

# **An Introduction to the Serious Violence Duty for Education Partners**

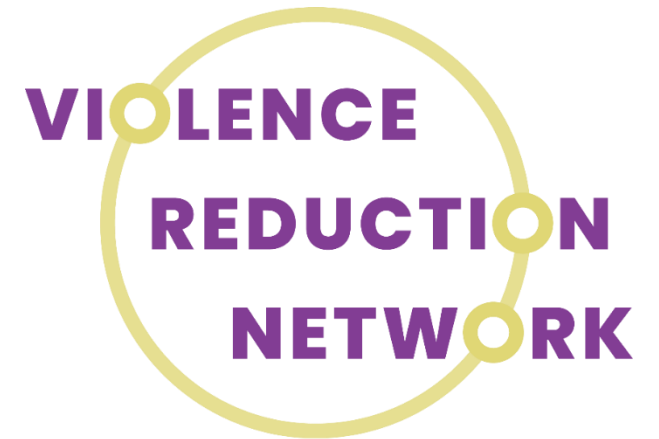
**#PreventionThroughConnection**

**@VR\_Network**

**[www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk)**

# About the Violence Reduction Network [VRN]

- The VRN is a wide alliance of groups, communities and organisations that believe violence can be prevented if we collaborate in identifying and tackling its root causes.
- We were established in September 2019 following receipt of Home Office funding. It is one of 21 funded partnerships across the UK which are taking a public health approach to preventing and reducing serious violence in their local area.
- There is also a small multi-disciplinary team which provides capacity and expertise to the partnership. This includes roles focusing on data analysis, evidence and evaluation, children and families, community and young person involvement and communications.
- The expectations of the new Serious Violence Duty are very similar to the underpinning approach and responsibilities of the VRN. This places our local partnership in a position of strength. A recent independent readiness assessment commissioned by the Home Office concluded we are 'mature, demonstrating best practice' (the highest rating).



**LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE  
& RUTLAND**

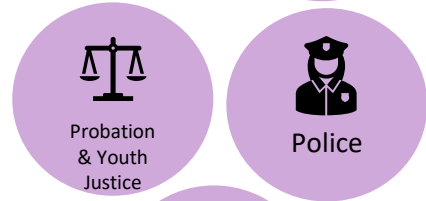
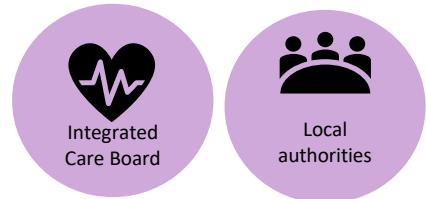
# Introducing the Duty

The Serious Violence Duty is one of many measures introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSC) 2022 (Ch1 Part 2).

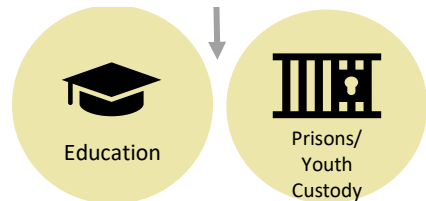


Police and Crime Commissioners are not subject to the Duty but have the authority to take a convening role, support specified authorities, draw down and distribute funding and monitor progress.

## Specified Authorities (duty holders)



Must consult relevant authorities in preparing the strategy and they should co-operate



## Relevant Authorities

## The Duty

The Duty requires specified authorities, for one or more local government areas, to work together and plan to prevent and reduce SV, including identifying the kinds of SV in the area, the causes of that violence and to prepare and implement a shared strategy for preventing and reducing SV in the area.

**Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act now requires Community Safety Partnerships to have SV as an explicit priority in their strategies and plans.**

## Timescales



The Duty commenced on the 31 January 2023. Specified authorities have until 31 January 2024 to produce their SNA and Strategy

## Success Measures



- ❖ A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with knife or sharp object
- ❖ A reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the Police
- ❖ A reduction in homicides recorded by the Police

# Relevant Authorities: Education

Section 12 and Schedule 2 of the PCSC Act defines Educational Authorities as:

1. Governing bodies of maintained schools, further education colleges and sixth-form colleges in England and further education institutions in Wales
2. Management committees of pupil referral units
3. Proprietors of academy schools, free schools, alternative provision academies and non-maintained special schools
4. Proprietors of independent schools

# Relevant Authorities: Education

## Why are Education Providers included?

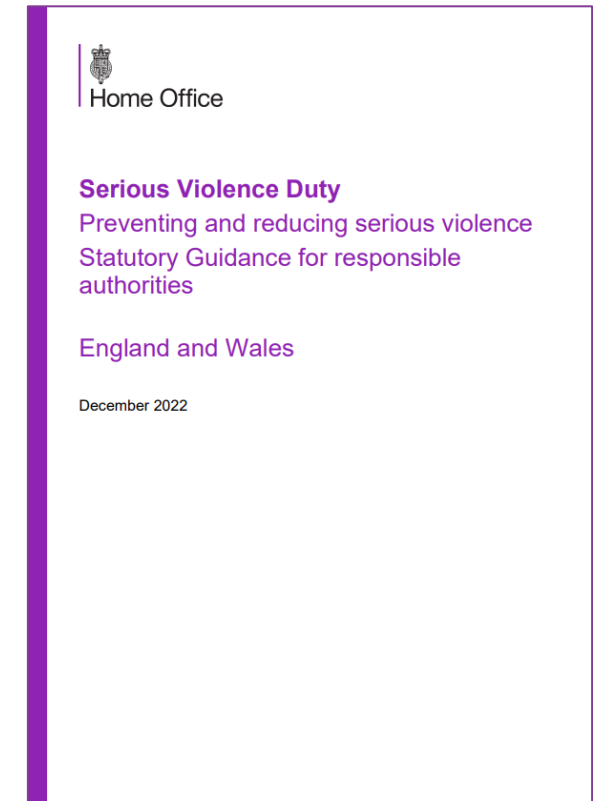
- ✓ They hold valuable information and insights on relevant issues affecting children and young people.
- ✓ Engagement in education can act as a protective factor and reduce the likelihood of involvement in violence throughout life.
- ✓ They already play a vital role in facilitating early intervention, prevention and safeguarding children and young people in their care as a relevant agency within multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- ✓ Violence prevention activities can be delivered through the curriculum with teaching and support staff and older pupils acting as positive role models, delivering important messages and facilitating learning.
- ✓ Teaching and support staff hold important relationships with parents and carers and can positively influence parenting practices.
- ✓ Education providers can create positive pro-social environments which support healthy development and pro-actively challenge some of harmful social norms which are known causes of violence.

*Home Office (2022) and World Health Organisation (2019)*

# The Requirements

Duty holders are encouraged to adopt a 'public health approach' and must:

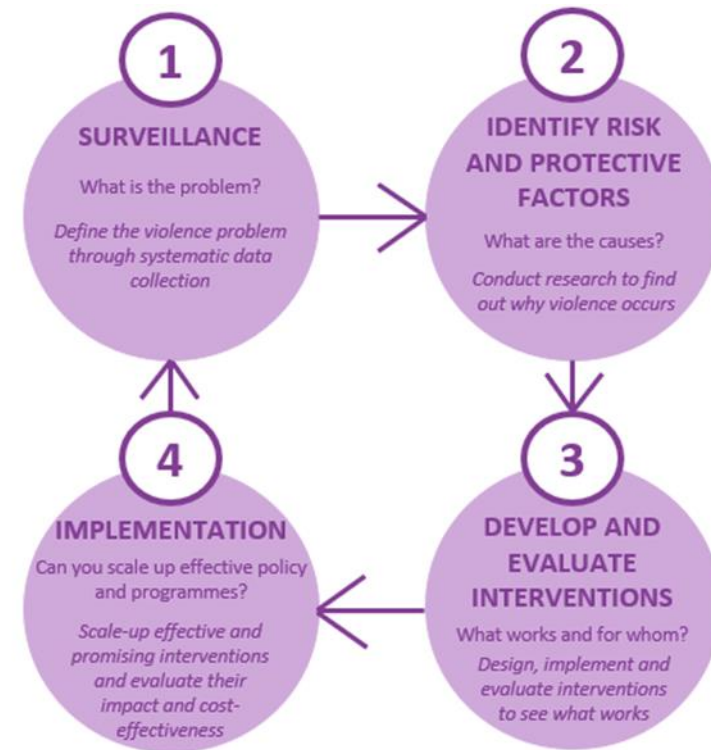
- 1 Define Serious Violence in the local area
- 2 Agree the geographical area and partnership model
- 3 Understand local issues and produce a Strategic Needs Assessment
- 4 Prepare, publish and implement a strategy



# A brief introduction to the Public Health Approach

## Why is a public health approach relevant to serious violence?

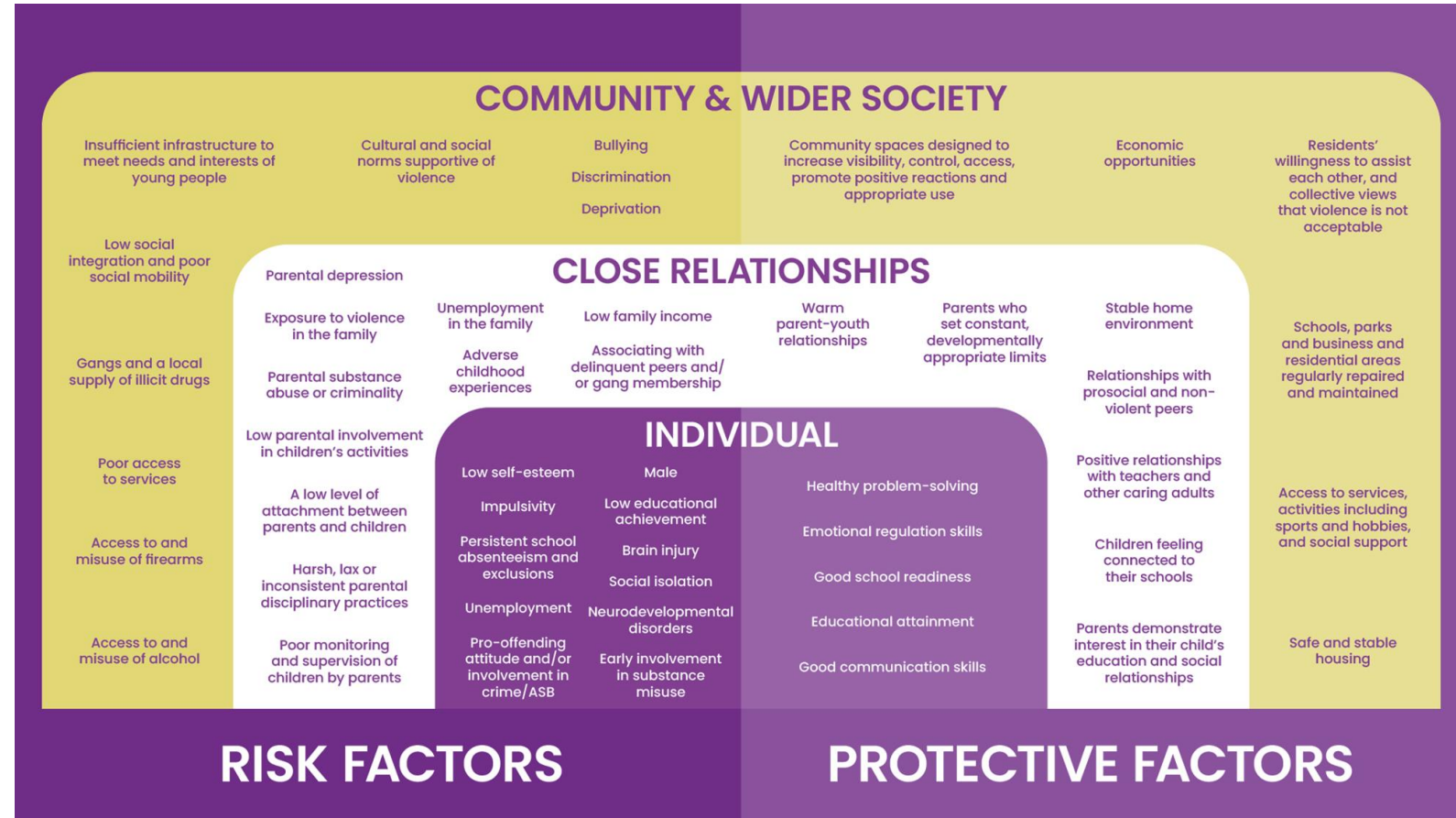
- ✓ Violence causes ill-health through fear, injury and loss affecting individuals and communities
- ✓ Violence “spreads” like diseases, with clusters of incidents linked in time, by place or by the groups of people affected
- ✓ It is distributed unequally across population groups and contributes to health inequalities
- ✓ The risk factors for violence overlap with risk factors for other adverse physical and mental health outcomes and many solutions are the same.
- ✓ It has **root causes**, it can be **treated**, it can be **prevented**



A 4 step process to preventing violence

# Risk and protective factors

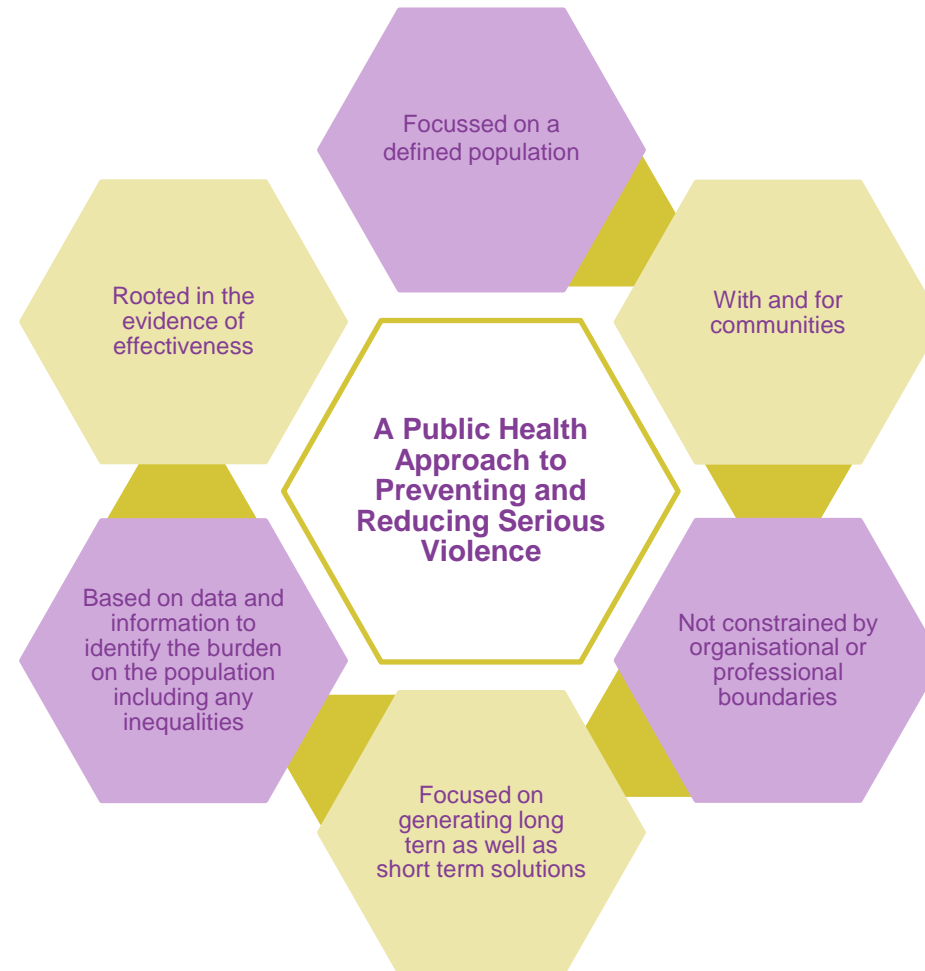
- Taking a public health approach involves reducing the known risk factors of young people's involvement in violence and strengthening the protective factors. These are multiple, complex and inter-related but the majority are malleable to change.
- Everyone has a role in violence prevention and Education partners are in a position to positively address and influence many of these factors. For example:
  - **Risk factors** such as: Persistent absences from school, suspensions, social isolation, associating with 'delinquent' peers, bullying, unhealthy cultural and social norms.
  - **Protective factors** such as: Healthy problem-solving, educational attainment, positive relationships with teachers/caring adults, children feeling connected to school, safe school environment.





# Public Health Principles

- The statutory guidance encourages areas to adopt the World Health Organisation's definition of a public health approach and outlines 6 underpinning principles which should guide all activity.
- The local VRN already follows these principles and all partners are asked to consider them in developing their responses to preventing violence.



# Public Health Principles

## Focussed on a defined population

- An initial focus on an agreed population (for example Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland)
- Analysis which identifies those parts of the population which are most at risk (this may be within a geographical area, relate to protected characteristics such as age or race or relate to other vulnerabilities such as experience of care)
- Resource allocated to these populations to reduce inequalities and ensure impact at a population level

## With and for communities

- Ensuring communities are central to arriving at a local understanding of violence (insights work) and in generating and delivering solutions (co-production)
- Communities are fully involved rather than just consulted – it's a way of working rather than a one-off exercise and its important that communities most affected are reached.
- Communities is meant in the broadest sense. E.g. it can apply to a geographical community, a community with a shared experience or a school community

## Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries

- Preventing and reducing a complex issue such as violence requires a whole system approach as the solutions lie across and beyond different sectors and communities
- As a public health approach focuses on prevention, early intervention and reduction activity a broad partnership is vital. This means also means higher involvement from the private sector and the voluntary and community sector
- Sometimes solutions will require operating across traditional boundaries and involve high levels of collaboration and/or integration

# Public Health Principles

Focused on generating long term as well as short term solutions

- A public health approach has a relentless focus on prevention. This includes:
  - Primary Prevention**
  - Secondary Prevention** (*Early Intervention*)
  - Tertiary Prevention** (*Reduction & Recovery*)
- Primary prevention is the ultimate goal but there are also opportunities to prevent escalation or repeats
- Criminal Justice responses are also important but these tend to be shorter term in nature, often in response to an incident having occurred already. However, future prevention is still possible.

Based on data and information to identify the burden on the population including any inequalities

- A public health approach is data driven. Partners pool their available data to arrive at a collective understanding of the local problem and to monitor trends and the performance of local strategies
- This shows the burden on the local population and where any inequalities lie. Targeted prevention activity should prioritise where the risk is greatest
- Gathering insights from communities is an important source of data and can often enhance organisational data sources (e.g. crime data)

Rooted in the evidence of effectiveness

- Continuous, evidence-based learning is an important part of the public health approach
- When designing strategies and interventions the best available research should be used and outcome/impact measures agreed from the outset
- Monitoring arrangements should be in place to support evaluation and continuous learning
- Decision-making over future investment in strategies and interventions should be based on evaluation findings

# Define Serious Violence in the local area

## The Requirement

Specified authorities (SAs) are expected to define serious violence.

*A definition is not imposed by Government but local areas must include a focus on public place 'youth violence' including: homicide, violence against the person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as county lines drug dealing. Section 13 of the PCSC Act makes it clear that violence is not limited to physical violence against the person. Local areas can include domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence in their definitions. Terrorism cannot be included.*

## Local Implementation

The local partnership have agreed to extend the existing local definition from public place serious violence to violence also occurring within domestic settings. The new definition is:

*“Violence resulting in significant physical injury and other serious harm, including sexual violence. Violence may be committed with or without weapons, and may take place in domestic or public places”*

## Relevance to Education Partners

The local definition includes violence which occurs within and outside education establishments. There will also continue to be a priority focus on children and young people as both victims and/or perpetrators

## The Requirement

Specified authorities should agree the local partnership model (and its geographical area) for discharging the duty.

*The legislation is flexible to allow SAs to determine the geographical extent of their collaboration (minimum permitted area is a local government area). It is not necessary to create a new partnership. SAs can use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications and the geographical area of the partnership can extend to a wider area, such as a police force area providing this is agreed by all SAs.*

*A Partnership Agreement outlining these details had to be submitted to the Home Office by **31 March 2023**.*

## Local Implementation

- Our local area has been defined as the police force area (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland).
- The existing Strategic Partnership Board (SPB), which includes senior officer representation from a wide range of organisations, is providing the local partnership model.
- At a locality level, Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), will ensure their partnership is sufficiently representative to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area.

## Relevance to Education Partners

The guidance states that a strategic education representative(s) or representative group is needed to provide a link with individual education institutions. Their role is to:

- Represent the voice of education providers
- Assist the partnership to better understand education risk factors and vulnerabilities of CYP
- Consult with wider group of providers to gain insights into the impact of SV on the sector
- Agree ways in which education can support delivery of the Strategy

The Strategic Partnership Board has representation from Education and the VRN Schools Network will remain in place. Some CSPs have representation but more consistency across partnerships is needed.

## The Requirement

The partnership should work together to establish the local Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA).

*The local partnership should produce an SNA on an evidence-based analysis of information relating to the violent crime types, the drivers of crime within the partnership area and the cohorts most vulnerable through the gathering and analysis of data from specified and relevant authorities. The SNA may also draw on qualitative data gathered by the partnership and should identify any gaps in data or intelligence. The SNA has to be submitted to the Home Office by **31 January 2024**.*

*The SNA findings should be used by the local partnership to define their serious violence issues and prioritise bespoke actions that the partnership will take forward (the Strategy).*

## Local Implementation

- The VRN already has access to a range of multi-agency data and produces an area-wide annual SNA on public place serious violence but will extend this in 2023 to cover the new local definition.
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is also drawing down funding for an additional Data Analyst post who will offer additional support to CSPs to develop locality-based violence profiles.
- The findings from these documents will be available to all partners so that they can use them for strategic planning and operational purposes.

## Relevance to Education Partners

Education partners should provide aggregated and anonymised data to Local Authorities to feed into the SNA to strengthen our local understanding of the extent and nature of serious violence, its causes and how it's affecting our children and young people.

The VRN already receives education information on key risk factors (e.g. missing from education, suspensions, exclusions) but there is an ambition to increase data sharing

Education partners should consider other data and insights they have available which they can use internally to understand violence and its causes as well as share with partners to strengthen our collective understanding.



# Information Sharing

- The PCSC Act includes specific provisions to support partners to share information, intelligence and knowledge to prevent and reduce serious violence (Sections 16 and 17, Chapter 1 and Part 2).
- These create information sharing gateways to permit disclosure to a specified authority of information held by specified authorities, local policing bodies and educational, prison or youth custody authorities and to enable PCCs to request information from these authorities for the purpose of the duty.
- This provision does not replace existing data sharing agreements/protocols and are intended to be used where existing powers alone would not be sufficient.
- There are restrictions under these powers which mean that health and social care authorities cannot be required to disclose confidential patient information.
- Sharing of information must be considered carefully and in line with data protection requirements ensuring that any disclosure is necessary and proportionate for the proposed purpose.

# Prepare, publish and implement a Strategy

## The Requirement

The partnership must collectively develop a strategy which should outline the multi-agency response that will be taken to prevent and reduce serious violence in the local area.

*The strategy should comprise of a range of new and existing actions that the partnership will take forward to prevent and reduce the issues and drivers identified in the SNA. The strategy should be published on the website of a specified authority or local policing body (OPCC) by **31 January 2024** and sent to the Home Office within 7 days of publication.*

*The strategy should be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary (on an annual basis as a minimum).*

## Local Implementation

- The VRN team will be leading on the production of the new Strategy including organising co-production events.
- Co-production events for Education have been scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> May (secondary) and 19<sup>th</sup> May (primary).
- These will provide Education Providers with an opportunity to shape the new Strategy and priorities and how we will deliver on these in partnership .

## Relevance to Education Partners

Education partners should support the development and implementation of the Strategy – all schools and colleges are encouraged to attend the events in May.

All organisations, including Education Providers, should consider and articulate the role they play in preventing serious violence both internally and in partnership. The VRN will provide further guidance to support this.

Education partners should carry out agreed actions specified in the Strategy providing they:

- ✓ Are compatible with other statutory duties
- ✓ Would not have an adverse effect on other functions
- ✓ Are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally
- ✓ Do not incur unreasonable costs





# Examples of how Education Partners already contribute to violence prevention and reduction

Working with safeguarding and community safety partners

Promoting positive social and cultural norms around healthy relationships

Sharing and utilising data to understand the local issues and develop responses

Implementing bystander interventions

Whole school approaches which facilitate inclusion and reduce risks of exclusion

Supporting the development of life and social skills

Gathering and acting upon insights from pupils, parents and staff on feelings of safety

Bullying prevention policies and programmes

Provision of quality education and a positive school experience

Providing factual information about staying safe to children and parents

Staff training around relevant issues such as child development and trauma

Restorative and/or trauma-informed whole school approaches

Delivering a relevant and comprehensive PSHE programme

Delivering purposeful after-school activities

Discharging statutory safeguarding duties

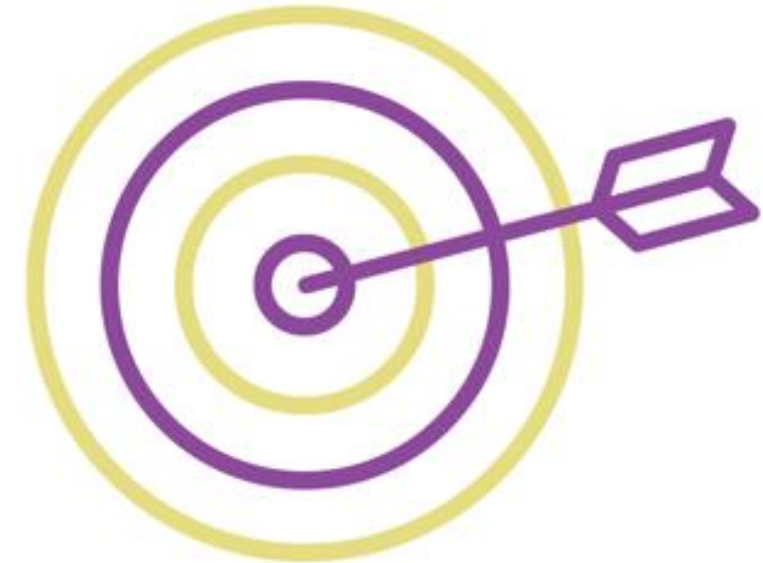
Creating pro-social and safe school environments

Running awareness raising and/or behaviour change campaigns

Collaborating with parents and community-based partners

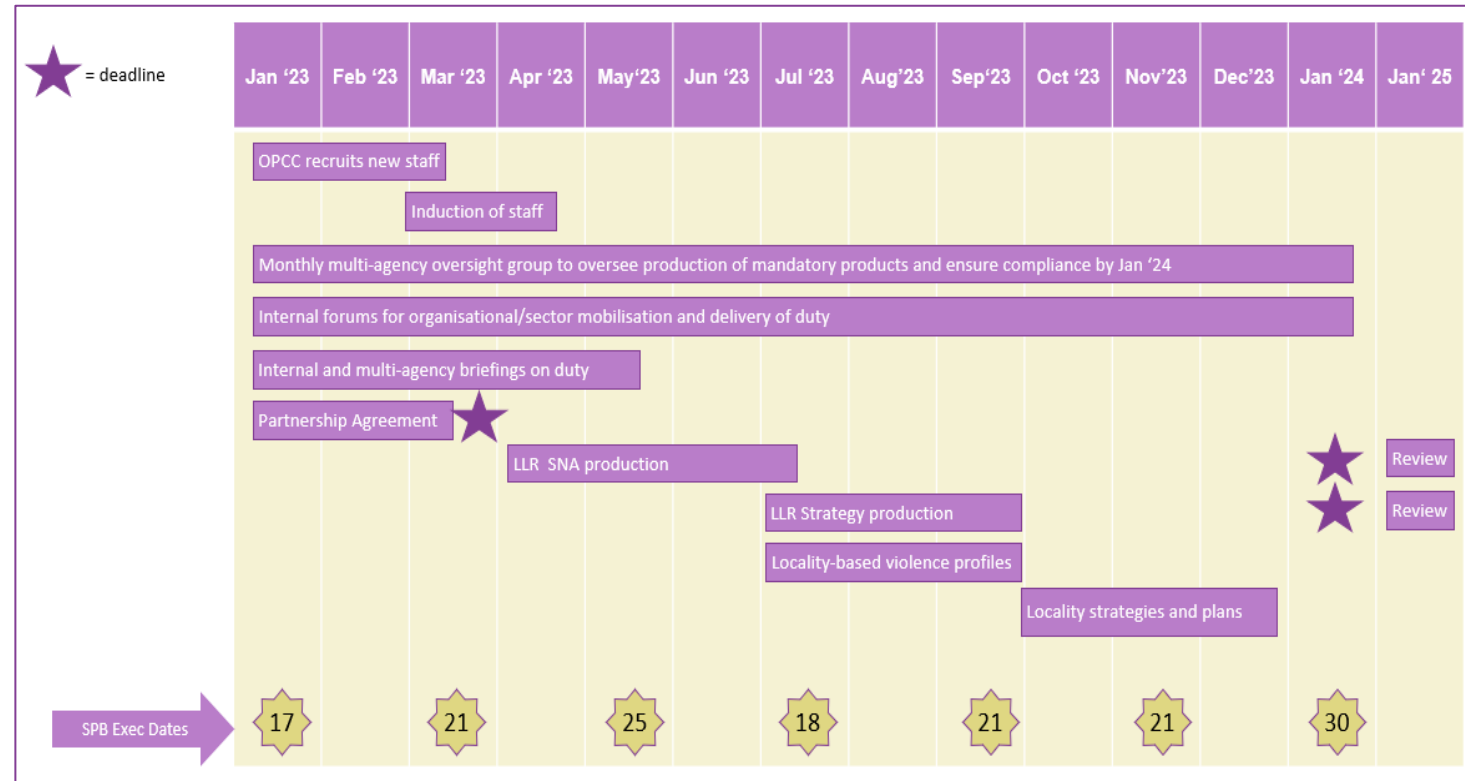
# Monitoring and Compliance

- The Home Office have announced 3 national success measures:
  - ✓ 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
  - ✓ A reduction in homicides recorded by the police
- Local partners are also expected to identify and monitor local success measures (which include a focus on serious 'youth violence' in public places). The partnership will agree these once the SNA findings are known.
- Partnerships are expected to be able to self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the local strategy – the Strategic Partnership Board will lead this locally. Government departments may also monitor progress and a cross-Whitehall board will deliver national oversight.
- Routine inspection programmes undertaken by individual inspectorates may also consider organisations compliance with the Duty.



# Local Timescales and Next Steps

- Education partners will be provided with further briefings and guidance through existing Local Authority communication channels. Partners may also wish to join the VRN Schools Network.
- All establishments are encouraged to send a representative to the Education co-production events in May 2023.
- The OPCC are drawing down the additional funding available to recruit a Data Analyst and 2 Partnership Officers.
- They will produce locality-based violence profiles and offer CSPs support in strengthening local collaborations and responses.
- Schools will receive the findings of the SNA and locality-based profiles on publication.



# Forthcoming Events for Education

- Secondary/FE/HE/Alternative Providers:

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May

Lecture Theatre, Leicestershire Police Headquarters, St. Johns, Enderby, Leicester, LE18 2BX

Morning (9:15am) or afternoon (1:00pm) available

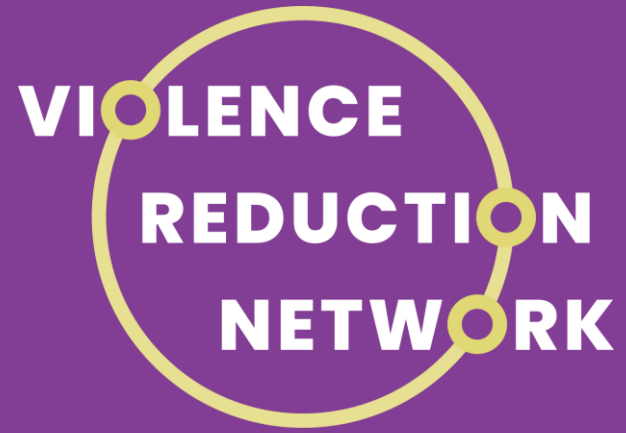
- Primary Schools:

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May

Holiday Inn, 299 Leicester Road, Wigston, Leicester, LE18 1JW

Morning (9:15am) or afternoon (1:00pm) available

- Registration via the VRN website: <https://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk/events>



**Any Questions?**

**#PreventionThroughConnection**

**@VR\_Network**

**[www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk](http://www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk)**