

Introduction

The Violence Reduction Network is an alliance of groups, organisations and communities determined to prevent and reduce violence across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR). We believe that violence is preventable if we combine our efforts to tackle the causes of violence and develop evidence-based responses. This requires all partners – including communities – to work collaboratively and courageously to make our area a safer place to live for everyone.

Communities play a particularly important role in preventing violence because:

- Violence usually occurs within community and home environments and therefore its impact is most significantly felt within these contexts.
- Communities often have invaluable insights into the nature and extent of violence, the root causes, and the most suitable solutions.
- Strategies and interventions designed in partnership with relevant communities are more likely to be responsive and effective.
- Communities often hold the key to reaching those most affected and can deliver effective responses when empowered to do so.

Through collaborating with communities, the VRN is more likely to have an impact through achieving the following outcomes:

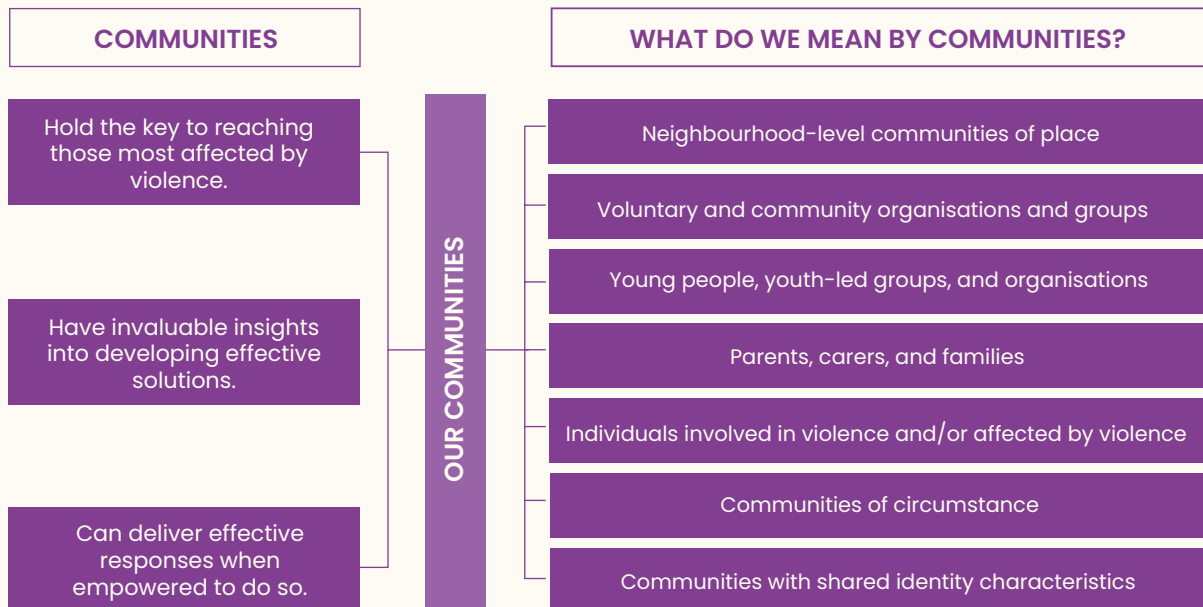
- Increased understanding of the causes of violence and evidence-informed solutions.
- Increased understanding and involvement in the VRN's work.
- Improved confidence and ability to respond effectively to individual and local needs and develop community-based, sustainable solutions.

We will expect to see the following overall impact:

- Reductions in serious violence across LLR.
- Increased feelings of safety within communities.

What do we mean by communities?

We consider communities in the broadest sense. Communities may include:



Community identification can be complex and multi-layered with most of us identifying with more than one community. Importantly, individuals decide for themselves which community or communities they identify with.

Our principles

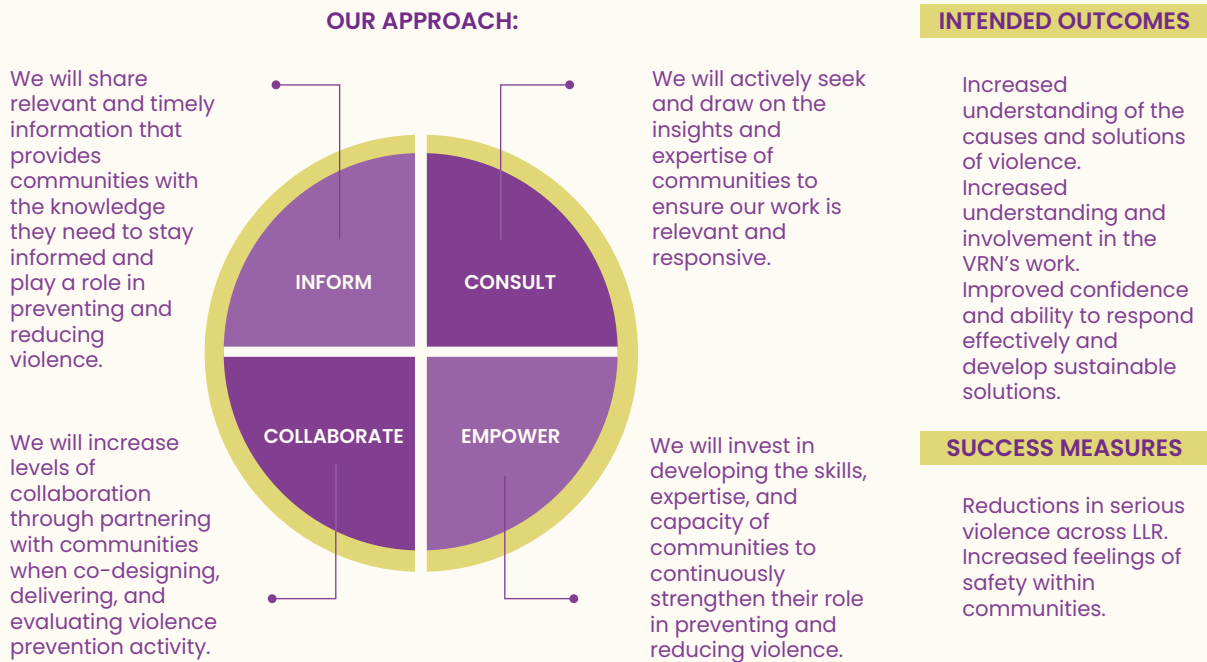
The following principles will guide how we will work in partnership with communities.

We will:

- 1. We will invest in relationships and work with communities as partners:** We will invest in creating meaningful, trusting, and reciprocal relationships. This will require transparency around expectations and reliability in delivery. We will draw on each other's strengths whilst recognising the importance of challenge in working towards our shared objectives.
- 2. Involve those communities most affected by violence:** We will actively seek the voices and involvement of those most affected by violence. We will ensure that interventions and services are co-designed with the most relevant communities, including children and young people. We will partner with communities in delivery wherever appropriate.
- 3. Adopt a creative, flexible, and adaptable approach:** We will do everything we can to empower communities to work in partnership with us through meeting diverse needs. This will require us to do things differently including meeting

community partners in the spaces and times which are most suitable for them.

4. Be ambitious, courageous, and champion change: We will play our role in securing system-change by continuously developing and strengthening our approach. This will involve testing innovative ways of working, being open to challenge and sharing learning so that other partners feel able to pursue a more collaborative and empowering approach.



Our Approach

Our approach spans four areas of involvement activity. Whilst all of these play an important role in partnership working, our ambition is to increasingly invest in collaborating and empowering communities.

Inform

We will share relevant and timely information that provides communities with the knowledge they need to stay informed and play a role in preventing and reducing violence.

We will inform communities through:

- Sharing knowledge about our local serious violence problem and evidence-informed solutions.
- Providing updates on progress in relation to interventions, projects, strategies, publications, and reports.

- Communicating relevant opportunities linking to available resources such as funding and training.
- Providing feedback on how community insights and involvement have influenced our work.

Consult

We will actively seek and draw on the insights and expertise of communities to ensure our work is relevant and responsive.

We will consult communities through:

- Generating and capturing insights from a range of sources to strengthen our understanding of violence.
- Seeking input and feedback on the proposed priorities and activities included in our Strategy and Plan.
- Providing a range of opportunities to influence and shape the way we work including in relation to new workstreams or initiatives.
- Gathering community views and insights as part of our evaluation activity.

Collaborate

We will increase levels of collaboration through partnering with communities when co-designing, delivering, and evaluating violence prevention activity.

We will collaborate with communities through:

- Increasing community representation in decision-making forums.
- Pursuing a co-production model which increases opportunities to co-design and co-deliver projects and interventions.
- Advocating to ensure accessible opportunities are available when communities are best placed to be delivery partners.
- Organising events together which seek to strengthen community involvement and this partnership.
- Developing resources together which support communities to play a role in preventing and reducing violence.
- Seeking and acting on advice on how we can increase community involvement in the network.

Empower

We will invest in developing the skills, expertise, and capacity of communities to continuously strengthen their role in preventing and reducing violence.

We will empower communities through:

- Investing in leadership development recognising the vital role communities play in leading others.
- Ensuring communities can access the VRN's programme of learning and development and tailoring this to local need.

- Providing bespoke support particularly to grassroots community groups.
- Acting as an advocate for this model and championing the strengths and capacity of communities in violence prevention.
- Pursuing a more participative and democratic governance model so that VRN decision-making and resource allocation increasingly involves communities.

Annual planning and review

An annual plan will be produced with communities to ensure we are continuously strengthening our approach and activities. We will evaluate this framework and associated plan with communities as well as monitoring the achievements of our intended outcomes.