



To: Scrutiny Coordination Committee

Date: 22nd November 2023

Subject: Serious Violence Duty (SVD)

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To brief the Scrutiny Coordination Committee on the Serious Violence Duty, which imposes a legal duty on the local authority to tackle serious violence using a partnership approach. Furthermore, to brief the Committee on the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) a matched funded intervention project to work with people aged 14 or more who are at risk or who are experiencing violence.
- 1.2 Further reading and information is available in the published [Home Office Statutory Guidance](#).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Coordination Committee is recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the information provided in the Briefing Note.
 - 2) Provide comments to be considered as part of the Serious Violence Duty.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 In response to rising levels of knife crime and other types of violence across the UK, Government has placed a new duty on specified authorities (of which the local authority is one) to take a partnership approach to tackling serious violence.
- 3.2 The Duty, which came into force in January 2023, arises from the **Police, Crime, Courts, and Sentencing Act 2022** and recognises that complex issues like violence require a multifaceted approach with a range of partners taking responsibility and action.
- 3.3 The specified authorities include Local Authorities, Police, Fire and Rescue, Integrated Care Boards, Justice (probation & Youth Justice). Other key stakeholders should be consulted and have a duty to cooperate with the specified authorities, this includes education partners and prisons.
- 3.4 In the West Midlands, the Police and Crime Commissioner will be responsible for developing and publishing a response strategy informed by the data gathering and analysis work which has taken place across all 7 local authority areas.

- 3.5 Coventry partners have been working in close cooperation with the regional violence reduction partnership (VRP) to prepare for the Duty since 2022. Using the local plans, the Police & Crime Commissioner will submit a regional response to the Home Office by 31/01/2024, the deadline. The Regional response strategy must be reviewed annually thereafter to ensure that responses to violence take account of changing circumstances.
- 3.6 The VRP hosted a series of online events (which were publicised locally) to raise awareness of the new Duty. The VRP also worked with Crest Advisory to assess the regions readiness; the region was assessed as “preparing.”
- 3.7 Crest Advisory identified 4 key factors which impact violence and were common to all 7 local authority areas:
- 1) Education
 - 2) Substance Misuse
 - 3) Demography
 - 4) Deprivation
- 3.8 Other factors of note which were common to the whole region were as follows:
- Early identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences (trauma) was a priority.
 - Violence was heavily concentrated in a small number of areas.
 - The need for robust commissioning processes and better processes to measure impact of commissioned services.
 - Three key headlines from communities: Feelings of safety (after dark); gaps in responding to vulnerability; and concerns about addressing the drivers of violence.
 - The importance of the educational sector in addressing key risk factors effectively and the need to understand what works in education settings.
- 3.9 The VRP have prepared a draft 3-year violence reduction strategy. The draft strategy has identified 5 overarching themes:
- 1) Prevention across the life course (the public health approach)
 - 2) Development of a sustainable, community and youth led approach to violence reduction.
 - 3) Building closer regional partnerships that supports innovation.
 - 4) Development of a West Midlands wide movement that aims for a violence free region.
 - 5) Upscale delivery of evidence-based programmes in schools.
- 3.10 Coventry completed a strategic needs assessment in March 2023. Key findings and recommendations were identified. Based on this, a local draft action plan has been developed. This draft plan was shared with the VRP who used it to inform their 3-year draft strategy.
- 3.11 The key themes for consideration which emerged in the Coventry needs assessment were as follows:
- Identify those who would benefit from earlier intervention.
 - Partners should make better use of data to assist in the identification of those in need of support (subject to general data protection safeguards).

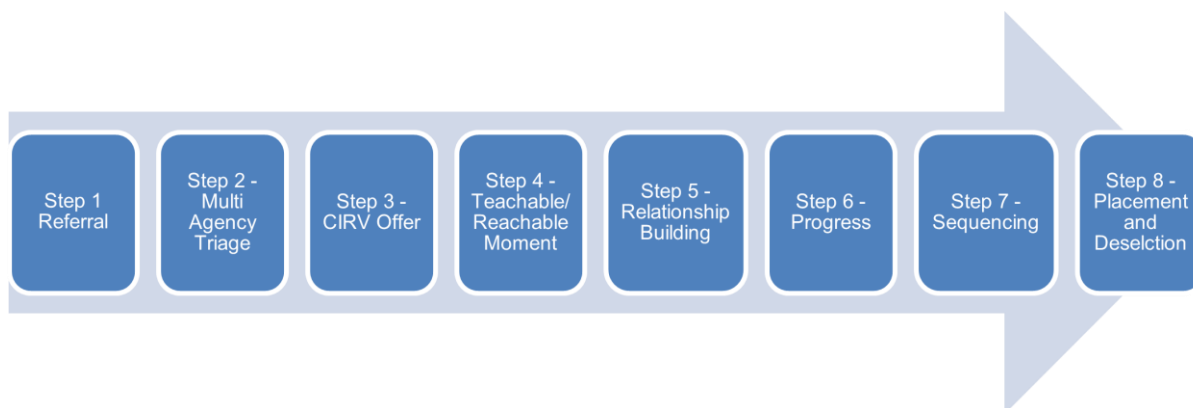
- Coventry partners should review their response to “hidden harms” e.g., trauma in childhood which may lead to adverse outcomes over time, including higher risk of violence.
- Policing colleagues should continue to prepare for and mitigate seasonal variations or patterns in weapon related violence. A priority is to address knife possessions and firearms discharges in the city.
- Better use of data (following a public health approach) should inform commissioning making decisions across the partnership.
- The city should work closely with the emergency department at University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire to support those who have sustained injuries due to violence.
- The partners should ensure that wherever possible they are acting early and addressing the root causes of violence, supporting those most at risk and monitoring the outcomes of the work through the Police and Crime Board.
- The partnership should communicate internally and externally how they are tackling serious violence and any positive.

3.12 The city has already been taking a proactive approach to tackling violence since 2019. There are several initiatives across the city to engage with young people to try and divert them away from violence or prevent them becoming exploited. One such initiative is the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV).

4 The Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV)

- 4.1 This came about through a substantial investment from the Youth Endowment Fund which the partnership assisted the police and in securing. West Midlands Police have also made a substantial investment in the project in terms of staff. The team consists of police staff who are now specifically working within the CIRV team. The project went live in April in both Coventry and Wolverhampton. The project is subject to rigorous academic evaluation (paid for by the Youth Endowment Fund) to determine whether the intervention is effective. From July to September there were over 260 referrals to CIRV. Not all referrals fit the criteria, and some, whilst fitting the criteria, may refuse to engage as the process is voluntary. Where someone referred is out of area or unsuitable for any other reason, they are referred to alternative sources of support. As the project is still in the early stages, it is too soon to discuss outcomes for those referred.
- 4.2 The CIRV process is detailed and complex but is primarily designed to engage anyone over 14 years and connect them to an exit pathway from gangs, violence and county lines. It also coordinates disruptive functions for those who are primarily adults who have been referred, who are criminally active yet fail or refuse to engage.

4.3 The process can be found here <https://www.cirv.co.uk/programme-outline> in more detail, but in summary it involves the following steps.



4. Health Inequalities Impact

4.1 Tackling violence and the root causes of violence should be a priority for all services in Coventry. Based on Home Office data from 2018, each episode of violence with injury costs the public purse an estimated £14050,¹ the actual cost is likely to be far higher in 2023/24 given inflation and other cost increases across the system. There is a large body of academic research which indicates that prevention of violence supports better health outcomes in the population.

4.2 Violence undermines people's health by causing injury, disability, and premature death. The mental health impact for individuals as well the communities they live in cannot be underestimated. Trauma is linked to higher risk of violence, therefore breaking this cycle is crucially important. There is a strong link between areas of deprivation and higher rates of crime. Coventry as a city and in particular wards, ranks highly on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation; therefore it is not surprising that as a City we see higher than average levels of violence.

4.3 Addressing the root causes of violence including: poverty, parental neglect, childhood adversity, living in a high crime neighbourhood, substance misuse and low levels of educational attainment/school engagement, should improve health outcomes across the population.

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¹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b684f22e5274a14f45342c9/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-crime-horr99.pdf>