

Consideration	
Public	Public
Report to:	Strategic Resources and Performance Board
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Report of:	PCC
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Agenda Item:	8

Violence Reduction Unit – Key Successes and Challenges

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of key successes and challenges for the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Unit (NNVRU).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner notes the contents of the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner continues to be informed of progress.

4. Summary of Key Points

- 4.1 Established in 2019, the NNVRU brings together specialists from public health, clinical commissioning, police local authorities, education and community organisations with a shared goal to reduce serious violent crime and the underlying causes countywide. The focus of the NNVRU is on a whole system approach to violence reduction providing strategic leadership and coordination.
- 4.2 The NNVRU produce two mandatory products a Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and Response Strategy, both can be found at [Information | Violence Reduction Unit \(notts.vru.co.uk\)](https://notts.vru.co.uk)
- 4.3 This report notes key successes and challenges in implementing a multi-agency approach to violence reduction and activity identified in the NNVRU's Theory of Change (**Appendix A**), as at Q3 2021/22.
- 4.4 **Successes**
- 4.5 **Multi-agency level working**
Stakeholders consulted as part of a recent independent evaluation of the NNVRU, undertaken by Ipsos MORI and ECORYS, perceived that the NNVRU

has been successful in creating a common understanding of and buy-in to the multi-agency approach. This had partly been facilitated by the NNVRU formalising arrangements and systems of working together between partners, thereby making the multi-agency approach less dependent on individual relationships between organisations. This was viewed as a crucial step to ensure that the multi-agency approach is embedded across organisations approaches to tackling serious violence.

- 4.6 To date, the NNVRU's approach to multi-agency working has enabled the Strategic Board to think more holistically, particularly around how interventions are commissioned and ensure that duplication of service is avoided.

- 4.7 **Community engagement**

- 4.8 The NNVRU Youth and Community Engagement Strategy sets out how the NNVRU approaches engaging and working with identified communities and how engagement will be used to inform the VRU strategy and delivery. This has included leveraging existing infrastructure such as the Ending Youth Violence Network, an existing forum consisting of over 100 community-based organisation and providers, who are consulted by the NNVRU on a quarterly basis. These activities have enabled increased community input into NNVRU activities and interventions, for instance through consultations on the SNA and co-production of the NNVRU's social media campaign, as well as increasing community awareness of the NNVRU.

- 4.9 A recent independent evaluation (Ipsos MORI / ECORYS) identified that multiple stakeholders felt that the NNVRU has made positive steps towards greater involvement of young people and communities in influencing the VRU's direction. This has been seen at a strategic level through the recruitment of 15 Community Ambassadors, one of whom acts as a representative at the board level, and in focus groups with young people to engage their views on the direction they want to see the VRU take.

- 4.10 **Community development**

- 4.11 The NNVRU have invested in the development of capacity and capability in the voluntary and community sector, recognising that the sector play a significant role in supporting children and young people who are at risk of being impacted by serious violence. This has included in the implementation of Incubation Hub which provides training that would ordinarily be made available to statutory youth services, including safeguarding, cultural competency and restorative supervision.

- 4.12 A priority programme for the OPCC and VRU during 2021/22 has been the development of Youth Work Programme in collaboration with the National Youth Agency, the UK's regulatory body for youth work. The programme aims to increase to the quality of youth work delivery across the VCS sector to ensure children and young people are supported to achieve positive life outcomes. This programme is the first of its kind in England and Wales and has garnered national interest.

4.13 **Interventions**

4.14 During 2020/21 the NNVRU commissioned 28 interventions in order to support children and young people (aged 5-25) at a universal, secondary and tertiary level. The latter prevention levels are targeted toward those who are exhibit risk factors with regard to serious violence and exploitation (secondary) and those who have already committed a first offence (tertiary). Interventions have included targeted outreach, counselling and mentoring and diversionary activity.

4.15 1547 children and young people have been supported either on a one to one or group basis, resulting in, amongst other outcomes:

- Reduced offending or reoffending
- Increased access to pathways of support
- Improved emotional resilience, mental health and wellbeing
- Decreased substance misuse
- Improved skills and readiness for education, training and employment
- Improved peer and family relationships

4.16 The NNVRU's approach to commissioning interventions is informed by the theory of change (please see **Appendix A**) and findings from the SNA to target the at-risk cohort, understand gaps in service provision, and identify the outcomes that the NNVRU wanted to achieve, as well as utilising the existing evidence base such as the latest YEF reports.

4.17 Where the existing evidence base is light the NNVRU has sought to build the evidence base through commissioning research and local evaluations. This has included the commissioning of four intervention-level evaluations, which are move novel in approach and therefore require further evaluation to understand their impact, and a VRU-wide evaluation being undertaken by the University of Northampton. These evaluations, in addition to project monitoring data, have further informed commissioning decisions for year 3 interventions.

4.18 **Funding**

4.19 The NNVRU have a core budget from the Home Office of £880,000 per annum to fund multi-agency approaches, the core team, interventions, research and evaluation.

4.20 During 2021/22 the NNVRU have been successful in securing £675,996 of additional in year funding from Home Office Serious Youth Violence Interventions Programme for the delivery of two custody based interventions based in the City and County; U Turn and Divert Plus.

4.21 Both bids aim to ensure that support workers can drive a positive improvement in key emotional, physical, and vulnerable behaviours amongst participants by intervening in the lives of children and young people at 'teachable moments', specifically following arrest and entry into police custody. The bids do not seek

compete with one another, but rather align and extend current custody intervention provision for all ages.

- 4.22 A further £1.02m has been secured from the Youth Endowment Fund for the continued deliver of Divert Plus until March 2024, providing longevity to the Divert Plus intervention and the opportunity for full evaluation in partnership with Cordis Bright.
- 4.23 A scoping exercise is currently taking place with partners to explore opportunities for the YEF 'A Supportive Home' grant with particular interest to expand the EPEC parenting programme with additionality in the County and roll out within the City.
- 4.24 **Performance**
- 4.25 A robust police and wider partnership response has led to a decrease in serious violence in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire since 2018/19. Knife crime in 2020/21 was overall 13% lower compared to the three year average.
- 4.26 Table A compares the period April 2020 – March 2021 to the annual average for the 3 years April 2017 – March 2020.

Crime type	% change
Overall serious violence	Down 37%
Violence Against the Person	Down 28%
Knife Enabled Robberies	Down 38%
Sexual Assaults	Down 28%
Knife Possession	Down 4%

Table A.

- 4.27 **Challenges**
- 4.28 **County engagement**
- 4.29 Although good progress had been made in relation to the engagement of young people and communities, the NNVRU have concerns about the reach of the current activities in the County. Community and Youth engagement is considered to be much stronger in Nottingham City in comparison to Nottinghamshire County. This difference is largely seen as a result of the comparative strength of existing community organisations in the City.
- 4.30 The NNVRU has commissioned a community assets assessment to better understand the community landscape both in terms of physical and human resources. In addition, the NNVRU is currently working with providers to obtain better data on the demographic make-up of project participants which will help the VRU to better understand the way in which they interact with BAME communities.
- 4.31 **Data and information sharing**

- 4.32 The NNVRU aims to work with partners to develop a common understanding of the available evidence across organisations and share data, intelligence and evidence around violence protection across partners and communities.
- 4.33 The NNVRU's approach to data and analysis is guided by the SNA which is informed by key data sources from the police, East Midlands Ambulance Service, and hospitals, including the Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS). Analysis of this data, alongside commissioned qualitative research which looked into the perceptions and experiences of young people and communities, has facilitated a better understanding of the at-risk cohort.
- 4.34 Progress towards greater levels of data sharing was significantly impacted by COVID-19 which led to a shift in organisational priorities and resources away from these activities and created new challenges in terms of accessing data remotely. As a result, efforts towards greater integration of data and information sharing have not progressed as much as initially hoped in year 2.
- 4.35 Access to Probation service data and good quality health data which would provide greater information on the at-risk cohort are both national issues. The NNVRU are working with partners locally and nationally to resolve this.

5 Financial Implications and Budget Provision

- 5.1 NA

6 Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 NA

7 Equality Implications

- 7.1 NA

8 Risk Management

- 8.1 NA

9 Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 Prevention is a key priority within the Commissioner's developing Police and Crime Plan, of which NNVRU activity is a key work stream.

10 Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

- 10.1 NA

11 Details of outcome of consultation

- 11.1 NA

12. Appendices

12.1 Appendix A. NNVRU High Level Theory of Change

Appendix A: Theory of Change

Our vision: We will work with communities to prevent violence and reduce its harmful impacts through developing a detailed understanding of its causes and investment in evidence based interventions that make a lasting difference

