serious and organised crime.

The three-phase initiative, known locally as EVOLVE, uses a combination of targeted high-visibility police operations and covert policing tactics alongside activity from partners and input from residents to protect our communities and prevent organised crime groups from operating.

► What?

The strategy sees police ruthlessly pursue gang members using all available powers and tactics to clear an area; continue activity to hold the location, so another gang can't take control in the vacuum; and then work with residents and partners to build the community into a more prosperous area where people would love to live, work and visit and one less susceptible to being exploited by organised crime groups.

► Where?

EVOLVE projects are taking place in areas of Wirral, Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton.

► When?

This is a long-term project and work will be continuous

► Why?

Implementing this holistic approach will make it more difficult for organised crime groups to operate. It will disrupt their activity and their incomes, and will help to

protect those living, visiting and working in Merseyside. It will also assist those vulnerable to manipulation by gangs. By working together and listening to residents' needs, EVOLVE will regenerate areas blighted by serious and organised crime and will allow residents to reclaim their communities, building long-term resilience against organised crime groups and help prevent future threats to safety.

► How?

Partners will work closely to share information and identify hot spots that need regeneration as well as targeted activity to remove and disrupt organised crime groups. In addition, partners will provide advice and services, in particular to those in need of assistance who may struggle to access help. Areas that will be focussed on include: the living, working and recreational environment for residents, opportunities for young people, help with employment, assistance to access funding, health issues, crime prevention and security advice.

Events will also be held with community groups that will provide opportunities for input from residents to determine how partners can best help and support communities.

► Who?

Partners involved in EVOLVE include Merseyside Police, Merseyside's Police and Crime Commissioner, local councils, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, housing associations, health services, schools, colleges, local businesses, community groups and residents.

SAFE Taskforce Liverpool

SAFE Taskforce – Liverpool

SAFE stands for Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed. The SAFE Taskforce is a group of mainstream secondary schools working together with other multi-agency structures and local experts to support young people at risk of serious violence and re-engage them in their education. The interventions will help:

Support young people with challenging behaviour.

Attend school regularly.

Fulfil their potential.

Exceed their expectations.

The Department for Education has allocated £3.7 million of funding over a 3-year period for the Taskforce to invest in, and commission school focused interventions to reduce involvement in serious violence and improve attendance at school. It will also help with behaviour in school and within the community and improve social and emotional regulation and wellbeing.

Intervention 1 → SAFE Workers

The implementation of SAFE workers in 11 schools who will provide 1-1 mentoring and support to the referred young person, working both in and out of school with the pupil and their family for a period of around 6 months.

Intervention 2 → Data Sharing Hub

The building of a data-sharing hub that will bring together information from multiple agencies that work with families and young people across the city. The information will include schools, social services, family support and police.

Intervention 3 → ELSA

The implementation of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) in schools and training school staff in trauma-informed practice.

Intervention 4 → Cognitive Behavioural Approaches through Sport

The intervention involves 13 schools and offers a 12-week engagement programme for selected pupils to explore 'Choice Theory' and cognitive behavioural approaches through Sports sessions delivered by Liverpool School Sports Partnership Foundation. These engagement sessions will then lead to an extra-curricular offer including signposting to community sport plus an expedition.

Intervention 5 → Girls Out Loud

A 4-session programme for girls exploring the following key areas: Social Media & Me, Friendship Fix, Mental Health and Choices & Consequences.

Intervention 6 → Speech & Language Therapy Training

A training programme for school SENCos delivered by Speech & Language Therapists from Alder Hey. The SENCos will follow an 11-16-year-old specific programme and can opt to work towards the ELKLAN accreditation.

Date for review/annual review mechanism

This Strategy document will be reviewed annually, with the next review due by 31st January 2025.

Progress of this strategy, the objectives set out within it and the local action plan, will be reviewed at least quarterly through the MSPPB and Serious Violence Duty Tactical Oversight Group.

Summary of Annual Assessment of Progress

This section will be applicable 12 months after the local Strategy is produced and will provide a summary of the annual assessment of the partnership's performance against the previous years' strategy.

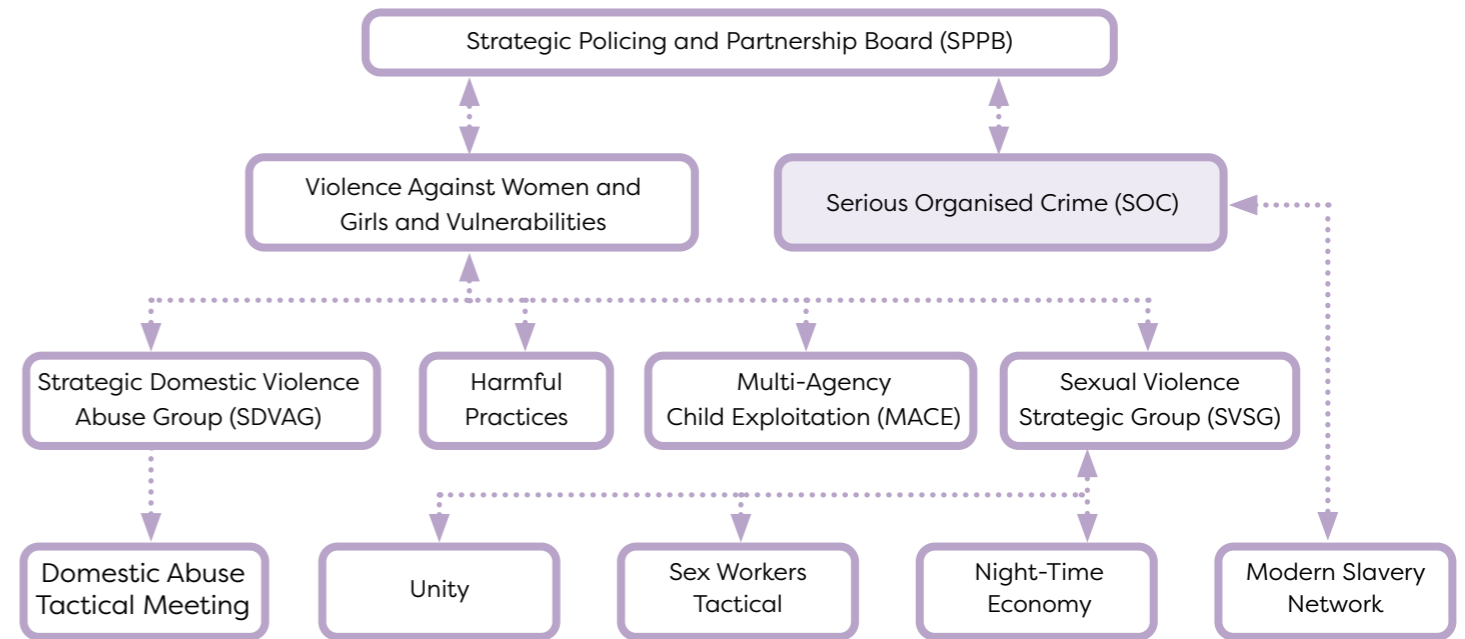
Appendix A

Governance arrangements for Violence Against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse.

There is flexibility for Specified Authorities in local areas to take account of their evidence-based SNA when defining serious violence, including flexibility to include domestic abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Locally, the partnership agreed at strategic level that VAWG and domestic abuse will not form part of the serious violence definition for the purpose of the Duty.

However, there are pre-existing mechanisms in place to support victims, survivors, and their families, and further detail on the governance and programme of work underway locally to prevent and reduce serious violence is set out below.

VAWG Governance Structure which feeds up to the MSPPB:



Violence Against Women and Girls

Mayoral Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for Liverpool 2023- 2026

Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner – Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan

Wirral Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022 – 2025

Domestic Abuse

Liverpool Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy

Wirral Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020 – 2025

Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023 – 2028

St Helens Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020 – 2022

Knowsley Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 – 2025

Appendix B

Interdependencies

There are a number of enabling strategies and plans which support the partnership in delivering the vision outlined within this strategy:

[Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board Joint Forward Plan](#)

[HM Prison and Probation North West Reducing Reoffending Plan 2022 – 2025](#)

[Home Office Serious Violence Strategy 2018](#)

[Government’s Beating Crime Plan 2021](#)

[Government’s drug strategy](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

[Knowsley Cared for Children Strategy 2023 – 2026](#)

[Knowsley Community Safety Partnership | Knowsley Better Together](#)

[Knowsley Community Safety Plan 2022 - 2025](#)

[Knowsley Early Help and Prevention Strategy Liverpool City Council](#)

[Liverpool City Council City Safe Plan 2021 – 2024](#)

[Liverpool University Hospital Foundation Trust Our Future Together Strategy](#)

[Liverpool University Hospital Foundation Quality and Safety Strategy 2021 - 2024](#)

[Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Plan 2023 – 2024](#)

[Merseyside Police Force Strategy 2020 – 2025](#)

[Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioners Police and Crime Plan 2021 - 2025](#)

[Merseyside Police Operation Interface](#)

[NPCC National Vulnerability Action Plan 2020](#)

[Policing Vision](#)

[Policing, Health, and Social Care Consensus 2018](#)

[Sefton Borough Council](#)

[Sefton Children and Young People’s Plan 2022 – 2025](#)

[Sefton Childhood Poverty Strategy 2022](#)

[Sefton Safer Together Strategy 2023 – 2026](#)

[St Helens Borough Council](#)

[Welcome to Knowsley.gov.uk | Knowsley Council](#)

[Wirral Borough Council](#)

[Wirral Community Safety Strategy 2021 – 2026](#)

[Wirral Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Safer Adolescence Strategy 2021 – 2023](#)

Appendix C

EVOLVE

What?

The strategy sees police ruthlessly pursue gang members using all available powers and tactics to clear an area; continue activity to hold the location, so another gang can't take control in the vacuum; and then work with residents and partners to build the community into a more prosperous area where people would love to live, work and visit and one less susceptible to being exploited by organised crime groups.

Where?

EVOLVE projects are taking place in areas of Wirral, Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton.

When?

This is a long-term project and work will be continuous.

Why?

Implementing this holistic approach will make it more difficult for organised crime groups to operate. It will disrupt their activity and their incomes, and will help to protect those living, visiting and working in Merseyside. It will also assist those vulnerable to manipulation by gangs. By working together and listening to residents' needs, EVOLVE will regenerate areas blighted by serious and organised crime and will allow residents to reclaim their communities, building long-term resilience against organised crime groups and help prevent future threats to safety.

How?

Partners will work closely to share information and identify hot spots that need regeneration as well as targeted activity to remove and disrupt organised crime groups. In addition, partners will provide advice and services, in particular to those in need of assistance who may struggle to access help. Areas that will be focussed on include: the living, working and recreational environment for residents, opportunities for young people, help with employment, assistance to access funding, health issues, crime prevention and security advice.

Events will also be held with community groups that will provide opportunities for input from residents to determine how partners can best help and support communities.

Who?

Partners involved in EVOLVE include Merseyside Police, Merseyside’s Police and Crime Commissioner, local councils, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, housing associations, health services, schools, colleges, local businesses, community groups and residents.

Glossary

WORD	DEFINITION
Local Area	The primary area within which specified authorities will collaborate in discharging the Serious Violence Duty. This may be, as a minimum, a local authority area (e.g., Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Wirral) and, at a maximum, a police force area (Merseyside).
Local Policing Bodies	Local Policing Bodies in the context of this strategy refer to the Police and Crime Commissioner.
Life Course Approach	Adopting the life course approach means identifying opportunities for minimising risk factors and enhancing protective factors through evidence-based interventions at important life stages, from the perinatal period through early childhood to adolescence, working age, pre-conception and the family-building years, and into older age.
Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP)	Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), known locally as the MVRP, are 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.
Public Health Approach	A Public Health Approach seeks to improve health and safety for all individuals in a population by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence.
Partnership	An arrangement through which specified and relevant authorities will work together to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.
Primary Intervention	Interventions to prevent violence from happening in the first place.
Protective factors	Factors that decrease vulnerability to violence.
Place Based Approach	Place is a physical setting and social context. It means different things to different people but always relates to somewhere meaningful to the individual. A place-based approach crosses organisational boundaries and is intended to reduce silo working by bringing partners together to focus on improving long term outcomes of the 'whole place' and not just individuals.
Relevant Authorities	A secondary group of authorities who are able to co-operate with the specified authorities as necessary. This includes prison authorities, youth custody authorities and educational authorities.
Risk factors	Factors that increase vulnerability to violence.
Serious Violence	Serious Violence in the local area is violence that is serious in that area. The scope of the strategy is concerned with specific types of crime set out within the definition. It does not include Violence Against Women and Girls or Domestic Abuse.
Serious Violence Duty ('the 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 (SNA)	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.

WORD	DEFINITION
Specified Authorities	All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies, including police, fire and rescue, youth offending teams, probation, health, and local authorities.
Secondary Intervention	Interventions to address risk factors and prevent an emerging problem becoming established.
Strengths Based	A strengths-based approach focusses on what is good in our communities, meaning that partners will assess the needs of communities and make plans that build on their strengths. This strengthens the positive aspects of a person's life – including people's skills, interests, and assets, instead of focussing on what is missing.
Trauma Informed Approach	According to the concept of a trauma-informed approach, "A program, organisation, or system that is trauma-informed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Realises the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery. 2. Recognises the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system. 3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and 4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatisation. A trauma-informed approach can be implemented in any type of service setting or organisation and is distinct from trauma-specific interventions or treatments that are designed specifically to address the consequences of trauma and to facilitate healing.
Targeted	This involves working only with specific individuals or groups.
Tertiary Intervention	Managing an ongoing problem to reduce harm, focussed on reducing offending and reoffending.
Universal	This includes opportunities open to all members of the population, regardless of risk factors.
Whole Systems	A Whole Systems Approach is a term used to show that there is no one organisation, person, or part of the system that can achieve a reduction in serious violence. It means that all organisations, people, and parts of the system must work together to achieve this.
5 C's Principles	The 5 C's principles are principles which local partners can adopt to work together to prevent violence. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration – A collaborative approach requires those who understand the broader implications of violence to generate a collective understanding across all partners within the local system. • Co-production – The approach and workstreams undertaken locally to prevent and tackle violence should be informed by the multi-agency perspectives of all partners. • Co-operation in data and intelligence sharing – Data and information sharing is a key enabler for all multi-agency approaches. • Counter narrative development – Work with community members to create opportunities for development and the option to pursue alternatives to criminal activities. Partnerships should help to support positive aspirations and promote positive role models. • Community consensus – Community consensus lies at the heart of a place-based multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention. The approach must be with and for local communities, it should empower them to actively participate and get involved in tackling issues that affect them collectively. This is essential for legitimacy and for any 'new' work being carried out by partners (particularly statutory work) to be seen as valid by communities.

