



**VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
NETWORK**

**Serious Violence
Prevention Strategy
Leicester, Leicestershire
& Rutland**

2023–2028

**#PreventionThroughConnection
@VR_Network
www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk**

*Reviewed and updated January 2025

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Introduction

Background

In September 2019, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and local Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) established the Violence Reduction Network (VRN) with the aim of strengthening our local response to preventing and reducing serious violence across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The VRN's core function is to offer leadership and provide strategic co-ordination of the local response to serious violence (↗).

Violence has devastating and long-lasting impacts on individuals, families and wider communities. Importantly though, the VRN partnership believes that violence is preventable. With the causes of violence being multiple and complex and the solutions lying across the system, the VRN is a wide alliance of communities, organisations and partnerships who all share a common vision and mission.

Vision

We believe 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.

Mission

Our mission is to achieve '**prevention through connection**' by building an inclusive, collaborative and courageous network which will drive the short and long-term change required to successfully tackle the causes and consequences of violence.



In January 2023, the Serious Violence Duty was introduced, placing a statutory responsibility on several of the core members of the VRN to work together and take effective coordinated action to prevent serious violence. As part of the Serious Violence Duty, these Specified Authorities* must:

- Agree a local partnership model (and its geographical area) for discharging the duty
- Agree a local definition of serious violence
- Work together to produce a local Strategic Needs Assessment
- Work together to develop, publish and implement a strategy outlining the multi-agency response to serious violence

Our partnership is in a strong position to deliver on the Serious Violence Duty due to our collective involvement in and commitment to the VRN and the progress made to date. This was highlighted by the recent Joint Readiness Assessment (2023) conducted by Crest Advisory on behalf of the Home Office which found that we are 'Mature, Demonstrating Best Practice' in relation to the core requirements of the Duty.

Following a change in Government in 2024, the Home Secretary has announced the introduction of the Young Futures Programme. Under this programme all areas will be expected to introduce Prevention Partnerships to ensure children and young people most vulnerable to harms such as violence and exploitation are identified and receive prevention-focused intervention. The VRN partnership will be instrumental in ensuring these are established locally and the central VRN team will provide capacity and expertise to support their development given their relevance to our vision, mission and delivery of this strategy.

Our Definition

For the first four years of its work, the VRN has focused on preventing public place serious violence. However, the local definition has now been extended to:

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

Whilst this strategy focuses principally on the definition outlined above, we remain committed to preventing and reducing all forms of violence recognising that they are inter-connected including sharing common causes and consequences for individuals, families and communities. To reflect this broad view of violence, our partnership also embraces the WHO broader definition of violence:

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

(World Health Organization, 2002)

Behaviours such as bullying, intimidation, coercion, exploitation, physical, sexual and emotional violence and abuse fall within our definition. Our partnership will continue to connect the dots between different types of violence when pursuing preventative strategies and activities.

*As defined in section 11 of Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act, the Specified Authorities are the Police, Justice (including Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams), Fire and Rescue, Health (including Integrated Care Boards), and Local Authorities.



This Strategy

This is a five year Strategy which sets out the LLR-wide strategic approach to preventing serious violence. It builds on the VRN's previous Response Strategy (2020-23) and sets out the collective action that partners will take to enhance and compliment core business.

Based on the findings of the VRN's previous and latest Strategic Needs Assessment (7) it explains how as a partnership we are adopting a public health approach, using data and evidence to understand serious violence and its root causes, designing and implementing evidence-informed responses, and evaluating impact.

As a partnership we will adhere to the common approach and principles when developing internal and multi-agency policy and practice to ensure that it is consistent with the evidence-base and makes a positive and effective contribution to our local violence prevention system.

The Strategy then sets out seven inter-connected priorities. These priorities have been informed by well-established and evidence-based violence prevention strategies, and co-developed with the VRN partnership since its establishment.

The seven priorities are:

1. Providing collaborative and courageous leadership
2. Using data and evidence to improve and understand the effectiveness of our collective work
3. Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments
4. Building protective and cohesive communities
5. Providing safe and inclusive education
6. Connecting children and young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults
7. Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery to lessen future harm

Finally, our approach to monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation are outlined, along with the mechanisms which we use to share learning within and beyond our local area.

Co-Production

We know that when strategies and services are co-produced they are more relevant and responsive to local needs. The VRN partnership has a track-record of adopting an approach which is collaborative, open and inclusive when designing and delivering its work. This Strategy has been developed by the VRN core members/duty holders, with support from the VRN central team, and after consultation with the wider partnership, including:

- Co-production workshops with primary and secondary schools, alternative provision and further education establishments.
- Co-production workshops with prisons located within our area.
- A co-production event with voluntary and community organisations across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
- Consultation events with children, young people and community members including the VRN's Community Oversight Group which comprises of people who come from local areas with high rates of serious violence and/or have been directly involved with the criminal justice system.

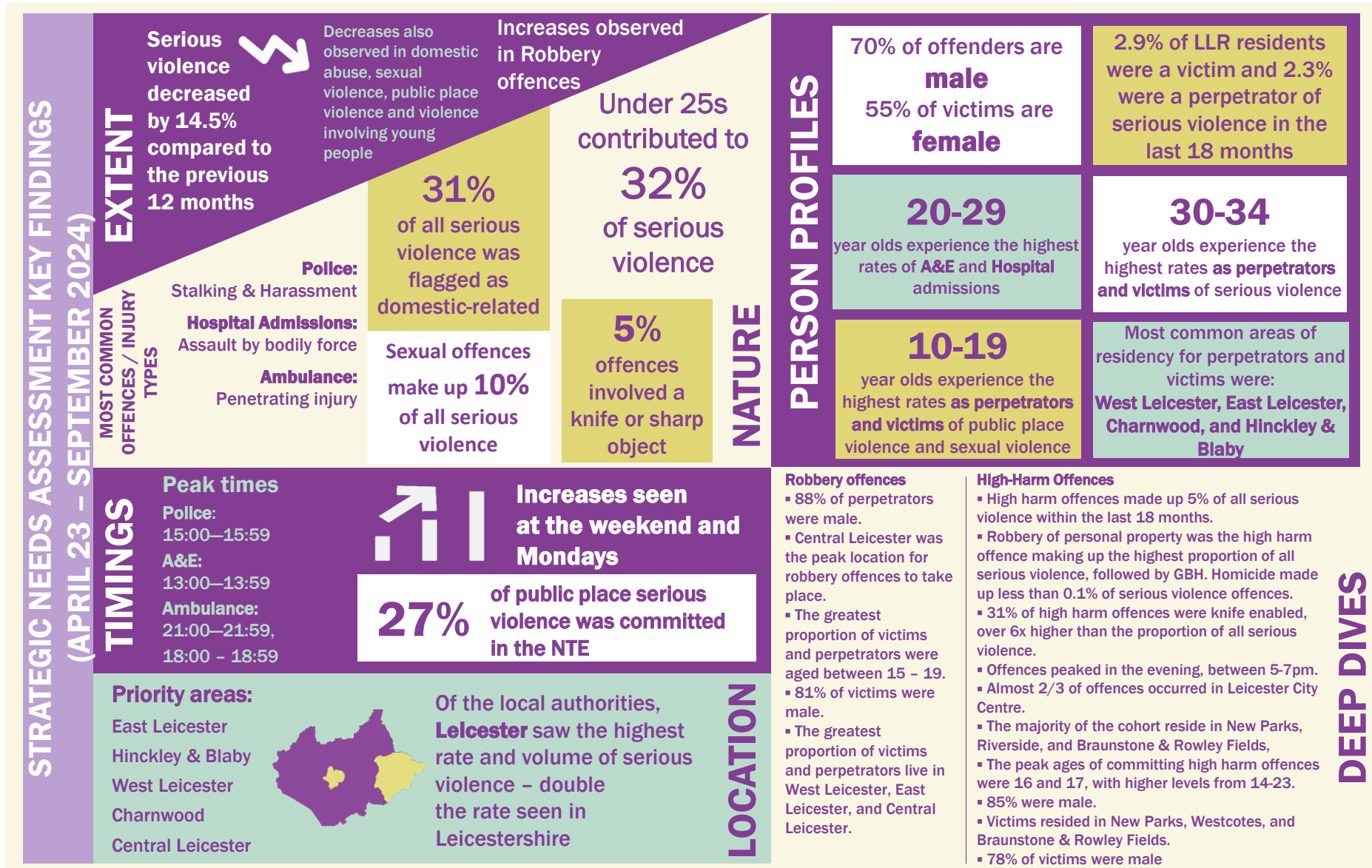
As highlighted in the section on our partnership, we will continue to consult with and involve children and young people, communities and Relevant Authorities in the implementation, reviews and evaluation of the Strategy.



Our Local Serious Violence Problem

In order to identify our local serious violence issues and the drivers, we have worked together to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) which draws upon multi-agency data to improve our local understanding of the types, distribution and extent of serious violence across LLR and identify those who are most vulnerable to being involved and/or affected.

The following infographic provides a high-level summary of the key findings from the SNA:



*Reviewed and updated January 2025

Our Local Serious Violence Problem

As a partnership, we should be prioritising activities which enable us to tackle our local serious violence issues. Based upon the findings identified in the Strategic Needs Assessment, this should include:



Reducing the number of children and young people who are affected by higher harm serious violence, including in relation to robbery and the carrying and use of weapons.



Reducing rates of sexual violence amongst children and young people.



Preventing and mitigating the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people



Reducing the prevalence of domestic-abuse related serious violence, particularly stalking and harassment.



Reducing the scale of serious violence taking place after-school and in the night-time economy.



Reducing serious violence in communities within East, West and Central Leicester and Hinckley & Blaby and Charnwood in the County.



Reducing the presence of criminal networks and drug-related activity within communities with high rates of serious violence.



Reducing the number of repeat offences committed by perpetrators of serious violence and related offences.



Reducing the prevalence of known risk factors (e.g. neurodiversity, absenteeism, unsafe family and community environments, and alcohol use) amongst children, young people and adults at-risk of or involved in serious violence.

Our Approach

A Public Health Approach

A public health approach provides a framework to help us understand and respond effectively to serious violence across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The VRN partnership has embedded the public health approach within our principles and processes, and we routinely follow the World Health Organization four step process when designing services and interventions aimed at preventing violence (see diagram below).

We know that the causes of violence are wide-ranging, complex and inter-related, and, therefore, effective prevention requires a comprehensive and coordinated whole system approach. In recognition that violence can manifest differently and have distinct causes and consequences at different life stages, our multi-agency response should span the life course and

address individual, relationship, community and societal risk factors, providing prevention opportunities in the spaces in which people live, work and socialise.

Importantly, we should continuously seek to increase our focus on prevention and early intervention to stop violence from happening in the first place, thereby reducing the multiple and far-reaching human, economic and societal impacts of violence. Evidence shows that there is considerable overlap between the risk and protective factors for different forms of violence including violence involving young people, domestic abuse and sexual violence (CDC, 2014). Therefore, our work to prevent or mitigate the onset of risk factors and strengthen protective factors has the potential to reduce multiple types of violence and abuse.



The four steps of a public health approach to violence prevention (World Health Organization, 2002)

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk Factors

Community & Wider Society

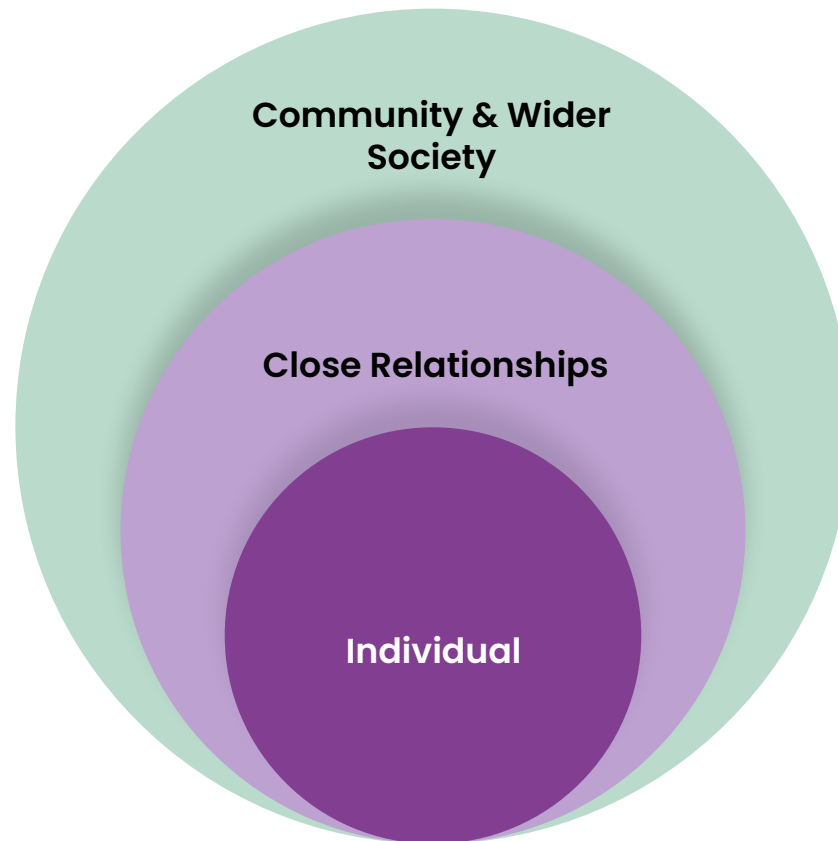
- Low social integration and poor social mobility
- Poor access to services
- Access to and misuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- Cultural and social norms supportive of violence
- Harmful gender norms
- Discrimination
- Deprivation

Close Relationships

- Exposure to violence
- Family conflict
- Economic stress
- Associating with delinquent peers
- Gang involvement
- Lack of nurturing relationships and environment

Individual

- Unemployment
- Low income
- Low educational achievement
- Brain injury
- Social isolation
- Neurodevelopmental Needs
- Substance use
- Low self-esteem
- Witnessing violence
- Mental health concerns
- Adverse childhood experiences



Protective Factors

Community & Wider Society

- Economic opportunities
- Community spaces designed to increase visibility, control, access, promote positive reactions and appropriate use
- Residents' willingness to assist each other, and collective views that violence is not acceptable
- Safe recreational areas and community environments
- Access to services and positive activities
- Safe and stable housing
- Community cohesion
- Meaningful employment and training opportunities

Close Relationships

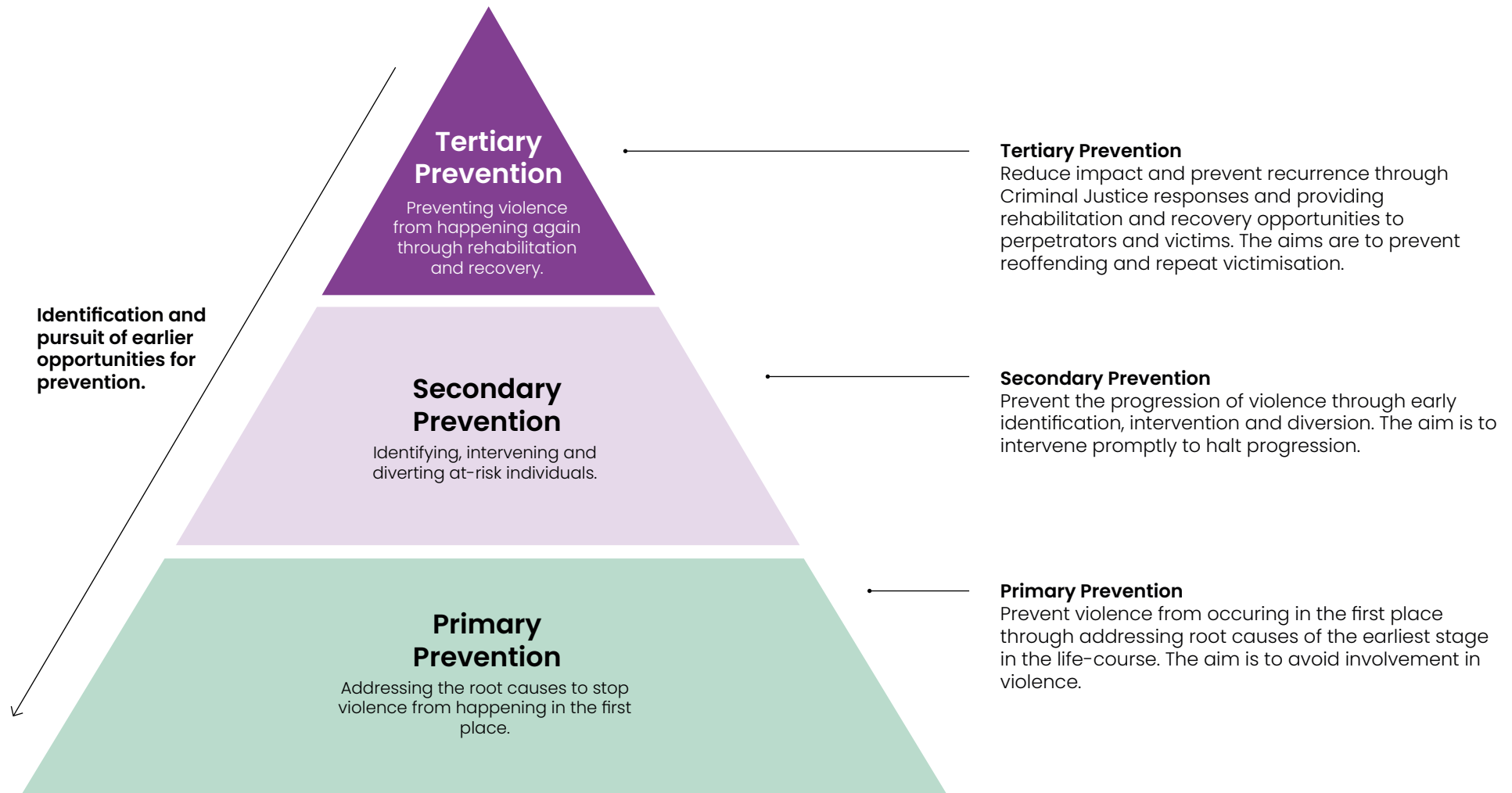
- Relationships with prosocial and non-violent peers
- Stable home environment
- Healthy relationships
- Family support

Individual

- Healthy problem-solving
- Emotional regulation skills
- Good communication skills

Adapted from Wales Violence Prevention Unit, 2023

Much like all public health issues, violence can be predicted and prevented, and there are opportunities for us to intervene at different stages across the life course to prevent the (re-)occurrence of violence. There are three key levels of prevention and as a partnership we will continuously operate across these levels to ensure that we address not only individual level risk factors but also those that occur within relationships and the wider community and societal context.



Our Core Principles

Aligning to the public health approach, we have developed and agreed seven core principles which will guide our collective efforts to prevent serious violence:

- 1. Empower everyone, including young people and communities, to play a role in preventing violence.** We will seek to widen involvement, particularly amongst those most affected by violence, so that solutions are more relevant, responsive and effective. We will also promote leadership amongst young people, communities and at all levels in organisations to build capacity and the reach of our work.
- 2. Secure maximum impact through maintaining a population focus and tackling inequalities.** When allocating resources and targeting prevention activity we will ensure this reaches the populations most at risk and impacts positively on reducing inequalities.
- 3. Ensure our work is evidence-based.** We will use data and insights and gather knowledge from a range of sources to improve our understanding of the nature and causes of violence locally and in shaping our responses. We will seek to share this knowledge across and beyond the Network so to promote a shared understanding and improve our collective effectiveness.
- 4. Adopt a life-course and trauma-informed approach.** We recognise that prevention holds the greatest potential if we invest in healthy child and adolescence development, actively support transitions and promote resilience in individuals, families and communities. We will seek to prevent violence at the earliest opportunity and within each developmental stage in life with a particular emphasis on early years development.
- 5. Promote whole-system thinking and action.** We will continuously seek to lead and collaborate across the whole system, promoting joint working, strengthening connections and problem-solving between agencies and within communities where challenges or barriers arise.
- 6. Add value and create sustainable solutions.** We will seek to strengthen existing structures and services wherever possible including investing in capacity and asset-building. We will invest

additional resource only where there are identified gaps and with a view to making the case for mainstream investment.

- 7. Commit to continuous learning and improvement.** We will assess the effectiveness and impact of our work including seeking stakeholder feedback, evaluating interventions and sharing learning across the local and national violence reduction and prevention networks.



Our Partnership

The Strategic Partnership Board

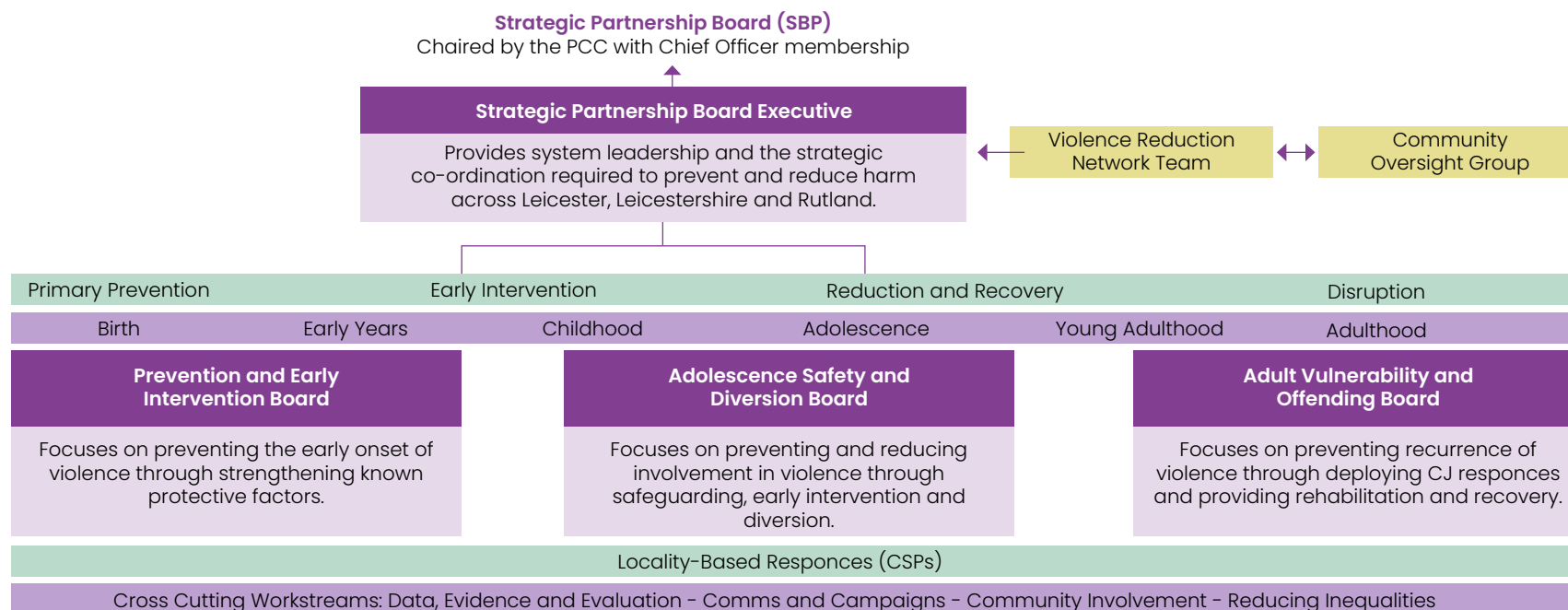
The Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) provides the local partnership model for discharging our responsibilities set out within the Serious Violence Duty at a system-level and for holding one another to account. The Violence Reduction Network (VRN) and its central team, which is governed by SPB, will continue to provide the vehicle through which the local partnership will collaborate in its work to prevent and reduce serious violence across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

This model includes strong links with place-based and locality-based organisations and partnerships, not least Community Safety Partnerships, to ensure that strategies and activity are tailored to the diverse needs of our populations.

The membership and Terms of Reference for SPB can be found here [\(↗\)](#)

The SPB Executive provides the ideal forum and governance for discharging the Duty as:

- Its purpose is to provide the system leadership and strategic coordination necessary to prevent and reduce harm across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR).
- Preventing and reducing serious violence is an existing Board priority and it has provided governance for the local Violence Reduction Network (VRN) since September 2019.
- Membership of the Board includes representation from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, all Specified and Relevant Authorities as well as the voluntary and community sector and community groups.
- It has the capability and combined authority to be able to monitor and respond to changes in the rates and volumes of serious violence locally as well as the known risk and protective factors.
- It has embedded the public health approach into its core principles and its sub-board structure.
- It has strong links with other relevant Boards including Safeguarding Boards, Health and Well-being Board, Locality-Based Domestic Abuse Boards the Leicestershire Strategic Community Safety Board and the Leicester City Community Safety Partnership.



Everyone has a role: our partnership has individual and shared responsibilities in preventing and reducing serious violence. Together these lay the foundations for a whole-system approach which is vital to the successful delivery of this Strategy.

Shared Responsibilities:

- Leading the delivery, review and evaluation of this Strategy
- Championing and pursuing our shared principles and approach
- Sharing and using data and evidence to improve responses
- Involving communities as partners
- Collaborating on multi-agency and cross-sector activity
- Jointly problem-solving to overcome barriers
- Understanding our impact through monitoring and evaluation

Youth Justice Services

Promoting a child-first approach and diverting children from the criminal justice system through early intervention and rehabilitation.

Probation Service

Protecting communities from future violence through managing adults on statutory orders and offering desistance-focused and rehabilitative services.

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner

Convening the partnership, supporting the delivery of this strategy, securing and distributing relevant funding, (co-) commissioning violence prevention activity and monitoring progress.

Local authorities

Contributing to safe and nurturing families and protective, resilient communities through commissioning and delivering a range of prevention, early intervention and protective services including early help, children's and adult's social care, housing, alcohol licensing, substance use, leisure, community safety and support services for victims.

Health

Commissioning and delivering a wide-range of physical and mental health services and interventions that address the causes and consequences of violence and the wider social determinants of health.

Police

Contributing to protective communities through neighbourhood policing, identifying and pursuing early intervention opportunities, protecting the vulnerable, and disrupting and reducing violence through the use of proactive and reactive tactics.

Children, Young People, Families and Communities

Strengthening responses through sharing insights and co-producing solutions, promoting healthy social norms, providing nurturing and safe environments.

VRN Central Team

Co-ordinating the delivery of the Strategy, leading on data, evidence and evaluation, providing capacity for new projects and workstreams, strengthening and extending the partnership, and delivering the communications plan.

Voluntary and Community Sector

Providing a wide-range of generic and specialist community-based provision which supports healthy childhoods, safe and nurturing families and resilient communities.

Fire & Rescue Service

Engaging with local communities to promote safety, citizenship and cohesion, and delivering preventative interventions with young people.

Prisons

Developing safe regimes, protecting the public through restrictive measures and rehabilitative activities and preparing prisoners for release.

Community Safety Partnerships

Convening duty-holders at a local level and delivering evidence-based strategies and activities in response to local issues and needs.

Schools, Colleges and other Education Establishments

Providing high-quality education and creating safe and inclusive social and physical environments which enable children and young people to thrive.

Effective prevention requires all partners to work together and this includes communities. They play a particularly important role in preventing violence because:

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

The following principles will guide how we will work in partnership with communities on the delivery of this Strategy.

We will:

- **We will invest in relationships and work with communities as partners:** We will invest in creating meaningful, trusting, and reciprocal relationships with communities.
- **Involve communities most affected by violence:** We will actively seek the voices and involvement of those most affected by violence to involve in co-design and delivery where possible.
- **Adopt a creative, flexible, and adaptable approach:** We will do everything we can to empower communities to work in partnership with us through meeting diverse needs.
- **Be ambitious, courageous and promote change:** We will play our role in securing system-change by continuously developing and strengthening our approach.

OUR MISSION

Build an inclusive, collaborative and courageous network to secure the change required to prevent violence. Communities are core partners in our Network.



INFORM

Providing communities with the knowledge they need to play their part and keeping them informed about our work, available resources and forthcoming opportunities to get involved.



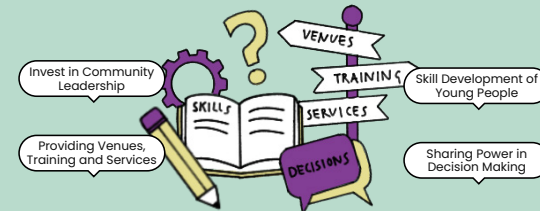
COLLABORATE

Co-producing with communities through involving them in the design, delivery and evaluation of violence prevention strategies and activity.



CONSULT

Seeking and drawing on the insights, views and expertise of communities to ensure our work is relevant and responsive.



EMPOWER

Enabling communities to secure change through investing in knowledge and skills and providing concrete opportunities in relation to decision-making and shaping and delivering services.

OUR IMPACT

- Improved understanding of violence
- Increased effectiveness of responses
- Increased reach of young people
- Increased feelings of safety
- Reductions in violence

Our Prevention Priorities

Our multi-agency response comprises of seven evidence-informed priorities which build on and extend the work undertaken by the VRN partnership to date.

These inter-connected priorities have been informed by the evidence-base, the findings of our Strategic Needs Assessment and the learning from previous VRN Response Strategies. The priorities have been developed in collaboration with the Specified and Relevant Authorities, and voluntary and community organisations, as well as insights from children, families and community members.

There is a wide-range of existing work being led by other partnerships and strategic boards which has relevance to these priorities including the work of the Health and Wellbeing Boards, Safeguarding Partnerships and the local Criminal Justice Board as well as other related SPB strategies and plans including the Combatting Drugs Strategy, the Serious and Organised Crime plan and the impending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. For this reason, the key areas of focus within each priority are those which strengthen and add value to wider work underway.

As mentioned earlier, we recognise the multiple forms of violence affecting communities and young people, and the links between these. Research highlights these connections, together with the common risk and protective factors and the importance of deploying strategies which simultaneously address the different ways in which violence manifests. It is therefore anticipated that by delivering the planned activity under each priority, there will be a positive impact on other forms of violence and vulnerability.

Over the coming pages, we provide a description of each priority along with the partnership's key areas of focus. Further detail on the activities that the partnership will pursue, including owners and timescales, are set out in an annual Delivery Plan.

- 1. Priority 1:** Providing collaborative and courageous leadership.
- 2. Priority 2:** Using data, evidence and evaluation to improve our response.
- 3. Priority 3:** Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments.
- 4. Priority 4:** Building protective and cohesive communities.
- 5. Priority 5:** Creating safe and inclusive education settings.
- 6. Priority 6:** Connecting young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults.
- 7. Priority 7:** Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery.

Priority One

Oversight Board for Priority 1:
Strategic Partnership Board Executive

Providing collaborative and courageous leadership

Leadership which reduces silo working and facilitates collaborative working across organisational and sector boundaries is key to tackling the root causes of serious violence and securing long-term impact.

As a partnership, we have a strong foundation of collaboration and have refreshed our Strategic Partnership Board structure so that we are better equipped to respond collectively to violence and vulnerability across the life course. By continuously strengthening our collaborative and courageous partnership we will be able to make a significant and sustained difference to lives of children, families and communities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Adopting a public health approach provides a framework for preventing violence but it is through system leadership and effective partnership that we will realise its benefits. A shared understanding and commitment to the key elements of this approach and a willingness to truly collaborate, including with communities as partners, will enhance our collective efforts to prevent violence.

Key areas of focus:

- Pursue the public health approach and tackle the root causes of violence through an increased focus on primary prevention strategies.
- Align and integrate partnership governance, commissioning, funding and prevention activity across inter-connected areas of policy and practice.
- Use our collective knowledge and voice to influence national policy relating to the drivers and societal causes of violence and vulnerability.
- Extend and strengthen our partnership through engaging new partners and empowering everyone to play a role.
- Challenge social and gender-based norms within organisations, families, and communities.
- Develop responsive, relevant and accessible communication and campaign strategies which span physical and digital environments.



Priority Two

Using data, evidence and evaluation to improve our response

Data, evidence and evaluation are central tenets of a public health approach to preventing violence. Effective prevention relies on understanding what our local serious violence problem is, what the key causes and drivers are and to inform the targeting of resource. We have developed a more comprehensive picture of our local issues through the Strategic Needs Assessments because of improved insight gathering, data sharing and collaboration across the partnership. However, there are still datasets that we have not secured, including in relation to identifying those most at risk and we need to extend and strengthen our insights work, particularly in relation to children and young people.

To give our collective work the best chance of success, we need to ensure that it is rooted in the growing body of evidence on 'what works' in preventing violence. As a partnership, we are committed to contributing to this evidence-base and to finding out if what we're doing is making a difference to the children, families and communities who are most in need. We will embed monitoring and evaluation within our collective work to ensure that we are generating learning which can be shared across and beyond our partnership to support continual improvement.

Key areas of focus:

- Develop and deliver a development plan for how we advance our use of multi-agency data with members of the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB).
- Ensure that data, insights and evidence informs strategic planning and commissioning activity.
- Improve how we use data to identify those children, young people and adults most at risk of involvement in violence and associated harm such as exploitation.
- Enhance how we gather and use insights and involve children, families and communities in all elements of our activity.
- Increase the use of evidence and the quality of monitoring and evaluation activity across the system.
- Develop more efficient and accessible ways of sharing knowledge within and across the partnership.



Priority Three

Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments

It is widely recognised that the family environment plays a critical role in influencing a child's emotional, physical and cognitive development, shaping the way in which they think and behave throughout their lives.

Evidence shows that children who grow up in homes which are characterised by instability, neglect or abuse, or who have experienced low levels of supervision or inconsistent and harsh disciplinary practices, are at greater risk of future involvement in violence. It is for this reason that one of our key prevention priorities is to support families to create and maintain a nurturing, stable and structured environment to support healthy development in children and young people.

Evidence-informed approaches related to this priority include providing support for parents in the early years through antenatal care, health visits, and local family hubs, affordable and accessible childcare, and parenting programmes which equip parents and carers with information and strategies to build an environment in which children can thrive.

Key areas of focus:

- Strengthen the prevention, early identification and mitigation strategies for childhood trauma and continue to develop a trauma-informed system across the partnership.
- Develop strategies and interventions to prevent domestic abuse and mitigate the impact on children and young people when it does occur.
- Equip parents and carers with knowledge and tools for them to play their part in preventing violence and vulnerability.
- Support professionals working with families in health, education and social care settings to understand the causes of violence and strengthen prevention focused practice.
- Strengthen the links between criminal justice responses and the opportunity to support families through early intervention.
- Support early years and early help provision to better target support for families at-risk of or experiencing violence and vulnerability.



Priority Four

Building protective and cohesive communities

Building protective and cohesive communities is an essential foundation for effective violence prevention. By communities, we are referring to defined populations with shared characteristics, or places where regular interaction takes place such as neighbourhoods, schools, youth or recreational clubs, online platforms, and local spaces (e.g. parks).

It is through community-level activity that we have an opportunity to address the features of community environments that are conducive to violence prevention. For instance, adapting physical and social environments through improved lighting, street cleaning and facilitating community events can make people feel safer and more connected.

We will also pursue opportunities to reduce children and young people's exposure to community-level risks. This includes limiting access to alcohol, drugs or weapons, and proactive policing operations such as hotspots policing or enforcement on criminal networks and their activities (e.g. County Lines). Finally, we will partner with communities on prevention activities because we know that when we do, our responses are more relevant, responsive and effective.

Key areas of focus:

- Invest in activities which support the development of collaborative leadership within and across communities.
- Equip communities with the knowledge and tools to play an active part in preventing violence.
- Develop and apply a shared model for community-based problem-solving to be deployed at a local level.
- Make evidence-informed adaptations to the physical environment.
- Create safe and inclusive spaces for groups most at risk.
- Pursue civil and criminal enforcement to tackle the drivers of violence and vulnerability.



Priority Five

Providing safe, inclusive and high quality education settings

Safe, inclusive and high quality education settings benefit children and young people in a number of ways; they support healthy social and emotional development, increase the chances that children will experience trusting and nurturing relationships, and improve life outcomes through academic and employment success.

The education sector provides a crucial contribution to our efforts to prevent violence locally. Schools (including alternative provision), colleges and universities have direct and regular contact with children and young people, providing teachers and other staff with invaluable opportunities to strengthen protective factors and reduce and/or mitigate the impact of risk factors associated with violence. Risk factors which are particularly relevant to education settings include absenteeism, exclusions, low education attainment, low self-esteem and bullying.

Education settings play a significant role in preventing violence locally through the provision of high quality education, the delivery of violence prevention activities within and beyond the curriculum, and through the creation of positive prosocial education environments.

Key areas of focus:

- Equip education establishments, including teaching staff and students, with the knowledge and tools to play their part in preventing violence.
- Improve multi-agency information sharing and joint working with children and young people at-risk of or affected by violence.
- Develop a shared school – community partnership approach to preventing violence and vulnerability.
- Pursue evidence-informed strategies and interventions which reduce education-related risk factors and strengthen protective factors.
- Support the implementation of curriculum and other school-based activities focusing on developing healthy relationships and positive social norms.



Priority Six

Connecting young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults

The risk of children and young people becoming involved in violence can be mitigated through the development of strong and stable connections with trusted adults including family members, teachers, youth workers, community members or coaches.

There are a myriad of ways in which trusted adults, and the opportunities and experiences that they can provide for children and young people, can support our violence prevention efforts. This includes acting as a positive role model by demonstrating acceptable and appropriate behaviours, providing emotional and practical support, and helping children and young people to navigate our complex support systems.

Importantly, trusted adults can support children and young people with the development of life, community and social skills by facilitating access to credible and purposeful activities. It is these positive interpersonal relationships and opportunities, and the benefits that they can bring in terms of improved education and employment outcomes, that can help to protect and divert children and young people from violence.

Key areas of focus:

- Equip 'trusted adults' with the knowledge and tools to play their role and empower, support and safeguard children and young people.
- Support the development of shared quality standards and a community of practice for cross-sector youth work.
- Improve the availability and quality of evidence-informed diversionary opportunities and interventions in reachable spaces.
- Increase opportunities for children and young people in volunteering, sports and physical activity and arts and culture within local communities.
- Provide concrete opportunities for children and young people to develop social and life skills within existing and new interventions.
- Empower and involve children and young people in all elements of the VRN's work including decision-making, and the design and delivery of violence prevention strategies and activities.



Priority Seven

Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery

While we will prioritise and proactively seek out opportunities for primary prevention and early intervention, a comprehensive whole system approach to prevention also includes responding effectively in the aftermath of violence.

Tertiary prevention is key to minimising the harm caused by violence because it can help victims to recover through the delivery of trauma-informed support services, which in turn, reduce the likelihood of involvement in future victimisation and perpetration. Furthermore, the visible and fair upholding of the law can provide reassurance and build confidence amongst victims, witnesses and communities.

Tertiary prevention also includes activity to rehabilitate those who have committed violence thereby supporting desistance. Our local criminal justice agencies – such as the police, prisons, youth justice and probation – and other relevant organisations have a pivotal role to play in delivering evidence-informed responses and interventions which address the drivers of criminality and prevent re-offending.

Key areas of focus:

- Strengthen timely and tailored support for victims, their families and wider communities.
- Design and deliver bespoke desistance-based programmes for people involved in violence
- Improve the continuity of support and intervention between the youth and adult justice system.
- Strengthen the provision and timeliness of specialist interventions for perpetrators across the pathways out of offending.
- Ensure responses are evidence-informed, tailored and culturally attuned to secure equity in rehabilitation and recovery outcomes.
- Increase whole-family and community-focused rehabilitation and recovery responses.



Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

As a partnership, we have made significant progress with data sharing. We have an information sharing agreement in place which provides a framework for the safe sharing of data and information to improve our collective understanding of serious violence. Accompanying this, we will develop a partnership data sharing plan which sets out the action that the Strategic Partnership Board will take to improve data quality, sharing and use in relation to all areas of harm.

Our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework outlines how we monitor our activities, outcomes and impacts, and how the evidence generated through monitoring and evaluation is used to implement, adapt and inform wider practice across and beyond the Network. This includes ensuring we monitor how violence and this strategy affects different parts of our population and impacts on inequalities. Our approach incorporates the following:

The Evidence Base

The VRN team will continue to support the partnership by seeking out and sharing emerging evidence on promising practice such as Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) Toolkit, the College of Policing's Toolkit and Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) Guidebook. We will undertake rapid evidence reviews to better understand 'what works' before commissioning or designing interventions. We will also pursue opportunities to collaborate with academics and What Works Centres, and commission research to address knowledge gaps amongst the partnership about our local serious violence issues and the drivers.

Local Datasets

As a partnership, we have made significant progress with data sharing. We have an information sharing agreement in place which provides a framework for the safe sharing of data and information to improve our collective understanding of serious violence.

Accompanying this, we will develop a partnership Data and Information Sharing Strategy which sets out the action that the Strategic Partnership Board will take to improve data quality, sharing and use in relation to all areas of harm.

Alongside improving access to data, we are also committed to improving the quality of our data outputs which will inform the work of the partnership. We have incorporated new datasets within our interactive dashboard so that it reflects the revised definition of serious violence. This will enable the Strategic Partnership Board to monitor local trends in serious violence and the drivers, and adapt their responses to tackle these issues.

The VRN team will use local data (such as ASB and crime, health, social care, education, substance use data) to monitor the impact that commissioned interventions are having on the local problem and causes of serious violence (see performance monitoring). We will also evaluate the impact that data sharing, such as the Injury Surveillance System, is having on rates and volumes of violence locally.

Performance Monitoring

As a partnership we will self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this Strategy and our commissioned services through our Strategic Partnership Board structure (see page 12). Our performance monitoring approach enables us to monitor the progress of this Strategy and our collective actions against the success measures outlined on the next page and in our Theory of Change (Appendix A). The VRN team will report progress against the Delivery Plan for this Strategy on a quarterly basis at the Strategic Partnership Board.

Local trends in serious violence and the prevalence of risk and protective factors will be monitored by the VRN team with quarterly reports provided to the SPB on a quarterly basis. CSPs have access to the Serious Violence Dashboard and analytical support to be able to monitor trends at a locality level.

We have implemented monitoring frameworks across VRN interventions and we analyse this data to learn more about the young people and families accessing these services. We use this monitoring data to further develop and improve these interventions to ensure that they are reaching the individuals who need them most and that they are achieving the intended outcomes.

Serious Violence Duty Success Measures

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

Partnership Success Measures

- Reductions in serious violence* overall and specific offence types such as robbery and actual bodily harm
- Reductions in serious violence involving young people
- Reductions in public place serious violence
- Reduction in re-offending and re-victimisation, with a particular focus on domestic-abuse and sexual violence
- Reductions in the risk factors associated with serious violence including absenteeism, unemployment and conflict within the home

Scrutiny

Members of the SPB will hold each other to account for delivery against the strategy and seek to resolve any issues at a senior officer level when necessary. Scrutiny outside of this Board structure will be provided through the VRN's Community Partnership activity, including the Community Oversight Board, as well as annual reporting to the Police and Crime Panel. Updates will also be provided to local CSP Strategic Boards.

Insights and Feedback

We will continue to embed opportunities for different beneficiary groups – including young people, families, community members, victims, perpetrators and professionals – to share their insights and to shape services and interventions. As a partnership we will strengthen our community involvement work through the adoption of the Community Partnership Framework to ensure that diverse voices are listened to.

*Based upon the definition agreed by the partnership.

Evaluation

The VRN team will continue to improve the robustness of evaluations conducted across the system. This will include:

- Process Evaluations – When implementing new interventions we conduct process evaluations to assess how they're being delivered and what's working well or needs improving.
- Impact Evaluations – Where possible we will undertake impact evaluations to provide an objective assessment of what difference VRN-supported interventions are making.

The team will also support partners to evaluate new and existing interventions including developing a Theory of Change, intervention blueprints, monitoring frameworks and evaluation plans.



List of VRN Core Members

Leicestershire County Council
Leicester City Council
Rutland County Council
Oadby and Wigston Council (on behalf of districts)
Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service
Leicestershire Police
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland)
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Integrated Care Board
National Probation Service (Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland)
HMP Leicester
East Midlands Ambulance Service
Voluntary Action Leicester(shire)
Active Together
Turning Point
Community Representation x 2
Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

Community Safety Partnerships

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

Appendix A: VRN Theory Change

Rationale

The 23/24 SNA highlighted that our local serious violence issues are:

- Persistent high rates after-school and in the night-time economy.
- high rates of young people affected by sexual violence and high-harm offences.
- High concentrations of SV in East, West and Central Leicester and Hinckley & Blaby and Charnwood in the County

Local data shows high rates of risk factors amongst children young people and adults involved in violence (including absenteeism, unsafe and community family environments), and key drivers include alcohol and drug markets.

A long-term public health approach involving the 'whole system' is key to enabling the partnership to tackle our local serious violence issues.

Evidence shows considerable overlap between the risk and protective factors for different forms of violence (CDC, 2014), and that early intervention strategies which create safe, inclusive and nurturing family, community and education environments, and which connect young people to trusting adults and activities can prevent young people and adults from involvement in all forms of violence by strengthening risk factors and reducing protective factors.

Activity

Priority 1: Providing collaborative and courageous leadership

Key areas of focus include continuously pursuing the public health approach and primary prevention strategies, influencing national policy relating to the drivers of violence, challenging social and gender-based norms, and developing responsible communication strategies.

Priority 2: Using data, evidence and evaluation to improve our response

Key areas of focus include developing a Data and Information Strategy and delivery structure, developing data products which improve the multi-agency management of people and places, and increasing the use and quality of monitoring and evaluation activity.

Priority 3: Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments

Key areas of focus include strengthening responses to childhood trauma, developing a trauma-informed system, equipping parents/carers with skills, and supporting early help to better target resources.

Priority 4: Building protective and cohesive communities

Key areas of focus include supporting development of effective community leadership, equipping communities with knowledge and skills, improving safety of physical environments, and creating safe and inclusive social environments and community-based problem-solving.

Priority 5: Providing safe, inclusive and high quality education settings

Key areas of focus include equipping teachers and other relevant staff with knowledge and tools, improving information sharing and joint working, developing a school-community partnership, and pursuing evidence-informed interventions and curriculum activities.

Priority 6: Connecting young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults

Key areas of focus include equipping 'trusted adults' with knowledge and tools, supporting development of a community of practice for youth work, and improving opportunities and support for young people.

Priority 7: Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery

Key areas of focus include delivering evidence-informed desistance programmes, improving transitions between youth and adult justice systems, increasing responsiveness of victim services, and developing whole-family and community-focused responses.

Outputs

- Strategy and SNA owned by partnership
- Partners understand and use PHA
- Primary prevention opportunities identified and pursued
- Communication and Campaigns Strategy
- Alignment between strategies, funding and activity

- SNA evidences local SV problem and drivers
- Data and Information Strategy and data outputs such as dashboards
- At risk/high harm cohorts identified
- Partners use data to inform responses
- Monitoring and evaluation embedded in activity across the system

- Partners, professionals, community members, parents/carers and young people have the knowledge and tools to respond effectively to violence and delivery evidence-informed approaches (where appropriate)
- New partnerships, activity and services across the system
- Data-led, evidence-informed interventions operating across primary, second and tertiary prevention levels to tackle the drivers of serious violence, reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors
- Adaptations to physical and social community environments
- Children and young people provided with opportunities to develop social and life skills
- At-risk/high harm young people and adults identified and receiving effective support to prevent, divert and rehabilitate
- Young people, families and communities influence the design and delivery of partnership activity across the system

Outcomes

- STRATEGIC**
- Focused, data-driven, evidence-informed whole systems prevention strategy to serious violence
 - Partners/CSPs embed the PHA, deliver on the SVLD and sustain work of the VRN
 - Shared and consistent communication and campaigns
 - Resources targeted at areas with greatest needs
- OPERATIONAL**
- Increased multi-agency and community collaboration and delivery, particularly primary and secondary prevention.
 - Partners/professionals understand and are better able to respond to individual/community needs
 - Increased efficiency and effectiveness of prevention activities across the system.
 - Improved understanding of effective practice, and appetite to learn and adapt

- YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS**
- Successful identification and engagement of those at risk
 - Underlying risk factors addressed
 - Improved access to local services for support
 - Diverted away from crime
- COMMUNITIES**
- Improved understanding, interaction and trust in VRN and partners
 - Improved knowledge of SV and development of skills
 - Community Leaders, parents and carers are better able to respond to individual/community needs
 - Increase in community-led solutions to preventing SV
 - Improved feelings of safety and cohesion

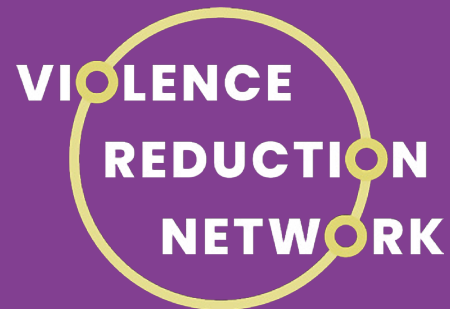
Impacts

Whole systems approach adopted and sustained through: organisational cultural change and effective multi-agency working

Reductions in all serious violence including SV Duty measures:

- Reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object
- Reduction in knife-enabled serious violence
- Reduction in homicides

Improved life outcomes for young people, families and communities across LLR from strengthening protective factors/ reducing risk factors at an individual, relationship, community and societal level



Serious Violence Prevention Strategy Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

If you would like to find out more about the Violence Reduction Network, you can contact us at:
vrn@leics.pcc.gov.uk

You can also find details of our work at:
www.violencereductionnetwork.co.uk

You can keep up-to-date with VRN developments at:
[@VR_Network](https://twitter.com/VR_Network)