

The role of multi-disciplinary partners in a public health approach to violence prevention across Merseyside

Presented by Dr Jane Harris

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Multi-agency approaches: the national picture

“taking a **multi-agency approach** to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.”
(Home Office Violence Duty, 2022)

Strong and committed senior leadership

Evidence based commissioning and implementation

A multi-disciplinary team of opinion leaders

Working with communities as partners

Life course approach to intervention selection, design and delivery

8.5%

reduction in sharp-object assault admissions among young people ≤ 24 years

12%

reduction in admissions for violent assault among young people ≤ 24 years

Data from national VRU evaluation, Cutmore et al (2026)

How does a multiagency approach to violence reduction work?

What we've learnt in Merseyside

- **Leadership** as a catalyst for whole systems thinking
- **Cultivating an environment** of professional curiosity, collaboration and innovation among partners
- **Embedding evidence-based decision-making** into violence prevention

Hear more about the challenges and solutions...

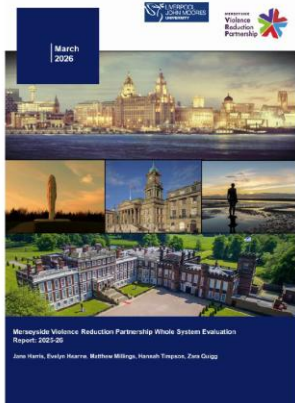
- **Panel discussion:** Challenges and solutions to adopting a public health approach to violence prevention (9.45-10.50am)



Context is key: developing a Merseyside Story

- Current and historical events in Merseyside
- Existing ways of partnership working
- Changes in partner organisations

How we've told that story: six years of whole system evaluation. Data from 121 interviews and three workshops (n=122 participants). Surveys with providers and over 20 evaluation interventions



Hear more...

SESSION 1A: Creating Safe Spaces: local approaches to preventing violence across Merseyside (11.10-12.20pm)

FILM: Dear Merseyside (4.15pm)

*"I do think there's something about Merseyside...Merseyside people are straight talkers...there is that element of the emotional intelligence...they do work together, and they all look after each other...that comes out in the partners...we'll speak our mind, but on the other hand, we'll be there to help people as well...working together...for the public and Merseyside."
(P1, 2025-6 Evaluation)*

Leadership as the catalyst for whole system approaches

it starts with one person, doesn't it? ... a vision that this can't carry on and things aren't getting better. So, we need to change ... I started to change things on my own, but I couldn't ever have had the sea change that's happened without the VRP." (P19, 2025-26 Evaluation)

WHO?

Sufficient seniority, clear vision of MVRP aim, representing partnership and not just own organisation

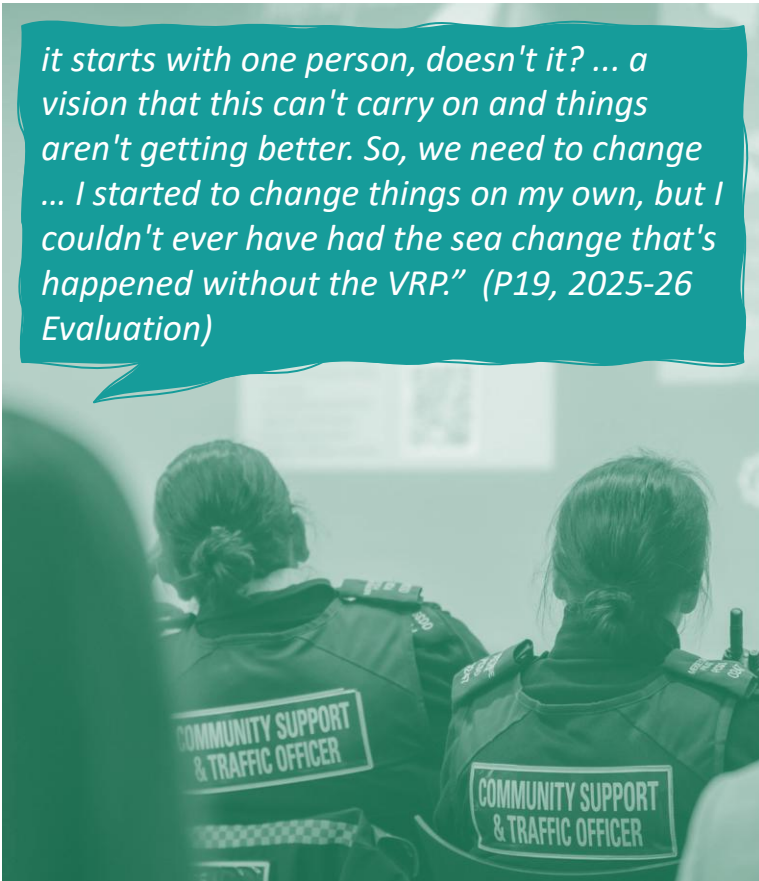
MVRP Director, Steering Group, within partner organisations

WHAT?

Drive violence prevention agenda and shifting culture (even when priorities compete)

Hear more...

- **Plenary 3:** An ACE and Trauma-Informed Responsive Region (3:20-4:15pm)
- **Session 2A:** Supporting children and families: neurodiversity, safety and healing across systems (1.50-3pm)





“everyone here is such a positive, proactive person in their own [professional] world ... if they can't do, they know someone who can do, or they can put you in contact with someone who can do” (FG9, 2-25-26 Evaluation)

“...the right person to engage people...[who] understands what [their organisations] need and how feasible it is to do...there's a level of respect there because they know...[they] wouldn't be bringing something if it wasn't gonna make a difference and it wasn't gonna fit into [...] their system.” (P14, MVRP Team, 2023-24 Evaluation)

Cultivating an environment of professional curiosity, collaboration and innovation among partners

WHO? The “right person” – strong professional networkers, embedded in the partner organisations, committed to multi-agency working and public health approach. Secondment

WHAT? Time and space to innovate, learn collaboratively, challenge one another and advocate for evidence-based approaches. More likely to affiliate ourselves to passionate people we respect and who understand what is feasible for our organisations

Hear more...

- **Film:** Preventing violence together: A public health story (9:45-10:50 am)
- **Session 1C:** Health as a catalyst for violence prevention (11.10-12.20pm)

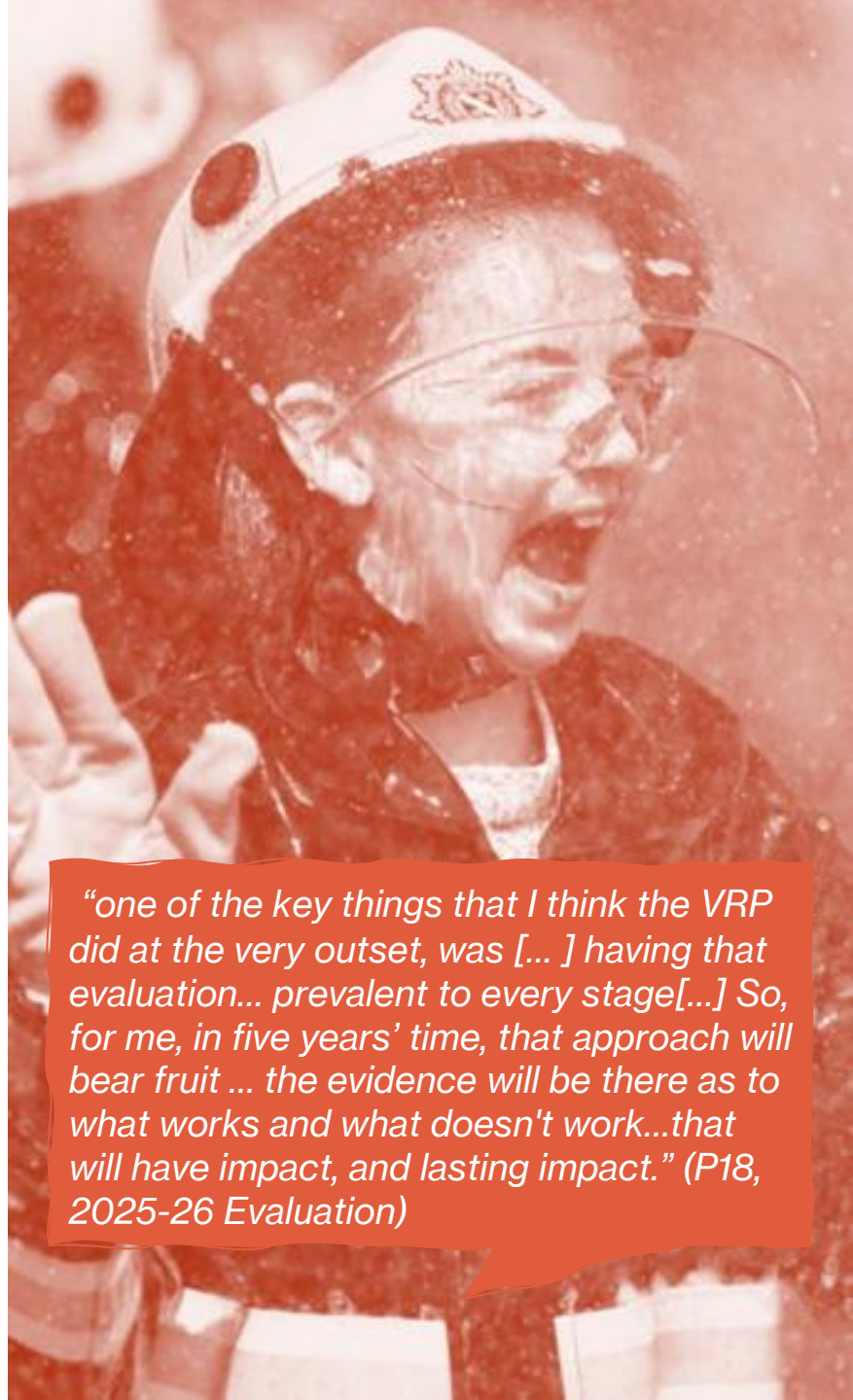
Embedding evidence-based decision making into violence prevention

HOW? Established data resources on risk and protective factors, commitment to evidence-based commissioning and design, routine evaluation, the “*luxury of money*”.

WHAT? Design, selection and implementation of primary, secondary and tertiary evidence-based interventions across the life course that work with statutory and VCSFE partners to respond to our communities’ needs.

Hear more...

- **Session 1B:** Early intervention: building resiliency and strengthening families (11.10-12.20pm)
- **Session 2B:** Early intervention through strong families and safe schools (1.50-3pm)
- **Session 2C:** Breaking the cycle: pathways to prevent (re)offending (1.50-3pm)



“one of the key things that I think the VRP did at the very outset, was [...] having that evaluation... prevalent to every stage[...] So, for me, in five years’ time, that approach will bear fruit ... the evidence will be there as to what works and what doesn’t work...that will have impact, and lasting impact.” (P18, 2025-26 Evaluation)



Conclusion

1. Strong leadership, a sustained culture of mutual learning and evidence-based practice have enabled MVRP partners to work together, but also areas where challenges have been encountered (e.g. *changes in organisations and leadership, differences in immediate priorities, short term funding*)
2. There as been no definitive map for VRU partners to follow. We have all been part of the sense-making. It is through consistent data collection, learning from experience and mutual dialogue that MVRP will continue to map out a good story for violence reduction.

"When you're [...] taking that public health approach a) you have to recognise it's really complex ... you're not going to make progress in six to twelve months ... it's long-term system change [...] big wins that will pay off for you in the long term ... introducing policies, getting people to sign up to it ... If the system accepts it ... that's going to achieve more impact"(P2, 2025-26 evaluation)

Thank You

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Latest MVRP Whole
System Evaluation
Report