

Preventing Violence Involving  
Children and Young People

# **A Handbook for Secondary Schools**

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

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**#PreventionThroughConnection**

**@VR\_Network**

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

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# Introduction

This handbook is aimed at leaders, teaching and other staff working in secondary school settings across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and its purpose is to provide information to support the development of a whole school approach to violence prevention. The content will also support secondary schools and other Key Stage 3 and 4 education establishments to prepare for the new Serious Violence legal duty.

## How to use this Handbook

This handbook has been structured around the public health principles and process which will assist schools in mobilising for and ensuring compliance with the new serious violence duty. Where relevant it has been linked to Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (2021).

It is advised that schools adopt a strength-based approach, building on existing policies and practice where possible. Readers will note that effective violence strategies are consistent with other whole school approaches such as trauma informed practice, inclusion, healthy schools and behaviour management. Importantly, schools will already be delivering relevant activity on a day-to-day basis.

**We believe that violence is preventable. Our vision is for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to be a place where people can lead their lives free from violence and the fear of violence.**

## About the Violence Reduction Network (VRN)

The VRN was established in September 2019 and is one of 20 Home Office funded Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in England and Wales tasked with tackling serious violence through applying a public health approach. Our VRN is an alliance of local groups, organisations and communities which are determined to prevent and reduce violence locally by working together to better understand and address its root causes.

Our local definition of serious violence is:

*Violence resulting in significant 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.*


However, the VRN also embraces the broader definition of violence developed by the World Health Organisation (2002):

*The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.*

This recognises the links between different types of violence including their common risk and protective factors and enables us to develop prevention strategies which can simultaneously have a positive impact on multiple forms of violence. As a partnership we focus on many types of violence, including:

- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Child to Parent Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Public Place Violence
- Sexual Violence
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Violence Involving Young People
- Weapon Enabled Violence

The VRN's priority focus is to prevent serious violence affecting our children and young people. This is because local analysis confirms that children and young people are most at risk of serious violence and furthermore, preventative strategies and interventions are most likely to be effective when implemented with this group.

 [Find out more about the VRN](#)

## The role of Schools in Violence Prevention

Section One highlights how the causes of violence are multiple and complex and that successfully preventing and reducing its occurrence requires a whole system approach and the deployment of multiple strategies across different sectors. Schools and other educational establishments have been identified internationally as important settings for violence prevention activity. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2019) highlights this role as:

- 1. Provision of Quality Education:** In itself, this can act as a protective factor for children and reduce the likelihood of involvement in violence throughout life by making other protective factors, such as employment, more likely.
- 2. Delivery of Violence Prevention Activities Through the Curriculum:** Teaching and support staff can act as role models, deliver important messages and support learning through the delivery of relevant programmes or activities. They are also in a position to work collaboratively with parents and positively influence parenting practices.
- 3. Creation of Positive Pro-Social Environments:** These support a child's healthy development and can also pro-actively challenge some of the harmful social and cultural norms which are known causes of violence (for example, unhealthy gender-based norms).

Schools also have a responsibility to protect children from harm, including violence, as outlined in Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also have to comply with a range of relevant statutory guidance including 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2022).

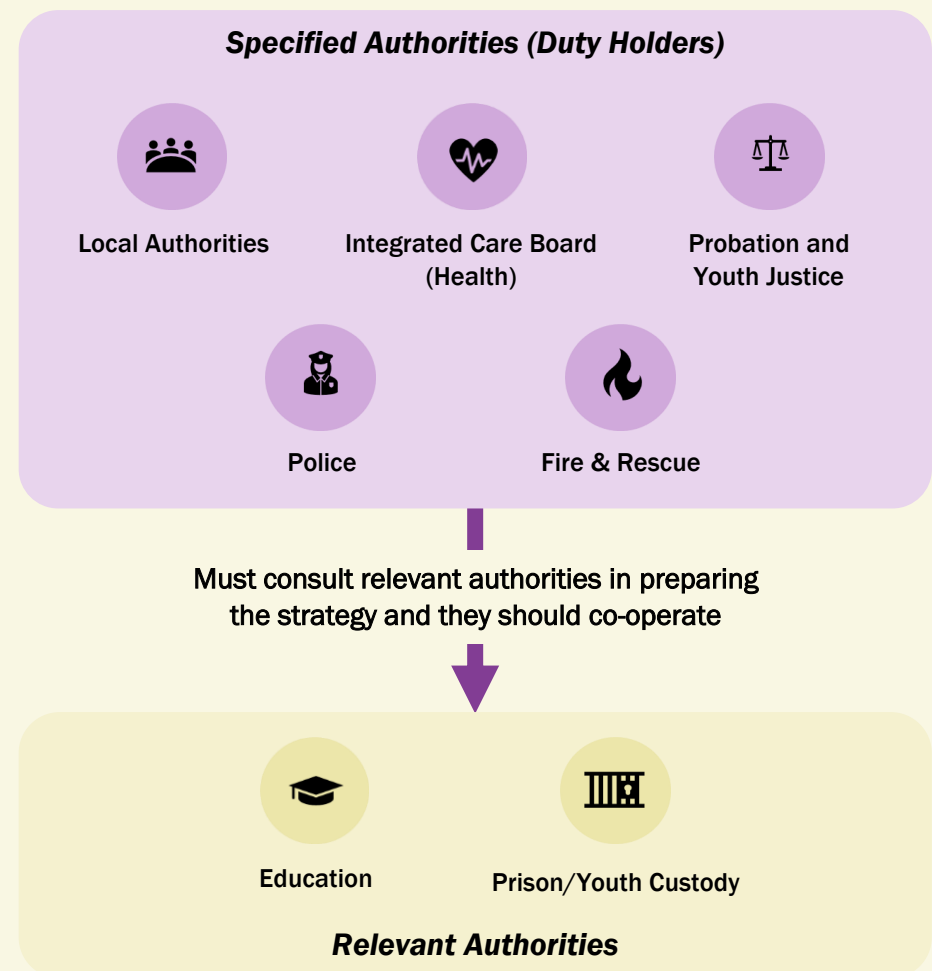
Importantly, preventing and reducing violence has multiple benefits in relation to the achievement of educational outcomes (WHO, 2019). Many of the factors which can prevent violence (e.g. communication skills, emotional management, problem-solving) are also conducive to effective learning, can reduce known risk factors (such as absenteeism) and directly correlate with more positive educational outcomes.

 See 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

 See 'Working Together'

## The Serious Violence Duty


The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act (2022) introduced a new legal duty which came into force on 31 January 2023. It requires specified authorities, for one or more local government area, to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the extent and nature, the causes of that violence and to prepare and implement a shared strategy for its prevention and reduction. Local areas are encouraged to adopt a public health approach in delivering on the duty.



Section 12 and Schedule 2 of the PCSC Act defines educational authorities as:

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

All authorities listed in the legislation have an important role to play and in partnership they are required to define serious violence in their local area, agree the geographical area and partnership model, understand local issues and produce a strategic needs assessment and then prepare, publish and implement a strategy. Schools should ensure they are linked into their local partnership arrangements (see Section Five) and are developing internal policy and practice which prevents violence in school and nearby community settings (see sections 3 - 6).

 Find out more about the Serious Violence Duty

## A Public Health Approach

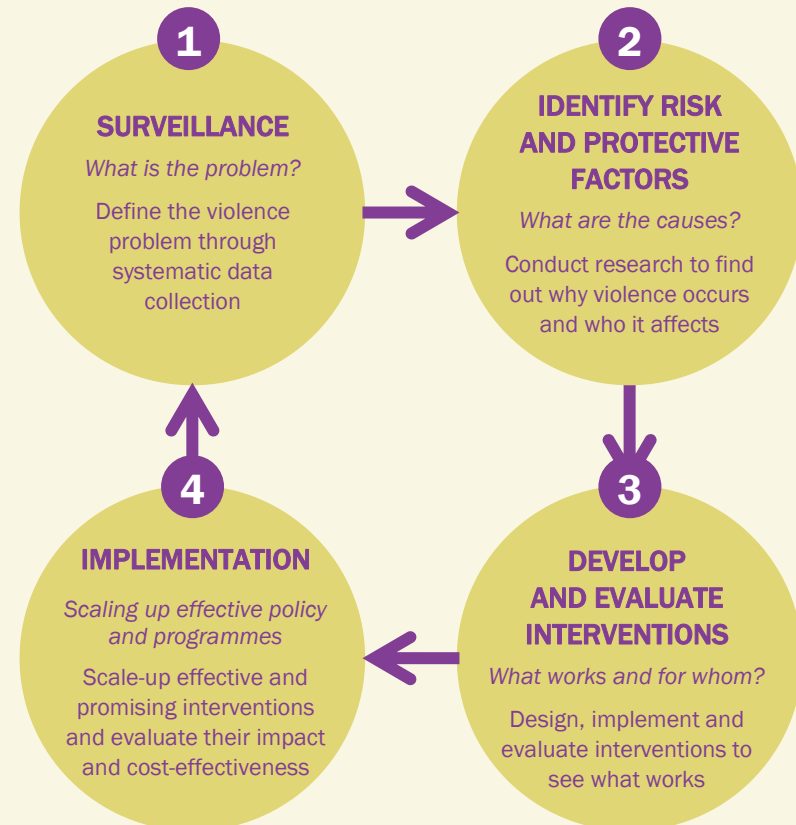
The VRN has adopted a public health approach to preventing and reducing violence and the new duty encourages specified and relevant authorities to do the same. Locally, our partnership is embracing the approach and are applying it to a range of different issues including domestic abuse, street-based violence and substance misuse.

### 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**

To ensure its approach is evidence-based, the VRN consistently follows the World Health Organisation’s four step process to violence prevention. This ensures that the approach is data-driven and evidence-informed with evaluation and review embedded into this continuous process.



A public health approach is based on six inter-connected principles which guides planning and activity at all times:

1

**Focussed on a defined population**

Seeks to understand the issue at a local population-level to identify and understand the whole issue rather than just at an individual level.

2

**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).

3

**Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries**

A whole system approach with all partners and communities working in an integrated and cohesive way.

4

**Focused on generating long term as well as short term solutions**

Recognises that short-term action is needed but longer-term preventative approaches which tackle the root causes are more effective.

5

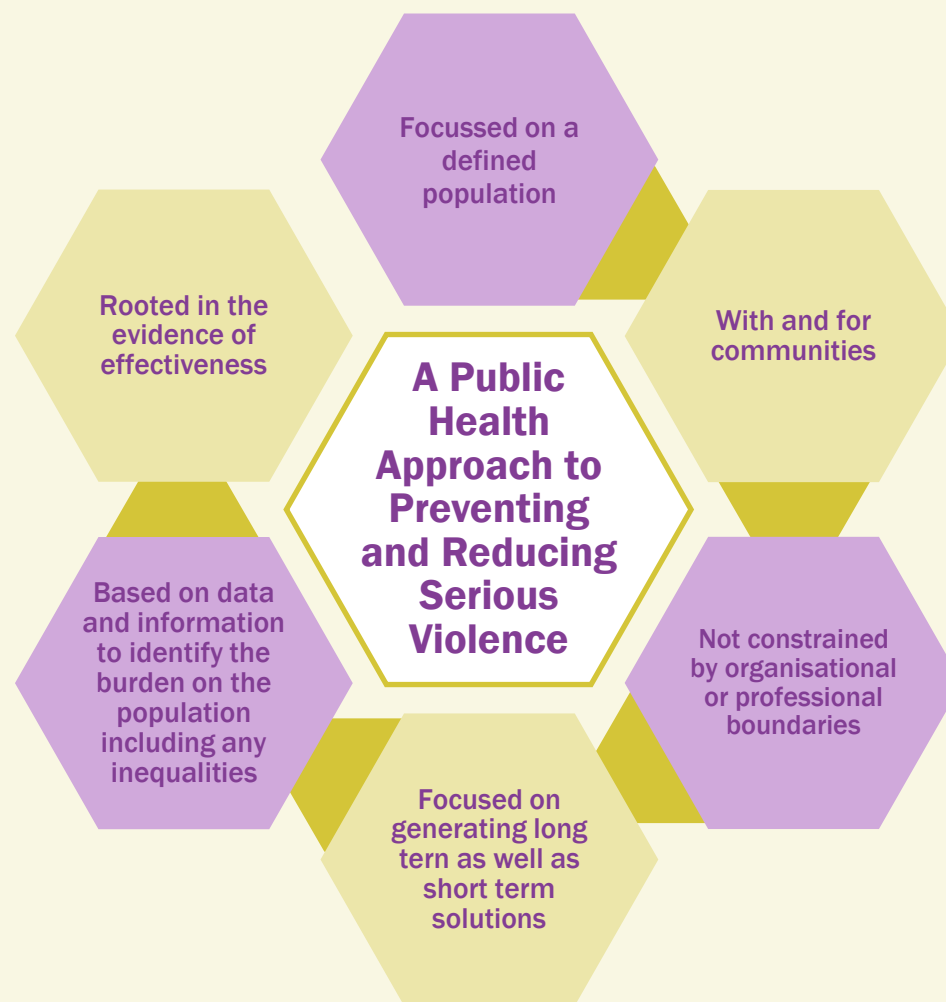
**Based on data and information to identify the burden on the population including any inequalities**

Sharing and use of data from a range of sources to understand the extent and nature of violence locally and the prevalence of risk and protective factors. The approach seeks to identify (and reduce) any inequalities.

6

**Rooted in the evidence of effectiveness**

Use of the best available evidence and embedding evaluation into the system to improve effectiveness and continuous learning.



# Section 1: Understanding Violence Affecting Children and Young People




## Introduction

The impact of violence on children and young people can be far-reaching and devastating. Experiencing violence within and/or outside the home during infancy, childhood and/or adolescence can lead to a range of poorer health and social problems across the life course including in relation to a child and/or young person's engagement with education and their attainment.

It is widely recognised that the social contexts in which violence can be experienced changes as children enter adolescence. As they secure more independence from adults, they are exposed to additional risks within a wider range of environments such as schools, parks, public transport and other community-based settings.

These contextual changes are combined with adolescence being one of the most dramatic developmental stages in life. As well as physical changes, children entering adolescence experience early developmental changes resulting in sensitivity to emotional cues. More gradual changes to complex cognitive abilities related to 'executive functioning' (for example; working memory, impulsive control, selective attention and abilities to plan) are also experienced. A consequence of the early adolescence arousal of the socio-emotional system paired with later maturation of cognitive control systems gives risk to increased vulnerability to risk taking and increases the likelihood of involvement in violence.

During adolescence, peers become increasingly more important and intimate or romantic relationships start to develop which again give rise to potential risks. Adolescence is also a time of strength and opportunity wherein adults (and education) can significantly influence and shape the social and emotional development of children and young people. (Hanson and Holmes, 2014).

 [Read more about risks in adolescence and effective responses](#)

Whilst most children and young people will never be directly involved in serious violence, local data confirms that 10-19 year olds are most at risk. This chapter aims to support schools to understand the types of violence which affect young people, the extent and nature of serious violence locally,

the known causes and offers a framework for developing preventative strategies and interventions.

## Types of Violence Affecting Children & Young People

All types of violence can and do affect young people including violence which occurs within domestic settings, for example domestic abuse. However, the focus of this handbook is violence which occurs within relationships and contexts outside of the home. This includes violence which occurs within the context of peer and/or romantic or intimate relationships within school, on-line and within wider community environments as well as the types of violence involving exploitation by adults. Some examples are listed below:




Importantly, there are clear links between the exploitation of children and young people and the risk of involvement in serious violence, either as a victim, perpetrator or both. Exploitation involves coercion and control and children and young people can be subjected to threats, intimidation and physical violence as well as being encouraged to carry drugs, carry weapons and use violence themselves.

## Extent and Nature of Violence Affecting Children & Young People in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

Each year the Violence Reduction Network produces a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) to increase understanding of the types, distribution of serious violence in the local area. It assists partners to identify the people and groups who are most vulnerable to being or becoming victims or perpetrators of violence in this setting and informs strategic and operational planning.

The most recent SNA focused on public place serious violence committed with or without weapons. In 2023/24 the focus of the annual SNA will widen to include serious violence occurring within domestic settings. All of the local SNAs can be accessed via the VRN website.

 [Read the VRN's Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

Importantly, the vast majority of residents in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, including children and young people, do not directly experience serious violence in public places. While there has been a notable increase in serious violence compared to previous years, this has been driven by Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) offences which typically involves minor physical injury as well as changes in police recording practices which have led to more offences being recorded as ABH.

A summary of the 2022/23 findings can be found in the infographic below. Of note for schools is the following information from the SNA:

- The majority of serious violence perpetrators and victims are male (75% and 66% respectively), but females make up a sizeable minority.



# EXTENT

An increase in serious violence compared to the previous year (impacted by Covid-19)

Decreases observed with robbery of personal property and knife-enabled serious violence involving under 25s

The rate seen between April 22 – September 22 is currently 7.5% greater than the rate seen in the same period of 2021.

**Under 25s observe a greater rate of ambulance call-outs which result in conveyance to A&E**

# MOST COMMON OFFENCES / INJURY TYPES

- Police:** Assault with Injury
- Hospital Admissions:** Assault by bodily force
- Ambulance:** Stab / Gunshot / Penetrating Trauma

Rates of attempted murder and robbery (personal property) offences by under 25s is 2.9 and 2.8 times higher than the rates for over 25s

**8%** offences involved a knife or sharp object

# NATURE

- Under 25s are most at risk of committing serious violence with a rate that is 1.8 times that for over 25s. This is higher for particular types of offences (robbery against personal property and attempted murder).
- Within this it is 10-19 year olds who experience the highest rates of violence as both perpetrators and victims.
- Approximately 8% of serious violence committed by under 25s involves a knife or sharp object.
- Most violence committed by children and young people is committed against victims within the age group. Males are most likely to commit public place serious violence against other males and females against females.
- Crime data consistently shows that the peak time violence occurs is between 3-4pm during term time indicating more violence is occurring immediately after the school day.
- Some communities are affected by violence more than others. The highest rates of serious violence are in Central Leicester, West Leicester, Charnwood, Hinkley & Blaby and East Leicester.

# TIMINGS

- Peak times**
- Police:** 15:00–15:59
- A&E:** 21:00–21:59
- Ambulance:** 22:00–23:59

**Increases seen at the weekend**

**31%** of serious violence was committed in the Night Time Economy

- Priority areas:**
- Central Leicester
  - Charnwood
  - West Leicester
  - East Leicester

Of the local authorities, **Leicester** saw the highest rate and volume of serious violence – over 2.5 times the rate seen in Leicestershire

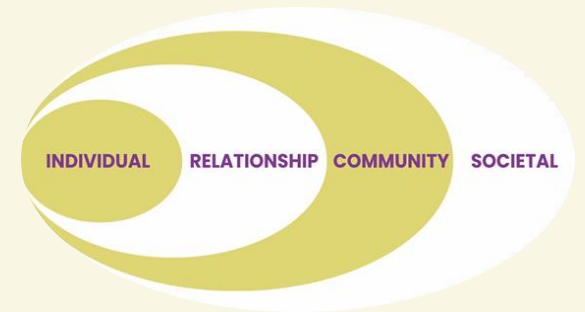


# LOCATION

## The Causes of Violence Affecting Children & Young People

The causes of serious violence are multiple and complex and importantly, there is not one single cause of any type of violence. Instead, violence occurs due to a complex interplay between a wide range of factors many of which can be traced back to early childhood and often involve deep-rooted societal issues such as poverty and other inequalities.

The World Health Organisation’s (WHO, 2011) ecological model helps to understand how risk factors co-exist across individual, relationships, community and societal levels.



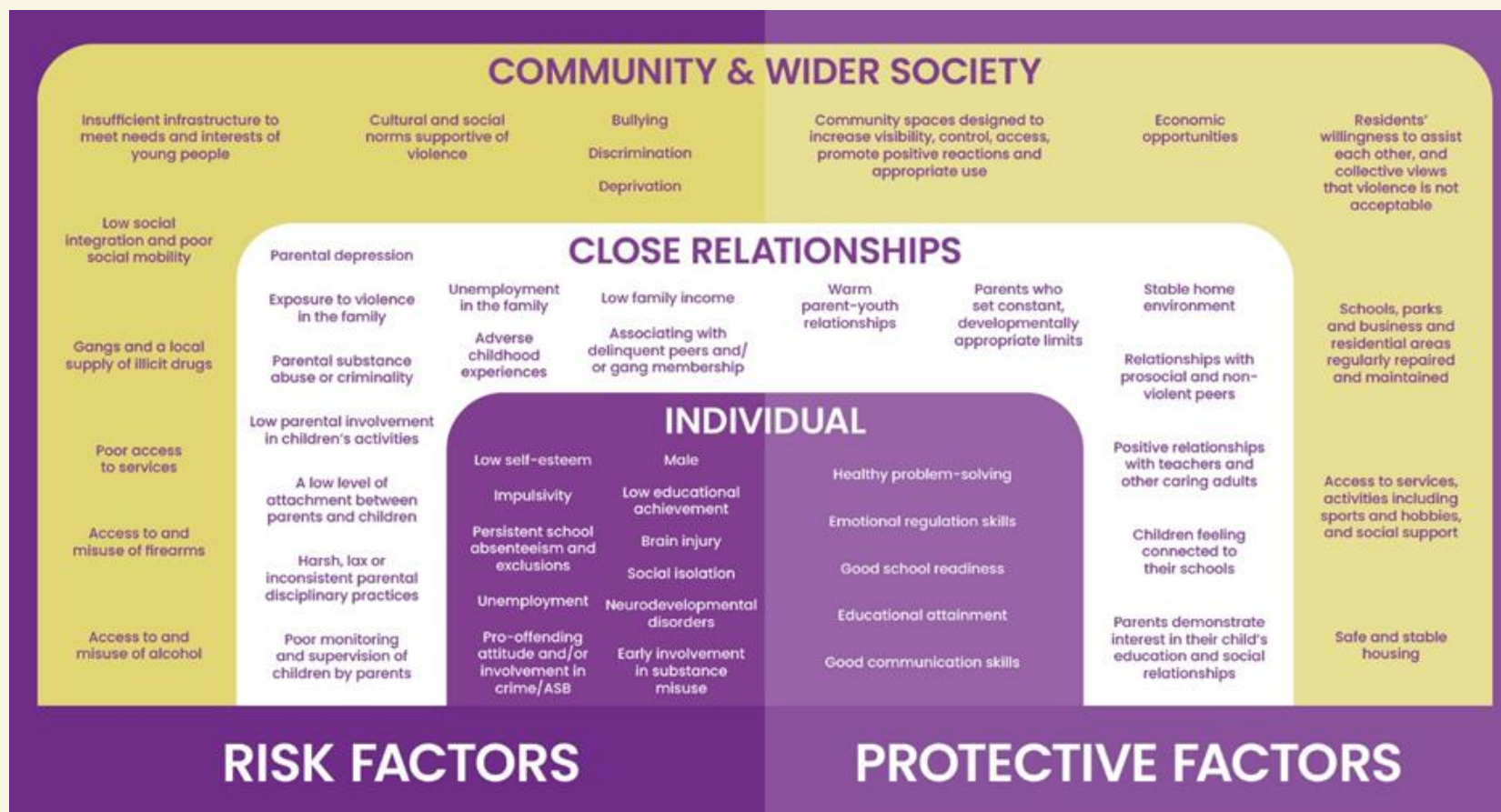
**A risk factor is a characteristic that increases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence involving young people.**

Individual and contextual risk factors occur across an individual's life course and are subject to change. They can be cumulative, additive and increasing in their impact. The more risk factors that are present and/or accumulate, the higher the likelihood that the individual will become involved in violence as a victim and/or perpetrator. The presence of risk factors and an absence or scarcity of protective factors can increase children and young people's levels of vulnerability. The vulnerability of young people is the key factor that increases the likelihood that they may become involved in behaviours and activities that put them at risk. Importantly risk factors are not deterministic and there will be many children and young people who experience known risk factors but will never become involved as a perpetrator and/or a victim. It is also possible for children and young people involved in violence to avoid future involvement with the right support, relationships and opportunities.

**A protective factor is a characteristic that decreases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence or buffers against the effects of risk factors.**

Having higher levels of protective factors in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood can reduce the risk and likelihood of involvement in violence. As the number of protective factors increases, the probability of violence decreases (the dose-response relationship).

A public health approach seeks to prevent and reduce risk factors and increase the presence of protective factors in the lives of children, young people and adults. The visual below outlines the known risk and protective factors linked to serious violence involving children and young people.



## A Local Study

The VRN recently conducted research to examine the prevalence of some of these known risk factors amongst a cohort of 113 children and young adults from Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who committed high-harm serious violence including Grievous Bodily Harm, Attempt Murder or Murder.

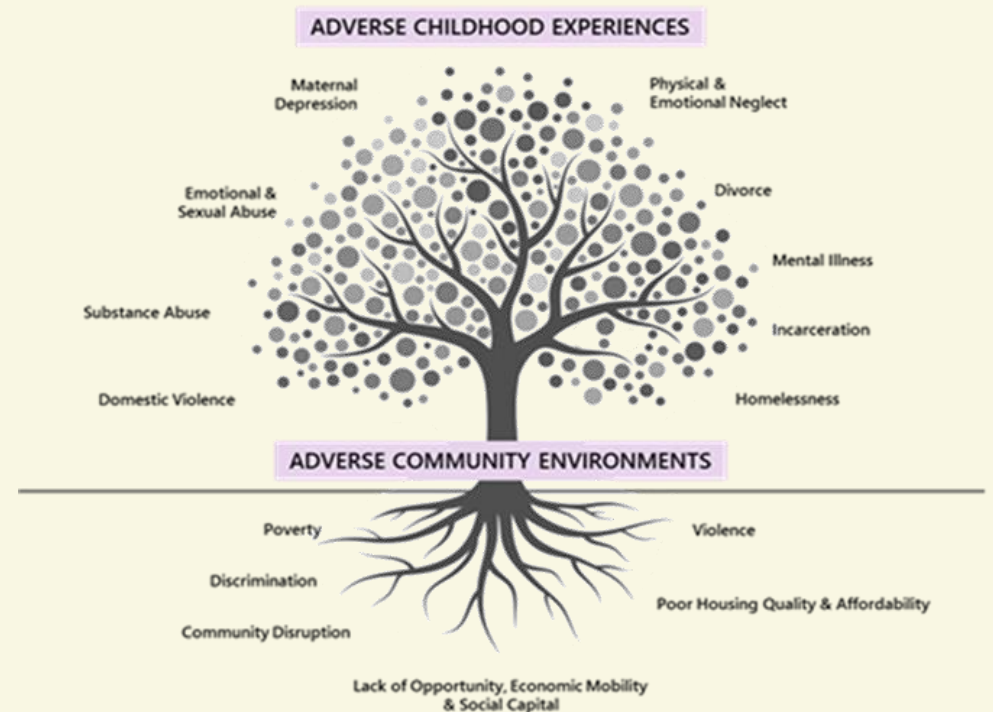
In summary, this research highlighted that the group experienced a wide-range of individual- and relationship-related risk factors. Based on the data available, each individual had an average of 4.8 risk factors recorded and when looking at those who had committed the highest harm offences (Murder & Attempt Murder) the average number of risk factors increased to 5.1.

Significantly, analysis revealed that this group were likely to have been a victim of crime before committing an offence themselves, and they had then committed an average of 12.2 offences before the most recent serious violence offence. The visual adjacent provides an overview of the crime, education- and social care-related risk factors experienced by this group of children and young adults.



## The Relevance of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma

International and local studies have highlighted the cyclical relationship between violence and trauma experienced during childhood. Many known ACEs involve children experiencing violence and abuse. Experiencing these and other ACEs can in turn increase the risk of involvement in violence later in life, particularly if a child has multiple adverse experiences and has not had the buffering effect of protective factors in place.



Examples of Adverse events and environments which can cause trauma Ellis and Dietz (2017)

A child's experience of ACEs can result in the presence of toxic stress in the body which disrupts healthy childhood development. This can result in the body's stress response system

Find out more about ACEs and trauma-informed practice

remaining activated, setting itself to a high level of alert continuously.

The presence of toxic stress can disrupt early and later attachments affecting the social-emotional development vital to social functioning.

It can also alter connections between brain cells and flood the body with hormones. Stress-induced biological changes and adaptive behavioural responses, if left unaddressed, accumulate over time affecting the child's developmental trajectory. This affects emotional functioning, self-regulation, educational performance and even physical health due to the accumulative wear and tear on the body. These negative impacts can be significantly mitigated by the presence of healthy, safe relationships with adults and other protective factors.

## Risk & Protective Factors Most Relevant to Schools

Schools can play a crucial role in reducing many of the risk factors associated with violence and are in an ideal position to also strengthen several protective factors. This can have a positive impact on the safety of children and young people, contribute to a positive and safe school environment for all, improve health, educational and other social outcomes and ultimately reduce serious violence locally.

There are some risk and protective factors which are particularly relevant to the role of schools in preventing violence.


Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<b>Individual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Persistent absences from school and suspensions/exclusions</li> <li>▪ Low educational attainment</li> <li>▪ Low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Impulsivity</li> <li>▪ Social isolation</li> <li>▪ Early involvement in substance misuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Healthy problem-solving</li> <li>▪ Emotional regulation skills</li> <li>▪ Educational attainment</li> <li>▪ Good communication skills</li> </ul>

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low parental involvement in children's activities</li> <li>▪ Associating with 'delinquent' peers and/or gang membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationships with pro-social and non-violence peers</li> <li>▪ Positive relationships with teachers and caring adults</li> <li>▪ Children feeling connected to their schools</li> <li>▪ Parents demonstrate interest in their child's education and social relationships</li> </ul>
<b>Community and Societal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural and social norms supportive of violence</li> <li>▪ Bullying</li> <li>▪ Discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools regularly repaired and maintained (environment)</li> </ul>

## Preventing Violence Affecting Young People

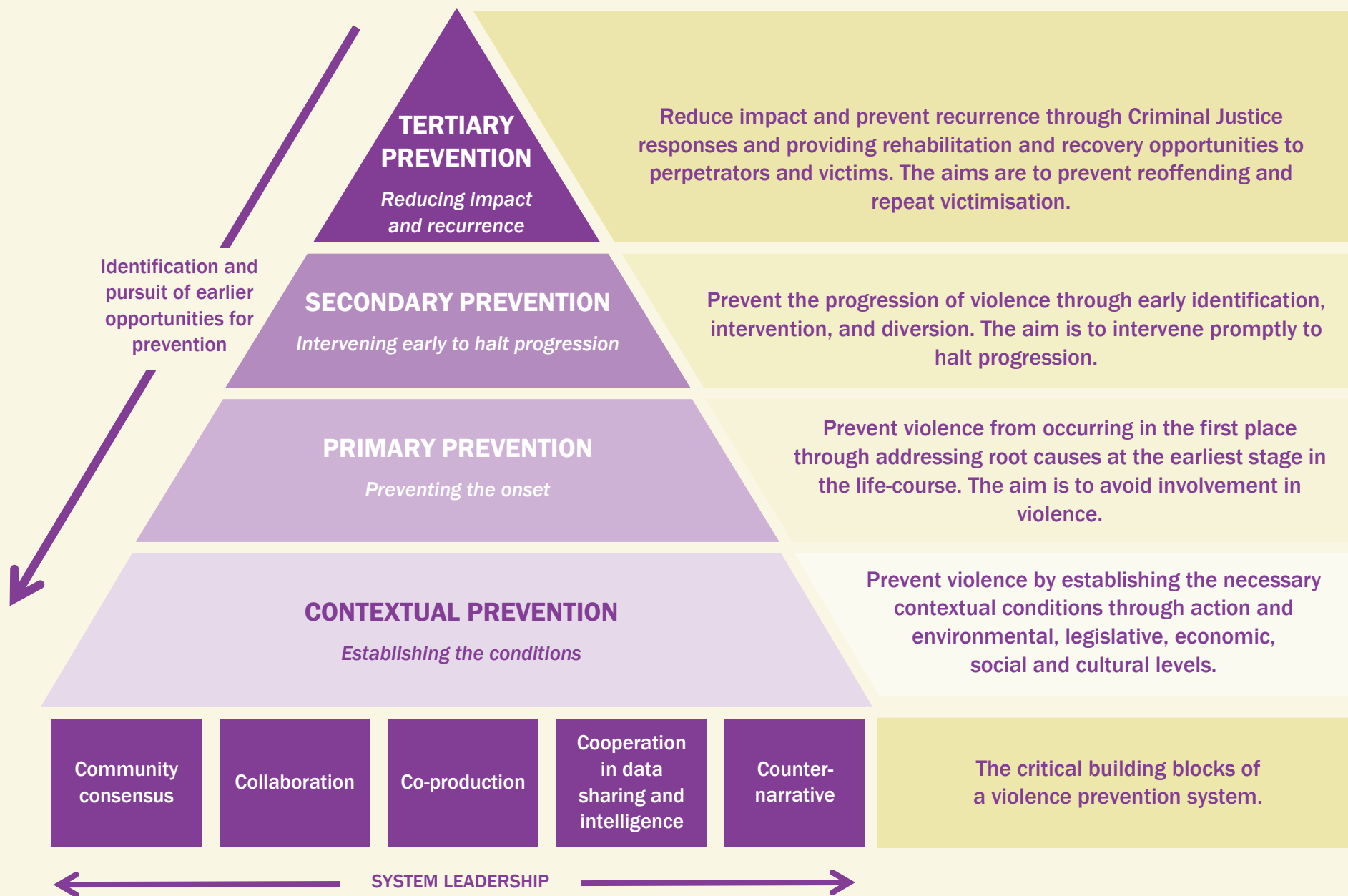
A core aim of the VRN is to support all partners to engage with the evidence-base in relation to the strategies and interventions which are most likely to be effective in preventing violence. We also design and test a range of strategies and interventions some of which are outlined throughout subsequent chapters. Further information can also be found on the VRN website.

All organisations, including schools, can strengthen their effectiveness in preventing and reducing violence through taking an evidence-based approach and using available resources and insights.

 Find out more about VRN interventions

To assist in the development of a whole system approach to preventing and reducing violence the VRN has developed a framework which is currently being used by organisations, sectors and multi-agency partnerships.

It ensures that our collective response plays due regard to the critical building blocks and our combined activity spans all levels of prevention.



The 5 C's are viewed as the critical building blocks to an effective violence prevention system and are relevant to all organisations who play a role in preventing and/or reducing serious violence. They are summarised below:

Community consensus	Collaboration	Co-production	Co-operation in data sharing	Counter-narrative
Approaches to preventing violence must be with and for communities. Increasing consensus between all parties is central to achieving agreement over the issues and causes, and ensuring that responses are relevant, responsive and regarded as legitimate by the relevant community	Tackling serious violence requires collaboration between a wide-range of groups, organisations and sectors. Each partner needs to understand their role in violence prevention and commit to identifying and organising resources to best effect including working flexibly and across boundaries	Approaches to preventing serious violence are more likely to be relevant and responsive if those that the project or service is for are part of the design. It is essential to involve young people, their families and communities in co-producing strategies and interventions on violence prevention	A key enabler to preventing violence is the commitment of organisations to identify, share and analyse all relevant data. Tackling the barriers to information sharing, as well as building capability is a key role of all partners. There should also be a commitment to drawing from and contributing to the evidence-base	Counter-narratives should be adopted and promoted across the system to support the development of environments that nurture protective factors. Having credible role models and creating opportunities which provide young people with alternatives are essential ingredients

← System Leadership →

The framework embodies a life-course approach in recognition that for prevention efforts to have a long-term impact, they need to recognise and plan around the critical life-stages, transitions and settings in which there are opportunities to reduce and manage risk factors and strengthen protective factors. The propensity towards violence has a long gestation period and the foundations are laid in early childhood. It therefore follows that upstream investment is vital to prevent the onset of risk factors and to ensure protective factors are in place.

In terms of how the Framework guides prevention activity, **contextual prevention** has the potential to achieve the most far-reaching impact due to its focus on ensuring civic-level policy and strategy and on creating the conditions and environments that are most likely to prevent violence. The **primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention** focus on different populations starting with a universal ‘for all’ focus and becoming more targeted and specialist as the risks and development of violence increases:

- **Targeted** (primary and secondary prevention): aimed at populations which can be identified as greatest risk
- **Specialist** (tertiary prevention): aimed at populations who have committed violence and/or experienced victimisation

Ultimately, there needs to be a broad programme of violence prevention activity delivered by multiple organisations and spanning all four levels of prevention. This involves an approach which strikes the balance between doing something for everyone (universal) but also doing more for those that need it the most (targeted).

The school environment provides an invaluable opportunity for prevention at all levels but in particular in relation to establishing the conditions (contextual prevention), through school leadership and culture (Section Two) and preventing the onset (primary prevention) through schools’ direct contact and work with children, parents/carers and communities (Sections Three to Five). A school’s role in secondary and tertiary prevention is also important but this is usually inter-dependent with the responses offered by other partners.

## Section 2:

# Leadership and School Culture



## Introduction

The new serious violence duty requires school leaders to give due regard to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence and take a proactive and collaborative approach to ensuring the whole school community are safe. As schools already have a range of statutory duties to ensure children and young people are safe, the new duty provides an opportunity to consider how a public health approach to violence prevention aligns with these existing responsibilities.

As highlighted in Section One, many of the causes of serious violence and the factors which protect against it are relevant to preventing other types of harm and will be of broader interest to schools as many also support positive behaviour, educational engagement and attainment. Preventing and reducing serious violence therefore does not need to be a separate area of work but rather can be incorporated into existing whole school approaches that seek to keep children safe and engaged in education. Importantly a wealth of relevant activity will already be taking place within schools and a strength-based approach is therefore advised.

The local violence prevention framework outlined in Section One highlights the importance of contextual prevention. This involves establishing the necessary conditions to support effective preventative action. For schools this includes a clear commitment from leaders, evidence-based policy and developing a school culture and environment which promotes inclusion, pro-social behaviours from pupils and staff and emotional and physical safety.

This section aims to provide schools with guidance on establishing the leadership and cultural conditions to strengthen violence prevention.

## Making Violence Prevention a Priority

An important first step in preventing violence is recognising its existence in schools and/or surrounding communities and ensuring it is a clear and well communicated priority.

There can often be a perception amongst adults that 'violence isn't a problem here'. This not only overlooks the forms of violence which can be 'hidden' such as dating and relationship violence as well as incidents which take place

outside of school, but it also downplays the risk factors for violence which can play out within the school environment and in time, lead to an increase in violence. Within this context, it is important that the whole school community understands their individual and collective responsibility for violence prevention.

There are several ways in schools can ensure violence prevention is a priority such as:

- Hold an event or series of sessions focusing on violence, its causes and the role governors, staff and pupils play in its prevention and some key commitments from everyone.
- Clear messaging from governors/those responsible for governance and school leaders and an understanding of the key education-related risk and protective factors and ensuring policy and practice supports reducing and increasing these respectively.
- Seek ‘champions’ or ‘ambassadors’ from staff and pupils to ensure violence prevention is given sufficient focus across the school community.
- A clear statement which is visible in school and other key platforms such as school websites or social media.
- Regular communication of progress including a focus on positive behaviours and outcomes.

## Using Data and Insights


A public health approach is data-driven. Collecting and analysing data improves our understanding about the local problem of violence such as how many pupils are affected by violence, what forms it takes and which groups of pupils are most at risk of becoming involved in violence as a victim and/or perpetrator. Data can also help schools to better understand the types and prevalence of risk and protective factors within the school population as well as understand the extent and nature of violence occurring within the communities surrounding a school.

Data should be used by schools to tailor their policies, strategies and interventions so that they address need and the issues affecting the children and young people within their care.

Schools both generate and have access to a wide-range of data relevant to violence prevention. Below are some examples of where to focus attention to build a whole school (and community) understanding and strengthen internal and partnership responses.

### Partnership Data

As highlighted in Section One, the VRN produces an annual Strategic Needs Assessment drawing on a range of multi-agency data sets. This is accessible via the VRN website. This focuses on Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland although it is broken down by local authority area in places. In 2023-24, locality-based violence profiles will be produced which will provide more granular details on the extent and nature of serious violence including in the neighbourhoods in which schools are located. The findings from these profiles will be shared with partners and school leaders are encouraged to use the findings to inform strategy and plans.

 [Read the VRN's Strategic Needs Assessment on Serious Violence](#)

### School Data

Schools also have access to internal data sets and are in a position to generate additional insights from pupils, parents and staff about feelings of safety, the extent and nature of violence and the prevalence of known risk factors (for example, substance use or weapon carrying). Some examples of the types of data and insights which are available or could be collected are outlined below.

**Some schools have a clear statement which is visible in school and other key platforms such as school websites or social media.**

**Such statements emphasise that violence in any form is unacceptable, everyone has a responsibility and children, parents, staff and visitors have a right to feel and be safe.**



Sources of data		Examples of data that could be collected
Routinely collected data	<b>Suspensions and Exclusions</b>	Number of students excluded from school for persistent disruptive behaviour or physical assault
	<b>Attendance</b>	Trend analysis to include persistent absence (less than 90%), frequent absence days and times, and persistent lateness
	<b>Bullying</b>	This could be collected via CPOMS/My Concern including alleged and confirmed cases and motivation. You could also use Worry Boxes, online reporting mechanisms or surveys.
	<b>Safeguarding incidents</b>	These are frequently monitored (weekly/fortnightly) by Designated Safeguarded Leads and always recorded per national policy. Further information could be collected from local authorities, multi academy trusts or internal annual safeguarding audits.
	<b>Rewards and sanctions</b>	This data could be analysed in relation to allocation and issue by group.
	<b>School-based support services</b>	The school is likely to collect data on those children who have special educational needs, speech and language difficulties and who are in alternative provision to name just some example. This data will help you to understand the prevalence of these key risk factors, as well as the demographics of those who fall within these groups.

Sources of data		Examples of data that could be collected
	<b>Special educational needs</b>	This could involve analysing data on the attendance, attainment, and behaviour of those who have special educational needs.
	<b>Children affected by domestic abuse (Op Encompass)</b>	Domestic abuse is a key risk factor for future involvement in serious violence and so reviewing data on students affected by domestic abuse or parental conflict can help to ensure that sufficient support is in place.
	<b>Looked after children</b>	This could involve analysing data on the attendance, attainment and behaviour of those who are in care as this is a key risk factor to monitor.
	<b>Surveys</b>	These could be administered by the school, local authority or Ofsted and could include staff, parents and students. Administering the survey annually can help to monitor long-term trends particularly in areas such as perceptions of safety and wellbeing.
Additional data	<b>Focus Groups</b>	It is important to collect the views and experiences of children and young people to not only enhance understanding of the nature and extent of violence and associated risk factors, but also to ensure that your policies, procedures and programmes are attuned to the needs of students. Focus groups is an efficient and effective way of collecting insights from different student groups on different topics.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 includes specific provisions to support partners to share information, intelligence and knowledge to prevent and reduce serious violence.

These create information sharing gateways which can be used where existing powers alone are insufficient. As always, sharing of information must be considered carefully in line with data protection requirements ensuring that any disclosure is necessary and proportionate.

Schools already share some data sets with local authorities who, in turn, share relevant aggregated and anonymised data with the VRN for the purpose of producing the annual strategic needs assessment and a serious violence dashboard. The legislation underpinning the serious violence duty requires data sharing for this purpose. Schools

may also wish to consider what other data they could share to strengthen the partnership's collective understanding and to generate support from partners in developing in-school and after school strategies.


## National Data

There are several national data sets which schools can access directly if interested in understanding more about violence, wider crime and the prevalence of risk and protective factors in the communities in which the school is located and/or pupils reside.

- [Police Data UK](#) includes information about street-level crime, outcome, stop and search data, police activity, arrests and 101 call handling. It provides a function to compare with other areas.
- [Office for National Statistics](#) routinely publish reports on 'The Nature of Violence Crime in England and Wales' which has a set of data tables that you can download and use.
- [Public Health Profiles](#) (PHE Fingertips) are publicly available and provide a rich source of data across a range of health and wellbeing themes. The tool allows you to browse indicators at different geographical levels, benchmark against the regional or England average and export data to use locally.

A new publicly accessible dashboard has been published in 2023.

It contains descriptive statistics relating to all pupils, children who have been cautioned or sentenced for an offence and children who had been cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence. It includes findings on demographics, children's experience whilst at school and children's social care experience. The data is produced at local authority level.

 [Access the dashboard](#)

- Public Health have also brought together nationally available datasets on risk and protective factors and outcomes into one place. You can access [indicators on risk factors](#) and [indicators on protective factors](#) on the PHE Fingertips website.

## Developing and Adapting Policies

The WHO (2019) advocates a whole system approach to violence prevention. To support this, schools should review existing policies to ensure they include a specific statement in relation to violence and they capture the necessary priorities and actions for the school to play its role in prevention. It might be that an existing policy – such as a behaviour or safeguarding policy – could be adapted or that a standalone policy is needed. The latter is advised if data and insights indicate that the school population is particularly affected by violence and/or the known risk factors are prevalent.

Whilst a standalone Violence Prevention Policy may be necessary in some schools, it is important for all schools to make connections between violence prevention and other interconnected policy areas, approaches and statutory

There are clear synergies between violence prevention and the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022' statutory guidance. Not only is experiencing violence a safeguarding issue, but also many safeguarding issues are risk factors for future involvement in violence such as child neglect and missing from education.

duties. This will help to ensure that there is a coordinated, whole school response which in turn will increase effectiveness.

Relevant policies and approaches include:

- Behaviour management
- Bullying
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Personal, social, health and economic education
- Prevent
- Relationships and health education
- Safeguarding
- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Trauma-informed practice
- Restorative approaches

Effective delivery within these policy areas – such as having clear and robust safeguarding arrangements, providing effective support to those with SEN or embedding a culture which embeds equality and inclusion – are key parts of the violence prevention ecosystem as they seek to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors. Similarly, the above areas, particularly the design and delivery of the PSHE curriculum (see Section Three), provide an opportunity to reiterate key messages that violence is unacceptable and can be prevented if everyone plays a role.

## Building an Action Plan

Some schools may feel that an action plan is necessary due to known or new issues relating to violence in school (or in the event of a recent incident in the local community which is likely to impact on the school). This is a great opportunity to involve a wider-range of stakeholders thereby fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. This could include different staff roles, pupils, parents/carers, governors and local organisations such as Community Safety Partnerships or the Violence Reduction Network (see Section Five).

**The Timpson Review of School Exclusion (2019) highlighted how children and young people excluded from school have the worse trajectories in terms of education and wider social outcomes. This includes lower educational attainment, increased anti-social behaviour and an increased likelihood of contact with the Criminal Justice System.**

**A more recent review of exclusions by the Education Select Committee (2022) highlighted how ‘zero tolerance’ behavioural policies can contribute to the risk factors which are associated with violence such as lower school attendance, repeated suspensions and exclusions. Trauma-informed and restorative approaches are considered more effective.**

Importantly, it’s likely that you will not be starting from scratch when drafting your action plan. As mentioned above, there will be a significant amount of activity taking place within the school which you can include. However, by developing an action plan, you can bring together all of this activity in one document adding new activity as appropriate to the issue or challenge you are seeking to solve.

The action plan can help to:

- Outline key activity which is being delivered which aims to reduce risk factors, strengthen protective factors and reduce the harm caused by violence (e.g. support for students affected by violence)
  - Assign leads for key areas of activity to drive forward these areas (e.g. senior pastoral staff or designated safeguarding leads)
  - Set targets which enable you to review progress which should be monitored regularly by leaders and by those responsible for governance
- Identify gaps or areas of duplication in your violence prevention activity

## Empowering and Equipping Staff

The values, beliefs, knowledge and skills of teaching and other staff within a school are highly relevant to creating a culture and environment which promotes safety and enables pupils to thrive. Existing learning and development programmes may already include content and activity which is relevant to violence prevention. When reviewing these, it’s worth considering the following areas:

- Are staff aware of the different types of violence affecting children and young people and how it can impact in a variety of ways including in relation to the ability to engage in education and their behaviour? Are staff equipped with knowledge and skills in trauma-informed practice so that the impact of children's experiences of violence and other forms of harm can be mitigated?
- Are staff aware of the important role they can play in and outside the classroom in reducing the risk factors of violence and increasing the protective factors. Do they have access to information and resource about the education-related strategies and interventions which are effective in preventing violence?
- Are relevant staff trained and supported in implementing positive discipline and classroom management? Are evidence-based strategies and approaches in place which support the development of safe and trusting relationships, address unacceptable behaviour and harness opportunities for learning, restoration and healthy development.
- Are staff aware of how their own experiences and beliefs as well as wider social, cultural and gender norms can heavily influence teaching and wider interactions with pupils? Are they aware of the relevance of these to violence (for example in relation to gender-based roles and stereotypes), is there the opportunity to understand how these can influence teaching practices and decision-making and to develop skills in challenging these when displayed by pupils?
- Are staff aware of the policies and processes in place to respond to school-based violence when it occurs? Are they supported to develop skills such as conflict resolution to prevent escalation and is support available to ensure staff well-being is not adversely affected by incidents?

## The Relevance of the Physical Environment

A safe and positive school environment can be achieved through developing a school culture which promotes inclusion, respect and care for others and proactively seeks to reduce discrimination, stigmatisation bullying and harassment. However, the physical environment also plays an important role

in feelings of safety and reducing the likelihood of violence occurring. For example, one of the known community-level protective factors is that schools are regularly repaired and maintained.

Whilst resource limitations may prevent significant changes being made to a school, it is worth understanding from pupils, staff and other data where any 'hot-spots' or other environmental issues are and regularly reviewing this, including at times when changes have been made to the environment as a result of other requirements. This work can also be replicated with local partners within the communities in which your school is located (see Section Five).

There are several ways that the physical environment can be changed within schools to 'design-out' violence (and have wider positive impacts) which many schools will already be pursuing including:

- Improving lighting particularly in 'hot-spots' including improving natural light where possible.
- Removing obstacles which reduce visibility and hide areas.
- Improve appearance through repairing damage to fixture and fitting, removing graffiti and picking up litter.
- Display items which increase pride and responsibility including murals, school banners, signage and awards/trophies.
- Restricting access to isolated or hidden areas. (World Health Organisation, 2019)

Ofsted Inspectors will take into account how well children and young people are helped and protected so that they are kept safe.

Inspectors will make a written judgement under 'leadership and management' about whether the arrangements for safeguarding learners are effective.

## Links with the OFSTED Education Inspection Framework

The EIF makes multiple references which are relevant to violence prevention and the serious violence duty. For example:

- **Behaviour and Attitudes** refers to an environment where bullying, peer on peer abuse or discrimination are not tolerated and if they do occur, they're dealt with quickly and effectively, so they do not spread.
- **Personal Development** refers to how the curriculum and wider work supports the development of resilience, confidence and independence and equips them with the knowledge and skills to stay well – all of which help to prevent violence. There are also now explicit expectations in relation to preventing sexual abuse and violence through whole school approaches.
- **Leadership and Management** refers to a school's safeguarding responsibilities which includes in relation to exploitation and other forms of violence.

It is anticipated that the expectations outlined in the Serious Violence Duty will be incorporated into future inspection frameworks more explicitly in the forthcoming months and years.

# Section 3: Working with Children



## Introduction

Schools direct and regular contact with children and young people over time provides teachers and other staff with invaluable opportunities to strengthen their protective factors and reduce and/or mitigate the impact of risk factors associated with violence. As outlined in Section One, regular school attendance and educational attainment in themselves reduce the overall likelihood of children and young people being involved in violence later in life. Positive relationships between children and teachers (and other caring adults) and feeling connected to schools protect against involvement and/or can mitigate against the negative impact of children's current or previous experiences.

Research highlights that one of the most of effective ways to prevent violence is to support the development of skills that enable children to recognise violence, stay safe, manage emotions, build resilience, and access help and support. This section provides an overview of several evidence-informed strategies which can be applied throughout the curriculum or extracurricular activity. It also provides summaries of a range of local interventions and approaches intended to keep children safe and support those affected by violence.

### Involving Children

Schools will already have ways of involving children in how a school operates. A participatory, co-productive approach works particularly well in violence prevention as it can improve understanding of the issues affecting children and young people and ensure responses are relevant and effective.

## Effective Strategies

The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework includes an expectation that the curriculum will prepare children and young people for life out of and after school. Specifically, the School Inspection Handbook states that:

*Inspectors will focus on what our inspection experience and research show are the most important factors to consider. These are the extent to which:*

- *the school's curriculum is ambitious and designed to give pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge they need to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life.*

The World Health Organisation (2019) suggest that the adoption of three key strategies – which can be implemented within the curriculum or as extracurricular activities – will support schools to adopt an effective approach to violence prevention which also aligns with the Ofsted Inspection Framework. Importantly, the earlier these strategies are deployed, the greater the opportunity to have a positive impact on a child's attitude and behaviour in and outside of school.

The following section provides an overview of each of these strategies, along with links to local activities and resources to support you in implementing each strategy.

## 1. Develop Life Skills

The World Health Organisation (2019: 24-25) defines life skills as:

*These are cognitive, social and emotional skills used to cope with everyday life. They include: problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, decision-making, creative thinking, relationship skills, self-awareness building, empathy, and coping with stress and emotions (WHO, 2015).*

*These skills allow children to manage emotions, deal with conflict and communicate effectively in non-aggressive ways, reducing the risk of violent behaviour (WHO, 2016). They can also improve a school's performance, which protects against youth violence through children and young people playing a greater part in school life and having better employment prospects (WHO, 2015). Life skills can also reduce risk factors for violence, such as impulsivity and substance use (Onrust et al, 2016; Faggiano et al, 2014).*

One approach to building life and social skills is to embed key topics within the curriculum. Some key skills to develop include effective communication, managing anger and conflict, problem-solving, and dealing with peer pressure and other harmful behaviours. Embedding key topics such as these within the curriculum will help to develop healthy relationships and build a child's

resilience by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to respond to everyday problems in a constructive way.

## Social Skills Training

**The Youth Endowment Fund – a 'what works' centre for preventing violence involving young people – recently rated social skills training as being an approach which is likely to have a high impact on violence. Social skills training supports children to think before they act, understand other people's perspectives, communicate effectively, and use strategies for managing impulsiveness or aggression.**

**Social skills training can be delivered through universal programmes, which work with all children, or through programmes which work in a targeted way with children who could benefit from more support. Programmes are often delivered at school through structured lessons and can vary in intensity from a single, short session to 40 or more sessions over eight months or more.**

 [Find out more about implementing Social Skills Training](#)

## The Reach Programme

**The Reach programme is a pilot running in several secondary schools in Leicester and Leicestershire for 10-16 year olds who are at risk of exclusion. Working closely with and in schools, youth workers deliver an intensive mentoring programme which incorporates social skills training.**

 [Find out more about The Reach programme](#)

## 2. Teach Children about Safe Behaviour

The World Health Organisation (2019: 24-25) describe this strategy as:

*The ability to recognise situations in which abuse or violence can happen and understand how to avoid potentially risky situations and where to find help. This knowledge can make children less vulnerable to abuse and reduce the risk of violence happening again (through telling a trusted adult, for example) (WHO, 2016a). You can also address risk factors for violence, such as alcohol and drug use, through making children aware of these substances, including the consequences of using them and recognizing high-risk situations (Onrust et al, 2016; Faggiano et al, 2014).*

As with all of the strategies, it is important to tailor the content and messaging related to this strategy to ensure that it is age-appropriate. For instance, for early years it is important to focus on building knowledge and skills to help children identify and avoid unsafe situations and to access help from trusted adults. With primary aged children, the focus should shift to supporting them to develop capabilities in relation to being an active bystander, helping their peers, identifying exploitative relationships and being safe on social media. These themes should continue to be explored through the curriculum in secondary school in greater depth and within the context of adolescence (e.g. safe dating behaviour).

**Deterrence-type lessons and the use of scare tactics have been found to be ineffective and can potentially make matters worse. This is reflected in one of the PSHE Associations 10 principles in which they advocate a more positive, empowering approach.**

 Find out more

Schools may approach (or be approached by) external partners/providers wishing to offer talks, workshops and/or material relating to violence such as knife crime, exploitation, substance use or gang-related violence which, if high quality, can enhance children and young people's learning experience.

Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (2022) has produced a useful guide which includes a checklist to inform planning and decision-making in relation to using external partners.

APPROPRIATENESS OF ACTIVITY/RESOURCE	
a) Does the activity either support wider school pastoral, community issues or PSHE learning outcomes for this academic year?	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Is there duplication in the activity offered by various organisations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Are young people being consulted around the type of activities they would most value and what is their knowledge base about any subject to be introduced?	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Is the activity universal or targeted?	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Where is the evidence base which demonstrates that this activity is beneficial?	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRE-CONSIDERATIONS	
f) If external people are facilitating the work, are they appropriately qualified, trauma-informed and safeguard trained?	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Have potential trainers clearly set out their key messages, motivations and how they will minimise any trauma prior, during and after delivery?	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Is there a risk assessment available which identifies the safety measures in place to support any difficulties which may emerge?	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Are trainers familiar with the school/setting and Local Authority's safeguarding procedures and referral pathways?	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Is there a need to inform parents/carers of the activities to be provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Have all school and support staff, including those not in attendance of the session, been made aware of the subject matter and point of contact should any issues arise e.g. through whole school briefings or digital updates?	<input type="checkbox"/>
THE ACTIVITY	
l) Has all pre-activity planning taken place?	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Have ground rules been agreed with young people; e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Everyone has the right to be heard and respected.</li> <li>▪ Using language that won't offend, stereotype or upset anyone.</li> <li>▪ Using correct terms, and if not known, to ask.</li> <li>▪ Comment on what was said, not the person who said it.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>




<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Avoid sharing own, or friend's personal experiences but instead use hypothetical or fictitious examples to discuss key ideas.</li> <li>▪ No-one to be put on the spot and having the right to pass.</li> <li>▪ Not to judge or make assumptions about anyone.</li> </ul>	
n) Are measures in place to ensure already identified vulnerable young people are supported to minimise any potential trauma?	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) Has additional consideration and support been given to differentiating and personalising the messages for those with special educational needs or disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>
p) Are school staff alert to signs indicating young people are being impacted by the activity and require additional support?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>POST-EVENT</b>	
q) Does the activity signpost appropriate additional support beyond the session?	<input type="checkbox"/>
r) Have school staff been alerted to any longer-term signs or indicators which may suggest young people require further support?	<input type="checkbox"/>
s) If a visiting organisation is offering supplementary online content, are materials compliant with the Age Appropriate Design Code?	<input type="checkbox"/>
t) How will the school measure the impact of the evaluation, test learning objectives and assess any progress made	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Live Safe

The VRN has designed a resources website with and for young people which:

- Provides information about different types of harm including exploitation, weapon carrying and substance use.
- Equips young people with the knowledge of how to stay safe and support their friends.
- Makes it easy to report concerns.
- Signposts to a range of resources and services.


 Find out more about Live Safe

## 3. Challenge social and cultural norms and promote equal relationships

The World Health Organisation (2019: 24-25) provided the following summary of the final strategy aimed at reducing the risk factors associated with violence and strengthening protective factors:


*Social and cultural behaviour and stereotypes around, for example gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity and disability, increase the risk of bullying and violence. Challenging harmful norms and strengthening those that promote non-violent, positive and equal relationships can reduce any justification for violent behaviour (WHO, 2016a). Promoting political, religious and ethnic tolerance is also likely to be important in preventing hate crimes as well as violent extremism and radicalization (Bellis et al, 2017). Challenging perceived social norms around young people's use of substances is also an important part of preventing substance abuse that helps address risk factors for violence.*

There are several key topics which should be embedded within the curriculum in order to strengthen protective factors amongst your students. This includes equality, diversity and inclusion, gender norms, accepting difference and recognising violence. In adolescence, it is also important to cover themes relating to dating and relationship violence in order to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to identify and respond effectively to harmful behaviour.

 [Access guidance on delivering activity on dating and relationship violence](#)

## Campaigns

The VRN has also co-produced several campaigns with young people with the aim of challenging social norms through drawing on positive psychology and bystander methodology. They focus on the behaviour we would like to see rather than on the behaviours of a small minority of young people who are involved in violence such as knife crime.

 [Access resources relating to the 'Make a Stand Against Violence' and 'We Don't Carry' campaigns](#)

## Mentors in Violence Prevention

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a programme currently available to all secondary schools in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland which focuses on developing healthy social norms.

It is a peer-led leadership and bystander programme developed in the United States by Educator, Dr Jackson Katz. Harnessing the influence of peers, it trains older pupils as Mentors and equips them with the confidence, knowledge and skills to identify and speak out against bullying, abusive behaviour and violence. It aims to tackle the beliefs, attitudes and culture that give the message that violence is acceptable.

Under the supervision of a teacher, Mentors also deliver PSHE sessions to younger pupils on topics relating to young people's safety such as knife crime, exploitation and bullying and harassment.

The Violence Reduction Network launched MVP in 2020 and have since supported more than 45 schools to implement the programme within their school, reaching more than 3,400 children. The programme is having a positive impact within these schools with a recent inspection of one school noting that:

- The school was on a mission to equip the young people with the tools they need to deescalate tricky situations and to report issues.
- Young people feel that MVP has given them the words and the tools they would need to de-escalate or get out of a tricky situation.
- There was a real power of message coming from them as young people.

Schools interested in finding out more about the MVP programme should contact the VRN.

## Preventing Bullying

Challenging social and cultural norms is also key to preventing bullying which is a risk factor for involvement in violence as both a victim and perpetrator in later life. Adopting a whole-school approach has been shown to be most effective at preventing bullying and includes:

- prevention activity delivered across the curriculum
- materials for staff and parents/carers
- school policies
- reporting mechanisms
- adapting the environment

### Learning Together


Universal programme for children between the ages of 11 and 16 which uses restorative practices to reduce bullying.

### Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme

A whole-school approach to bullying prevention, which is designed for students in primary and secondary schools

## Further interventions

Alongside the three strategies outlined above, there are other interventions and approaches which schools can develop internally or with partners which can prevent young people becoming involved in crime and violence. Both the College of Policing and the Youth Endowment Fund have produced toolkits which summarise the best available research evidence about different approaches.

 [Access the College of Policing toolkit](#)

 [Access the Youth Endowment Fund toolkit](#)


Below are two examples.

## After-school programmes

After-school programmes could prevent violence by supervising children during this time. The activities in after-school programmes could also lead to skill development, school engagement and pro-social behaviour. After-school programmes are typically implemented in school buildings but can be delivered by either school or external staff. Programmes often take place regularly throughout the school week and involve activities, such as:

- Academic support, tutoring or help with homework
- Enrichment activities including sport or art
- Activities to develop social and conflict resolution skills
- Mentoring

Research suggests that, on average, after-school programmes can reduce crime overall by 8% and externalising behaviours by 14%.


 [Find out more](#)

After-school programmes appear to be less effective when they only include recreation or non-academic activities so developing useful skills should be prioritised. Similarly, larger impacts are seen amongst 11-14 years and when activities are fun and interesting but supervised and structured.

## Intervening on the journey to and from school

There are a number of interventions which aim to help keep children and young people safe on their journey to and from school. For example, the 'Step Together' programme which is currently being implemented and tested in the West Midlands sees youth workers based along routes to school, acting as trusted adults and a point of contact. Their job is to de-escalate potential violence and to build positive relationships with children and young people. Young people, schools, local communities and the police have come together to identify the key routes to and from school which are 'hot spots' for crime and violence.

This intervention is currently being tested by the Youth Endowment Fund to assess how effective it is in reducing crime and violence before and after school.

 [Find out more](#)

The findings from an evaluation of how effective the 'Step Together' programme has been in reducing crime and violence should be available soon on the Youth Endowment Fund's website.

# Section 4: Involving Parents and Carers



## Introduction

The contact that schools have with parents and/or carers provides a further opportunity to contribute to the prevention of violence in our local area. As outlined in Section One, there are many risk and protective relating to parenting including parents having an interest in their child's education. Parents and carers are often the primary sources of support and guidance for children, and their involvement can help reinforce positive behaviours and attitudes including at school. Conversely, where there are lower levels of parental interest in a child's education and less positive parenting behaviours and practices, this can adversely impact on a child's ability to function well in a school environment.

A public health approach to preventing violence treats parents as partners wherever possible, reflecting the vital role parents can play and recognising that they too may be experiencing many challenges and concerns arising from their child's transition into and through adolescence. During this stage in life, parents and carers have much less influence over the contexts in which harm may occur and are reliant on others, including schools and other community-based partners, to help keep their children safe. They can, however, still play a role and should be included in local violence prevention activities.

This section outlines some practical strategies for involving and supporting parents to play their role in violence prevention.

## Involving and Informing

Violence prevention strategies and activities in school are more likely to be effective if parents and carers are aware of them and are supportive. It is therefore important to inform and involve parents at relevant points including when schools are understanding how violence is affecting through data and insights work and/or developing and implementing policies.

Though contact with parents and involving them in the school's work around violence prevention, there will also be opportunities to share the evidence in relation to what causes violence affecting children and young people, what factors protect against it and the vital role parents play in keeping them safe now and in the future. Schools will be aware that their efforts to prevent

violence will always be compromised if children are being exposed to risk factors and violence within the home environment.


Examples of risk and protective factors relating to parenting:

Level	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low parental involvement in children's activities</li> <li>Exposure to violence in the family</li> <li>Harsh, lax or inconsistent parental disciplinary processes</li> <li>Parental substance misuse, poor mental health and/or involvement in criminality</li> <li>Poor monitoring and supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents demonstrate interest in their child's education and social relationships</li> <li>Warm parent-youth relationships</li> <li>Parents who set constant, developmentally appropriate limits</li> </ul>

Schools can also provide a useful funnel for disseminating information about the various risks that children and young people face during adolescence and how they can talk about these issues and keep their children safe during this time of increasing independence. There is a myriad of existing resources for parents and carers about issues such as online safety, substance misuse, knife crime and exploitation including local resources which can be promoted to parents or used within school events involving parents.

### Are you listening?


A short film about children criminal exploitation which helps parents, carers and other trusted adults spot the signs.

 Watch the Are You Listening? video

### Live Safe

Parents and carers can also use the VRN's Live Safe website. There are specific sections for parents and carers which provide practical advice and support on a range of issues related to violence including exploitation, weapon crime, substance use and online safety. It also includes information on how to stay safe and how to report incidents of violence or abuse. Parents and carers could:

- Encourage their child to visit the website and explore the resources available to them.
- Use the website to access helpful tips and guidance on how to recognise the warning signs and talk to their children about risks which they may face.
- Visit the website to learn more about the services available to support young people if they are affected by these issues.

 Find out more about Live Safe


### Strengthening Parenting Skills

Effective parenting plays a critical role in shaping a child's physical, emotional, and social development. However, some parents can struggle with providing the necessary guidance and support that their children need, comprising the child's ability to engage in education and potentially leading to negative or disruptive or aggressive behaviour in schools. This can be particularly the case during adolescence.

There are several evidence-based parenting programmes delivered outside of school which are known to be effective in improving a range of positive social and health outcomes including reducing the likelihood of a child's involvement in violence and crime. These programmes are designed to provide parents and carers with information and strategies to create positive and nurturing environments that support their child's development. An example of an

## Free On-Line Parenting Course

Leicestershire Partnership Trust offer a range of free online parenting courses based on the Solihull Approach. The courses are available in 108 languages. Schools can promote these to staff and parents.

 [Access the on-line courses](#)


effective parenting programme is the Solihull Approach. An on-line version is currently available to professionals and parents residing in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Schools will also already be in contact with local Early Help services which offer a range of parenting programmes which can help to support the development of positive

parenting practices promote healthy child development and strengthen protective factors to reduce the risk of violence.

Leicester City Council	Leicestershire County Council	Rutland County Council
<p>The Council's Children's Social Care and Early Help offer can be accessed via the multi-agency referral form or telephone (0116 454 1004). They offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Families</li> <li>Parenting Support Programmes</li> <li>Specialist Therapeutic Support</li> </ul>	<p>The Council's Children and Family Wellbeing Service provides a range of early help services following the submission of a multi-agency referral form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard Family Support</li> <li>Enhance Family Support</li> <li>Supporting Families</li> <li>Parenting Programmes</li> </ul>	<p>The Council offers a range of early help and support for families which can be accessed via their website multi-agency referral form includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team Around the Family Support</li> <li>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</li> <li>Relationship Support</li> </ul>
 <a href="#">Access here</a>	 <a href="#">Access here</a>	 <a href="#">Access here</a>


The impact of domestic abuse on children and young people is now widely known amongst professionals. However, more recent evidence has highlighted how parental conflict, which sits below the threshold for domestic abuse, can have a significant negative impact on children's mental health, their ability to engage in and achieve at school and ultimately their long-term life chances.

 [Advice for parents and carers about parental conflict and short, medium and long-term strategies for reducing the impact on children](#)

The Government's Reducing Parental Conflict Programme aims to improve outcomes for children, with a focus on 'disadvantaged' families. It has two objectives:

- develop the evidence base on what works to reduce parental conflict, to inform future commissioning practice.
- help local areas integrate support to reduce parental conflict in local services for families.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Early Help Services are working collaboratively to implement a local strategy for Reducing Parental Conflict which includes a training offer and toolkit for professionals. Schools can play an important role in identifying the potential existence of parental conflict either through their direct contact with parents or through children's disclosures and/or behaviour at school. More information can be found through the Early Help services outlined above.

 [Find out more about Reducing Parental Conflict training](#)

## Connecting Children with a Trusted Adult


Another important protective factor is having a strong connection to caring and trusting adults. Trusted adults can serve as a source of support and guidance, providing children with a safe space to discuss their feelings and concerns. Having a trusted adult in their life can also help children build resilience and a sense of self-worth, which are crucial for developing healthy relationships and achieving their potential in life.

Trusted adults can support children in a number of ways including:

- Acting as a positive role model and setting a good example
- Providing emotional support
- Supporting the development of life, communication and social skills
- Helping with academic development or providing practical support with job applications
- Navigating the complex support system and advocating on their behalf

Parents often fulfil the role of a trusted adult but most children have more than one which frequently includes their teachers. In circumstances where a child may not be able to rely on their parents fulfilling the role it is particularly important that schools do everything they can to ensure a child has other trusted adults. Alongside daily interactions with teachers, there are a number of environments in which children and young people can develop trusting relationships with adults including mentoring programmes, after-school programmes or recreational activities such as sport, music or art.

Research suggests that, on average, mentoring programmes can reduce violence by 21% and all offending by 14%.

 [Find out more](#)

## Dealing with Challenging Parents and Carers

As mentioned through this section, parents and carers are critical partners in the education and development of their children. However, not all interactions with parents and carers are positive, and some can be challenging and even disruptive to the school environment. It is important that schools have strategies in place to manage challenging interactions with parents and carers effectively. These strategies, particularly when they draw on schools' understanding of the impact of trauma on adults (as well as children), can help to prevent violence, promote positive relationships between the school and families, and ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff.

Here are a number of effective ways that schools can deal with challenging parents and practical strategies for managing these interactions:

1

### Establish clear communication channels

Schools can establish clear communication channels with parents and carers, such as regular parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, and social media updates. This can help to build trust and understanding, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts.

2

### Use de-escalation techniques

In cases where a parent or carer becomes confrontational or aggressive, schools can use de-escalation techniques to diffuse the situation including active listening, showing empathy, and responding calmly.

3

### Involve a neutral third party

If communication between the school and parents or carers becomes difficult, a neutral third party such as a mediator or family support worker can be involved to help facilitate positive communication and resolve any conflicts.

4

### Implement clear policies and procedures

Schools can establish clear policies and procedures for dealing with challenging behaviour from parents or carers. These policies can outline steps to be taken in case of conflict and can also include measures for safeguarding staff and students

5

### Provide training and support for staff

Schools can provide training and support for staff on how to deal with challenging parents and carers, including how to recognise signs of conflict and how to respond appropriately. This can help to build staff confidence and resilience in challenging situations.

6

### Implement clear policies and procedures

Schools can establish and share clear expectations, policies and procedures for dealing with challenging behaviour from parents or carers. These policies can be co-produced with representatives of the parent body and should outline steps to be taken in case of conflict and can also include measures for safeguarding staff and students

# Section 5:

# Community Partnerships



## Introduction

Whilst schools have some unique opportunities within the school environment to prevent violence and play a specific role, the causes of violence are multiple and complex and the solutions lie across a wide range of organisations and communities as well as local and central government.

The public health approach requires whole system thinking and action with high and persistent levels of cross-sector and community collaboration. The serious violence duty places a responsibility on specified authorities to consult and involve relevant authorities (including education) and build a broad partnership capable of tackling the issues identified in the local area. The Violence Reduction Network (VRN) team provides a dedicated resource to assist partners to develop new and existing strategic and operational partnerships which will advance our collective ambition to keep children and young people safe.

This section provides information on the local partnership arrangements for the serious violence duty, how schools can get involved in developing and implementing the joint strategy, the role of different partners in violence prevention, the importance of collaborating with communities and provides some examples of how schools can work in partnership in relation to violence prevention.

## Local Arrangements

### The Strategic Partnership Board

The new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (2022) requires specified authorities to agree the local partnership model for discharging the serious violence duty and its geographical area. Locally, the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB), which also provides the governance for the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), will be the model for discharging the duty at an area-wide level (e.g. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland). The purpose of the SPB is to:

*“provide the system leadership and strategic coordination necessary to prevent and reduce harm across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR)”*




## Strategic Partnership Board Membership

- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Leicestershire Police
- Integrated Care Board
- Leicester City Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Rutland County Council
- District Councils (Charnwood, North West Leicestershire, Hinckley and Bosworth, Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Harborough, Melton).
- School Headteachers x 2
- HMP Leicester
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue
- East Midlands Ambulance Service
- University Hospital Leicester
- Turning Point (substance misuse provider)
- Community Leaders x 2
- Probation Service
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire
- Active Together

The Board focuses on areas of harm which necessitate a system-level response such as substance misuse, public place serious violence, child criminal exploitation, domestic and sexual violence, serious organised crime and modern slavery. Membership comprises of chief and senior officer representation from a range of sectors and organisations many of which are duty holders in relation to the serious violence duty and other statutory duties including Prevent, Modern Slavery and Serious Organised Crime. The Board is supported by three sub-board organised along the lines of the different levels of prevention; the Prevention and Early Intervention Board, the Adolescence Safety and Diversion Board and the Adult Vulnerability and Offending Board.

It will be the SPB that is formally responsible for the production of the area-wide Strategic Needs Assessment and the joint Strategy. These will be prepared by the VRN

central team on behalf of the partnership including the coordination of co-production events to ensure all partners, including schools, are given the opportunity to shape the strategy.

 [Read the VRN's current Preventing Serious Violence Strategy](#)

 [Get involved by contacting the VRN](#)

## Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are based at local authority level so have a more local footprint than the Strategic Partnership Board. In preparation for the serious violence duty section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act was amended to mandate CSPs to have serious violence as an explicit priority in their strategies and plans.

CSPs were established in 1998 and are made up of the 'responsible authorities' which are the same as those who are serious violence duty holders (e.g. police, local authority, health, fire and rescue and probation). These partners are required to work together to develop and implement strategies to protect their local communities from crime and to help people feel safe including in relation to w antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse, re-offending and now serious violence.

The membership of CSPs is now much broader than the responsible authorities and schools are encouraged to make links with their local CSP. In 2023-24, locality-based violence profiles will be developed, which will be of interest to schools, and the CSP will be developing their strategies to include relevant violence prevention activity.


## Safeguarding Children Partnerships

The Duty is clear that partners should make use of existing partnerships to discharge the duty, including local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships given the parallels between safeguarding and violence affecting children and young people. Schools should continue to engage in these partnerships to fulfil their statutory duties.

There is now a recognition within safeguarding practice that as children enter and transition through adolescence, they are exposed to harm outside of the


## Community Safety Partnerships

- Leicester City CSP
- Safer Rutland Partnership
- Blaby, Hinckley and Bosworth CSP
- Charnwood CSP
- Harborough CSP
- Safer Melton Partnership
- Safer North West Leicestershire Partnership
- Oadby and Wigston CSP

 [Find out more](#)

## 'Harm Outside the Home' Website

Safeguarding partners from across the East Midlands have produced a resources website for professionals.


 [Access the website](#)

home including exploitation, street-based violence, abuse and violence within their own romantic relationships and sexual harassment and abuse. To adequately safeguard adolescents a wider partnership is required which includes partners, including parents and communities, who are present in these contexts and therefore

play a role in keeping children and young people safe.

## The Role of Partners in Preventing Violence

As is the case with schools, partner organisations also have specific (and shared) roles to play in preventing and reducing serious violence. The VRN is supporting partner organisations to understand their role within the local framework for violence prevention including identifying the risk and protective factors that they are in a position to reduce and increase respectively. A summary of this work will be provided to all partners once completed. The statutory guidance for the serious violence duty also provides guidance for each relevant sector and organisation which highlights the different roles they can play.

 [Find out more about the Serious Violence Duty](#)

Importantly, the most effective violence prevention strategies require data and information sharing between partners and the development of multi-agency, cross-sector collaborations which meet the needs of children, young people and families holistically. Some examples of these are provided later in this section.

## Involving Communities

One of the VRN's core principles and the cornerstone of a public health approach is to empower everyone, including young people and communities, to play a role in preventing violence. In this approach communities are part of the partnership. As schools are often located in the heart of the

neighbourhoods in which their pupils reside, collaborating with communities can be particularly beneficial for all parties.

Communities play a central and invaluable role in violence prevention for several reasons including:

- Communities possess the knowledge about their own context including local resources, strengths, challenges and cultural norms. This local knowledge is essential for understanding violence in the local area and developing effective violence prevention strategies which are relevant and acceptable to communities.
- A participatory approach fosters community engagement, builds trust, increases the capacity of communities and is more likely to be sustainable. The efforts school's make inside the school gates are more likely to be effective if they are supported and enhanced through parallel activity in a pupil's local community.
- Communities-based groups and organisations are often in an ideal position to reach and support children and young people through a range of different activities which reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors. They are much more likely to have a presence in the community contexts in which children may be risk and if equipped with knowledge and skills, are in a position to ensure their safety.

## Working in Partnership

Schools will already have partnership arrangements in place which can be adapted and used to strengthen violence prevention activity. For schools considering strengthening their collaboration with partners, there are several ways of achieving this with some local relevant examples of how schools can work with partners to prevent violence and other types of harm.

**Involving communities and partner organisations in decision-making:** Schools can provide opportunities for community members and practitioners from partner agencies to influence the design and delivery of violence prevention activity. This could be through engaging with community groups or inviting community members to consultation events at the school.

**Collaborating with other schools:** Schools could collaborate with other schools to work together on or share resources and good practice in violence prevention. This could involve participating in community-wide initiatives or simply offering peer support in relation to obstacles or new issues.


**Referring students and families to community services and partner agencies:**

Schools can collaborate with community and partner organisations by making referrals and encouraging students to access community-based support such as youth centres and positive activities delivered by community groups.

**Using data and combined partnership resources to problem-solve:** Often problems relating to violence affecting children and young people require multi-agency and community problem-solving. A benefit of the data driven public health approach is that it identifies where there are particular issues which require a specific response. This is the case with the after-school peak in violence referred to in Section One. Schools and community partners who

**VRN School's Network**

Schools sign-up to attend the VRN Schools Network to receive regular updates on local violence prevention activity and share good practice.

 **Sign up with the VRN**

identify this issue within their area can pursue partnership problem-solving activity which promotes shared ownership and generates collective responses. Re-visiting the data at the point of review can also confirm if the partnership activity has had the desired impact.

**Utilising information provided by partners to support and protect children:**

Partner organisations often have information or insights which are highly relevant to a child or young person's life and may affect how they are in school. Effective violence prevention involves sharing data and other information between partners with the aim of prevention and safeguarding. Under the serious violence duty this will become increasingly important in relation to some of the known risk factors which, if mitigated, can prevent poorer outcomes which children may have otherwise experienced.

**Partnering with community and/or partner organisations:** Schools can collaborate with community groups to offer joint activities such as awareness-raising sessions, after-school clubs, positive activities and tailored sessions in the event of an incident or raised concerns in an area.


**Enabling communities and partner organisations to access school spaces:**

Schools can link with the community and other local organisations by offering

**Leicester City Council**

**Detached Youth Work**  
Aims to deliver informal education to young people about ASB and crime, and signpost them to positive activities in their community.


**Targeted Youth Support**  
One to one support for young people in need of extra support (e.g. with staying in school or college, getting or keeping a job, building confidence).

 [Find out more](#)

**Leicestershire County Council**

**IMPACT**  
For young people out in the community who may be involved in ASB. Street-based youth workers identify the needs of the group and tailor activities accordingly.


**Enhanced Youth Support**  
Youth worker offers support and guidance on issues affecting the young person (e.g. CCE, CSE, mental ill-health, NEET) for up to six months.

 [Find out more](#)

**Rutland County Council**

**Open Access Youth Clubs**  
The Youth Service runs a variety of youth clubs offering a safe space for young people, fun and education activities, and a sexual health service.

**Mentoring Programme**  
Youth workers offer one-to-one support to young people with a variety of issues. Involves meeting on a regular basis to help young people achieve their goals.

 [Find out more](#)

## Operation Encompass

All Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland schools work in partnership with Leicestershire Police to identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced a traumatic incident; this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

The purpose of Operation Encompass is to share information to safeguard and support children and young people who have been involved in or witness to a domestic abuse incident, reported missing from home or Police felt there was another concern for the child. We know from research that domestic abuse and other traumatic experiences can impact on children in various ways including physical injury, emotional distress, lateness or absenteeism from school and other behavioural changes.

The aim of sharing this information with local schools is to allow 'Key Adults' to provide silent tailored support that allows them to remain in a safe but secure familiar environment. Those teachers that know the child best will then identify any changes in their behaviour and whilst providing the support may also complete referrals to the appropriate services.

Police Safeguarding share police information of all domestic incidents, missing episodes and Child Concerns reports with the three local authorities who in turn disseminate this information with school based Designated Safeguarding Lead(s). On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the child/young person requires.


Leicestershire Police are also working closely with the national Operation Encompass founders to bring information in respect of wider trauma to schools; outside of the traditional domestic abuse, Missing Person and Child Concern definition. School will be provided with further information in due course.

school premises for community activities and events outside of school hours. This could include adult education, sports and recreation sessions or community meetings, and is likely to help engage the wider community's support for the school. It is also likely to increase pupil's access to after-school activity increasing their safety and in turn ensuring they are able to stay engaged in education.

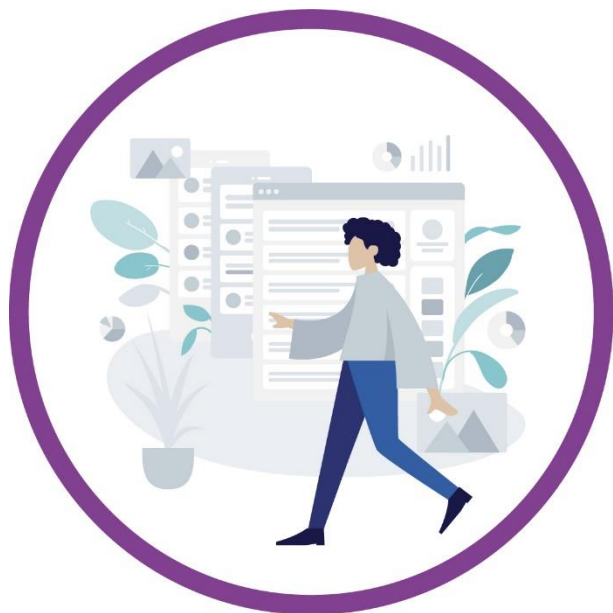
**Training and professional development:** Schools can work with community groups and partner organisations to provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers and staff members which help them to identify and address the needs of at-risk or violence involved students.

## Supporting Families affected by Parental Imprisonment

The VRN partnership have collaborated to raise awareness about the potentially negative impact that parental imprisonment can have on children families. Having a family member in prison is a known Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) which can lead to range of negative outcomes including in relation to attendance at school, educational attainment and later involvement in crime. The group have designed and are now delivering on-line Hidden Sentence training which seeks to raise awareness and equip professionals with the skills to support children and families and thereby mitigate the potentially negative impacts.

 [Access the training](#)

# Section 6: Reviewing Progress and Evaluating Impact



## Introduction

As mentioned throughout this handbook, data, evidence and evaluation are core components of a public health approach to preventing violence involving children and young people. Having evidence-based responses isn't enough; we need to know if what we're doing is working. Evaluation matters because it helps us to understand how our policies, procedures and programmes are being implemented and whether they are effective and cost-efficient. As a partnership, we are committed to sharing learning and to the continual improvement of our interventions, services and strategies to ensure that they're benefiting those most in need.

## The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential process in the implementation of any strategy or project. It involves adopting a systematic approach to measuring and assessing the progress and effectiveness against intended outcomes. There are a number of reasons why it is important to embed monitoring and evaluation within your work, including:

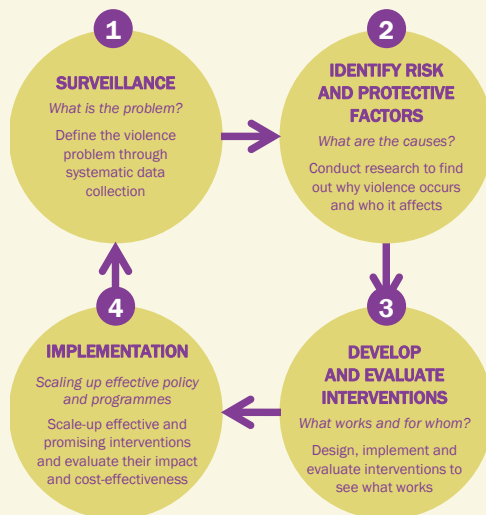
- **Learning and improvement:** Monitoring and evaluation provides evidence of what does and doesn't work in the implementation of a particular strategy or programme. This helps to identify areas for improvement and to learn from successes and failures.
- **Evidence-based decision-making:** Monitoring and evaluation generates data and evidence which can inform decision-making at all levels of an organisation. It provides a basis for making informed decisions about programme design and implementation strategies (e.g. whether to scale up or to stop delivering an activity).
- **Resource allocation:** Monitoring and evaluation can help to prioritise resources and allocate them to the most effective and efficient activities.

As such, monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensuring that your strategy for violence prevention is effective, efficient, and achieves the intended outcome which is to safeguard young people from harm.

## Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation

Following the World Health Organisation's four step process to violence prevention will help to ensure that the strategy and approaches that you develop are evidence-based.

As shown in the visual to the right, the third step in the process is to implement and evaluate the work that you're undertaking. The following provides an overview of the key steps that schools can take to achieve a systematic process for monitoring and evaluation:



### 1. Define the Outcomes

The first step is to decide on a set of outcomes that you expect your activities to lead to. One of the most effective ways of identifying your intended outcomes is through the development of a Theory of Change. A Theory of Change is essentially a 'road map' which links activities to intended short- and longer-term outcomes. You should draw upon all available data (see Section 2) and the evidence-base (see Section 3) to articulate why these activities are needed and how you expect them to lead to these outcomes.

**The Early Intervention Foundation provides guidance on developing a Theory of Change**

Some examples of outcomes include:

- Reducing the number of incidents of physical assault on students and teachers
- Reducing the number of suspensions or exclusions
- Increase in students accessing support
- Increasing students' awareness of bystander approaches

### 2. Develop Indicators

The next step involves identifying a set of outcome indicators that will help you to understand whether your violence prevention activities have been effective.

Outcome indicators are measures which can be collected on a regular basis to assess progress towards achieving your outcomes. It is useful to have a mix of performance indicators which measure change across a range of short and longer-term outcomes including attitudinal and behaviour change amongst students. Examples of indicators linked to the outcomes above include:

- The number of physical assaults reported by students and teachers
- The number of suspensions and exclusions and the reasons for these
- The number of referrals to support services and the number of students accessing them
- Understanding of bystander approaches and confidence in applying them

### 3. Collecting and Analysing the Data

Collecting data on the indicators is the next step that schools can take to evaluate the effectiveness of the violence prevention activity. Existing monitoring information collected by your school is a key source of data for outcome indicators (see the list of data sources in Section 2). These are often collected on a routine basis using a standardised approach (e.g. recording exclusions or attendance).

Another useful source of information is through school-level surveys and

**The INSPIRE Indicator Guidance and Results Framework has been designed to help organisations – such as schools – monitor progress and track change over time to prevent violence involving children and young people**

**The VRN can support you in conducting an outcome evaluation in terms of what data to collect or how to analyse it. This could also include putting you in touch with an independent evaluator who has the expertise to support your evaluation.**

interviews or focus groups which are administered annually or prior to and after an activity. As mentioned in Section 2, involving students and parents/carers in violence prevention activities – including evaluations – is good practice and can help to evidence attitudinal changes linked to outcomes (e.g. understanding and confidence-levels).

Once all the relevant data have been collected, you should analyse it to assess whether the violence prevention activity is achieving the intended outcomes and the extent to which progress has been made. The analysis should be conducted based upon the indicators that were developed as part of step 2 (e.g. comparing the number of suspensions recorded in the academic year before the activity started with the number recorded in the year after implementation).

#### 4. Review and Revise the Activity

The final step in monitoring and evaluating your activity is to review the findings from the analysis of data (both administrative data and qualitative insights from staff, students and parents/carers) and revise your strategy or programme based upon this.

Based upon the analysis, you should consider the following questions about the violence prevention activity:

- What is working well?
- What is working less well?
- What are the key barriers?
- How could it be improved?

The evidence generated on the progress and effectiveness should be used to revise the violence prevention activity. This will help to ensure that the activity is evidence-informed and tailored to the specific needs of the school and students. Importantly, these discussions should involve representation from all relevant stakeholders including senior leaders, teachers, students, parents/carers and partners (where relevant).

Monitoring and evaluating violence prevention activities in schools requires a systematic approach which involves defining outcomes, developing indicators, collecting and analysing data, identifying strengths and weaknesses, revising the activity, and repeating the process. By following this approach, schools

can continuously improve their violence prevention activities and create a safe and supportive learning environment for their students.

# Useful Links

## Further Reading

[Youth Violence Commission Final Report \(2020\)](#)

[Commission on Young Lives Report: Hidden in Plain Sight \(2022\)](#)

[Crest Advisory Report: Violence and Vulnerability \(2021\)](#)

[Young Minds: Addressing Adversity \(2018\)](#)

[Youth Endowment Fund: Children, Violence & Vulnerability Research Report \(2022\)](#)

[Crest Advisory Report: Education Inclusion \(2021\)](#)

[HM Government: Preventing youth violence and gang involvement – Practical advice for schools and colleges](#)

[Early Intervention Foundation Guidebook](#)

[Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit](#)

[Early Intervention Found: Ten Steps to Evaluation Success](#)

## References

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[Hanson, E and Holmes, D \(2014\). That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risks in adolescence: Evidence Scope. Research in Practice](#)

[Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership \(2022\) Delivering Violence Reduction Learning in Schools with External Partners](#)

[World Health Organisation \(2011\). The ecological framework: World Health Organization](#)

[World Health Organisation \(2019\) School Based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook](#)



# Contact Details

If you have any questions in relation to this handbook or would like to find out more about the Violence Reduction Network, you can contact us at:

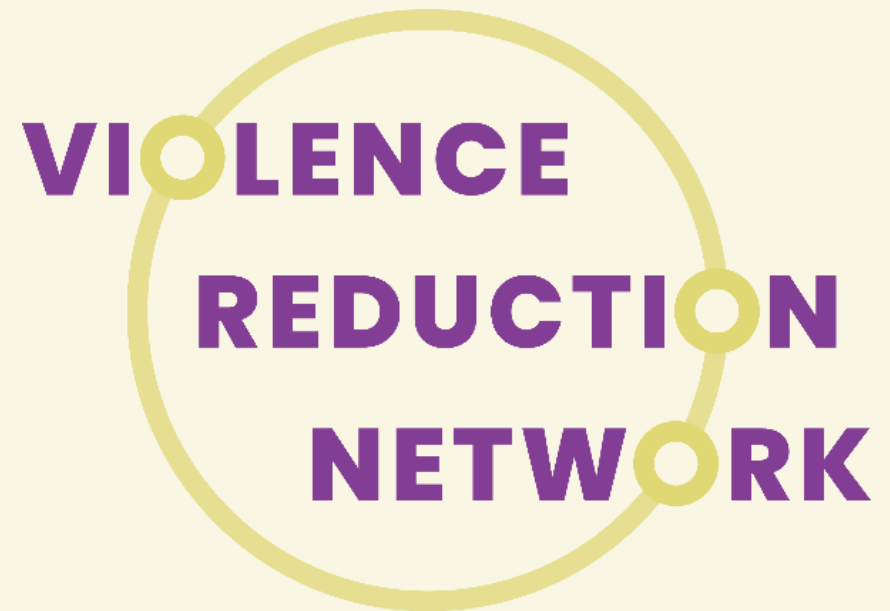
[vrn@leics.pcc.pnn.gov.uk](mailto:vrn@leics.pcc.pnn.gov.uk)

You can also find details of our work at:

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

You can keep up-to-date with VRN developments at:

[@VR\\_Network](https://twitter.com/VR_Network)



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