

The Phoenix Programme – Helping Young People to Rise

We recently launched an all new intervention – The Phoenix Programme – funded by the [Youth Endowment Fund](#) (YEF). This is an evidence-based intervention designed to address our local serious violence problem. It seeks to reduce harm by working with those who are linked to networks of criminality such as Urban Street Gangs and Organised Crime Groups.

The programme is based on a tried and tested approach known elsewhere as ‘Focused Deterrence’. The approach was pioneered in Boston (USA) in the mid-1990s to address an escalation in serious violence and later used effectively in Glasgow in 2008 to tackle the city’s gang-related violence problem. In cities around the world, this approach has [reduced crime by an average of 33%](#).

While Leicester and Leicestershire remain relatively safe places to live, data shows that a small group of young people and adults, who are connected through their involvement in crime, are driving the local serious violence problem. Analysis shows that they have previously experienced trauma, victimisation and a range of challenging circumstances but are now causing harm to themselves, their associates and local communities. Evidence indicates this group requires a different approach which pro-actively secures their engagement and offers a swift, tailored and tangible package of intervention addressing the root causes of their involvement in violence.

The Phoenix Programme is delivered by a multi-agency, community-focused team involving Leicestershire Police, the Probation Service, the Youth Justice Service from both Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council, alongside Community Navigators recruited from local communities by delivery partner, Ingeus. with support from a wide-range of local groups and organisations.

The Programme delivery team, offers young people (participants) tailored and tangible support to

change their lives across a wide range of areas. They work collaboratively with participants, building trusting relationships and securing swift access to tailored and credible support such as mentoring, concrete education, training and employment opportunities, mental health services, housing advice and other services and community-based provision that address underlying issues in their lives and enables them to build a more positive future. The consequences of continued involvement in violence are clearly communicated with participants from the outset and the team are pro-active, creative and persistent in their approach towards engaging young people on the programme.

Please contact us if you would like to hear more about the programme and explore how we can collaborate to make our communities safer for everyone.

[Find out more](#)



VRN Holds National Conference on Serious Violence

In July we welcomed policy-makers, practitioners and academics from across the UK to share new research insights and best practice on preventing and reducing violence.

The conference, held in conjunction with the [Home Office](#) and [University of Leicester](#), coincided with the recent implementation of the Serious Violence Duty which requires specified agencies across England and Wales to work together to develop public health strategies aimed at preventing and reducing violence. More than 130 professional attended the 'Serious Violence: Research and Evaluation Conference', held at College Court in Leicester, to share learning on effective approaches to understanding the local problem of serious violence, delivering evidence-informed responses and evaluating effectiveness.

Following a warm welcome from DCC David Sandall, the day began with a Plenary session – chaired by the VRN's Director Grace Strong – where keynote speakers Neil Round (Home Office), Prof Iain Brennan (University of Hull), Levin Wheller (Cabinet Office), and Dr Alex Sutherland (Research and Evaluation Expert) focused on progress, challenges and future priorities in relation to serious violence policy, public health approaches, researching serious violence and evaluation.

Attendees then heard from a range of experts from across the UK including the Home Office, Youth Endowment Fund, Violence Reduction Units, Universities, research agencies and police forces. With 9 different discussion sessions taking place throughout the day, key areas covered included:

- Insights from recent research on the nature, extent and distribution of serious violence, along with the causes and drivers of serious violence.
- New and innovative approaches to preventing or reducing serious violence including bystander interventions and sport programmes.
- The importance of evaluation and different approaches to assessing effectiveness.



We'll be sharing downloadable slides from each of the panel sessions that took place on the day on the Resources area of the VRN website.

[Find out more](#)

Out Now – The VRN Annual Report

Each year we publish an Annual Report to provide an update on the progress of the Network to date and plans for the future.

The 2022–2023 report highlights just a few of the key achievements of the VRN central team and of the wider Network of communities, groups and organisations in delivering on the priorities set out in the [Response Strategy](#).

The report provides an overview of the VRN, the breadth of the Network and the impact it's had to date on serious violence against the four key strategic priorities of Leadership and Cultural Change, Data, Evidence and Evaluation, Prevention, and Criminal Justice and Enforcement.



[Find out more](#)

An Update from the Community Oversight Group

Our Community Oversight Group (COG) has met a number of times in the past quarter and continues to directly influence and scrutinise the VRN's interventions and projects.

Consisting of eight members from the community who have a direct and/or indirect experience of violence, over the last few months the COG has:

- Reflected on potential challenges with the Phoenix Programme and provided feedback on how we can overcome these.
- Reviewed the Community Partnership Framework, co-produced from the start with communities, and provided insights to ensure the framework is relevant.
- Helped us to better understand how we can improve our data and knowledge sharing with communities.

We look forward to continuing to work together throughout 2023 and into 2024 and will provide further progress updates as a regular feature of the VRN Newsletter. We'll also remind you of the next round of applications when they open early next year.



[Find out more](#)

Fresh Faces in the Central VRN Team

We're thrilled to introduce you to two new team members. Please welcome Millie and Kulsum to the Violence Reduction Network.

Millie joined the team in May as our new Programme Manager and is responsible for overseeing all of our interventions and our Provider Network. Millie brings a wealth of experience to the Team having previously been the long term Manager of [Juniper Lodge](#) (Sexual Assault Referral Centre).



In addition to Millie, we also have a brand new Business Support Officer Kulsum. Kulsum joined us in June and whilst she works very closely with Millie, our Programme Manager, she also supports every member of the VRN team and the wider Violence Reduction Network. Some of you may recognise Kulsum as she has previously worked with Victim First.

Both have been out and about meeting the wider Network in recent weeks and you're sure to be seeing more of them at Network events throughout the year.

[Find out more](#)

Useful Resources

Following on from the success of the Serious Violence: Research and Evaluation Conference you'll soon be able to download presentation slides and recordings from all of the panel sessions within the Resources area of the VRN website.

[See more](#)