



NORFOLK COMMUNITY
SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Serious Violence Duty Response Strategy

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Introduction

Foreword

Violence has wide-reaching consequences for individuals, communities and society. It influences whether we are and feel safe within the places and spaces we spend time. In turn, this impacts our ability to live our lives freely, without fear. Creating safe communities, free from violence is an absolute priority.

While Norfolk is one of the safest counties in the country, it is still faced with diverse challenges in relation to violence and wider community safety. People are living in our county currently or previously experiencing violence (both directly and indirectly), or are living in fear of violence.

In Norfolk we have real strength in responding to the challenges, this includes the work of Norfolk Community Safety Partnership, other multi-agency partnerships and groups, individual organisations and local communities who work tirelessly to tackle these complex societal issues.

The introduction of the Serious Violence Duty has allowed the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership an opportunity to review the partnership response to serious violence and develop a robust evidence base helping us understand the complex causes of violence in Norfolk.

The evidence base has become the foundation of this serious violence strategy, setting out four clear priorities for Norfolk underpinned by the public health approach. The public health approach prioritises prevention and is integral to the way in which the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership works.

The prevention and reduction of violence requires a long-term approach and commitment. While this strategy sets out our immediate priority areas, it is designed to be dynamic and will be reviewed in partnership with all key stakeholders, including communities.

This strategy will build on our strengths as partners in violence prevention. It recognises the brilliant work that is already happening in Norfolk, but also forms the basis for further development and co-production of our local response.

I would like to finish by thanking all the young people, families, communities and professionals who have already contributed to the development of this strategy. The only way to tackle violence is in partnership across all our communities and organisations.

Together we can build long-term sustainable approaches to violence prevention and reduction.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Stokes, Chair of the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership and CEO at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk

Executive Summary

Serious violence has a devastating impact on victims and their families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Tackling serious violence is a priority at both a national and local level, for government and communities, there is a role for everyone to play.

Everyone has a right to lead a life free from violence and the fear of violence. Although the drivers and causes are complex, violence is preventable.

In January 2023 the Serious Violence Duty commenced, which places a strong emphasis on taking a whole-system approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence. It encourages areas to adopt a public health approach, focused on tackling the root causes of violence and preventing people from being affected in the first place.

The duty places a statutory responsibility on a range of organisations to work together to generate evidence-based analysis informing the production and implementation of a local strategy, which outlines the collective action the partnership intends to take to prevent and reduce serious violence.

In response, the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership has developed this strategy that sets out the partnership vision, strategic objective and four priority areas:

- A focus on the safety of young people
- A focus on the prevention of domestic abuse
- A focus on the places and spaces most affected by serious violence
- A focus on drugs and alcohol as a driver of serious violence

The four priorities are underpinned by a set of cross-cutting activities, or ways of working. These outline the foundations of the partnership's approach to achieving success, working towards building a whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence.

Through the implementation of this strategy, the partnership will work collectively, aspiring to achieve the vision of building resilient, safe and supportive communities throughout the area, where people can feel safe and are safe from violence.

Background

What is the serious violence duty?

The Serious Violence Duty, introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act, forms a key part of the Government policy to prevent and reduce serious violence; it encourages taking a whole-system approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, adopting a public health approach, focused on prevention and early intervention.

The Duty, which commenced in January 2023, requires partners across the public sector to work together to generate evidence-based analysis and produce and implement a local strategy, which outlines the collective action the partnership intends to take to prevent and reduce serious violence. This document sets out this strategy.

The Crime and Disorder Act has also been amended to ensure Community Safety Partnerships have the prevention and reduction of serious violence as an explicit priority in their strategies. This is set out in the [Safer Norfolk Plan](#) for our county.

Why has the Duty been introduced?

Serious violence has a devastating impact on victims and their families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. A multi-agency approach is essential to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention approaches, which are informed by evidence.

Who are the specified authorities?

The specified authorities (responsible for delivering the Duty) are Police, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Integrated Care Boards (Health), Youth Justice Services, Probation and Local Authorities. Educational settings, prisons and secure estates are included within the Duty as relevant authorities integral to the local response. The voluntary sector, businesses and communities are wider critical stakeholders. Police and Crime Commissioners are encouraged to take a convening role.

What does the Duty involve?

Local areas are encouraged to take a 'public health approach' to prevent and reduce serious violence. This means using data and insights to understand serious violence and its causes locally. It requires collaboration with communities and other partners to generate short and longer-term solutions which draw on the evidence of effectiveness. Importantly, this approach focuses on tackling the causes of violence and as such focuses on prevention and early intervention activity as well as deploying criminal justice responses where necessary.

What are the requirements of the Duty?

Local areas must:

- Confirm the partnership arrangements through which they will deliver the Duty
- Create a strategic needs assessment
- Develop and implement a strategy
- Monitor the effectiveness of the strategy

How is Norfolk meeting the Duty?

The Serious Violence Duty governance is managed through the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership. Arrangements to manage the Serious Violence Duty in Norfolk were initiated during the review of the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership (NCSP) in 2020 and written into the Safer Norfolk Plan (2021). The Safer Norfolk Plan (2021-2024) sets the direction for the NCSP and also supports the strategic direction of Norfolk's Police and Crime Plan & Community Safety Plan (2022-24).

In Norfolk, the team supporting the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership, the Community Safety and Violence Reduction Coordination Team, they are part of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (OPCCN) and are coordinating Norfolk's response to the Serious Violence Duty.

Partners in Norfolk are meeting the Duty by embracing the opportunities to ensure alignment and synergies across the crime, justice and public safety landscape, in order to reduce bureaucracy and duplication. The Serious Violence Duty (SVD) and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership (NDAP) Programme Group is providing strategic leadership and direction on the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty. It also will deliver the Norfolk response to the government's drug strategy and will be responsible for the delivery of the objectives agreed by the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership. This is because there is overlap in the priorities and objectives of the SVD and the national drugs strategy, delivered through the local partnership; namely the impact of drug supply/use on serious violence and homicide and understanding the drivers and the cohorts most vulnerable.

The group is attended by representatives from each of the specified authorities. As relevant authorities, the prison service and a strategic representative for education are also members of the group.

The Serious Violence Duty and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Programme Group meets every two months and reports progress quarterly to the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board respectively (governance chart can be found in the Annex).

The Norfolk Community Safety Partnership is independently scrutinised quarterly by the NCSP Scrutiny Sub Panel, the membership of which consists of Councillors from Norfolk County Council and each of the tier two local authorities.

What is already being done to respond to serious violence?

As acknowledged within the Government's Serious Violence Strategy (2018) there are already existing programmes of work at a national and local level, which interrelate to serious violence prevention and addressing the risk and protective factors. Existing arrangements in Norfolk include:

- Other sub-groups of the [Norfolk Community Safety Partnership](#) including the domestic abuse and sexual violence group, Norfolk Anti-Slavery Network and the Community Relations and Prevent Strategic Group
- The [Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board](#) including the [Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership](#)
- [Norfolk Children Safeguarding Partnership](#) including the Vulnerable Adolescent Group
- [Children and Young People Strategic Alliance](#)
- [Norfolk Safeguarding Adult Board](#)
- [Local Criminal Justice Board](#)
- Norfolk Youth Justice Board
- Local Organised Crime Group

The NCSP have ensured that there are strong links between existing relevant partnership arrangements during the development of the response to the Serious Violence Duty. Relationships with safeguarding arrangements are maintained through the Serious Violence Duty Programme Group membership, reciprocal membership on safeguarding groups and through the NCSP.

There are also many other non-statutory, partnership groups and boards within Norfolk. The implementation and delivery of this serious violence strategy must continue to capitalise on the existing strength, resource and expertise within the partnership to maximise effectiveness, support existing arrangements and avoid duplication.

Moving forwards with implementation of this strategy, the partnership will continue to identify interdependencies across the system and opportunities for collaboration.

This strategy sits alongside and complements existing strategic partnership strategies which operate in this space, for example:

In Norfolk:

- The Police, Crime and Community Safety Plan 2022-24 (Police and Crime Commissioner)
- The Safer Norfolk Plan (Norfolk Community Safety Partnership Strategy – NCSP)
- The Domestic Abuse Strategy (NCSP)
- The Sexual Violence Strategy (NCSP)
- The Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy (Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership)
- The Flourishing in Norfolk strategy (Children and Young People Strategic Alliance)

Nationally:

- HM Government, Serious Violence Strategy April 2018
- HM Government, From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives 2021
- HM Government, Tackling violence against women and girls 2021
- Home Office, Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan 2022

This strategy has also considered learning from relevant national and local thematic reviews.

Norfolk's partnership strategic objective and vision

Norfolk has a vision to build resilient, safe and supportive communities throughout the area, where people can feel safe and are safe from violence. Everyone has a right to lead a life free from violence and the fear of violence. Although the drivers and causes are complex, violence is preventable.

Strategic objective: to prevent and reduce serious violence in Norfolk in partnership

Collaboration is essential to prevent and reduce serious violence and everyone has a role to play in delivering this strategy (and those that follow).

Norfolk's vision and strategic objective will steer the local response to preventing and reducing serious violence over the next ten years. This response strategy sets out the agreed strategic priorities and partnership activity over the next 3 to 5 years.

How is Norfolk defining serious violence?

The definition of serious violence used for the purpose of the Norfolk serious violence strategic needs assessment is:

“Norfolk’s definition of serious violence includes crime types of violence against the person offences (including homicide), possession of weapons, robbery, sexual offences, arson and criminal damage offences endangering life, aggravated burglary and vehicle offences, selected miscellaneous crimes against society, and selected public order offences. The definition includes violence related to domestic abuse, hate crime, weapon related crime, public space violence affecting young people, and county lines drug markets and exploitation.”

There is no set definition of Serious Violence nationally, the Serious Violence Duty encourages local areas to produce a local definition of serious violence. Although the Duty does not define serious violence it does provide guidance in the factors that must be considered. These include:

- The maximum penalty possible for the offence
- The impact on the victim
- The prevalence of violence in the area
- The impact on the local community

The Duty also states that local areas should include a focus on public space youth violence, including homicide, knife crime, gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as county lines drug dealing. Local areas can also include any other forms of violence such as domestic abuse and sexual violence, alcohol related violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery or violence against women and girls.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as: “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”

The WHO broadly split violence into three categories:

1. Self-directed violence: anything a person does intentionally that can cause injury to self, including death (such as self-harm or suicide).
2. Interpersonal violence: the intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals.
3. Collective violence: the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group or set of individuals.

Rather than seek to define serious violence within strict parameters the Norfolk partnership have adopted a broad, all-age, life course definition of serious violence, guided by:

- local evidence and insight
- the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition
- Home Office Serious Violence Duty guidance

The rationale for Norfolk adopting a broad approach to defining serious violence is to allow the evidence base to guide the partnership decision making regarding strategic priorities rather than pre-empting need. This approach also allows the partnership to respond to a maturing strategic needs assessment as it evolves over time. In addition, adopting a broad definition of serious violence recognises the overlap with other types of crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and other established risk and protective factors.

What does serious violence look like in Norfolk?

One of the core elements of the Serious Violence Duty is for areas to carry out a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur locally and, where possible, the causes of that serious violence. An SNA also helps to identify the drivers of serious violence in the local area and the cohorts of people most affected or at risk. In November 2023, the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership and the Norfolk Office for Data and Analytics (supported by a range of partnership organisations) published the strategic needs assessment.

Key findings from the Norfolk Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment

Rates of serious violence in Norfolk overall are lower than the national average (38.1 offences per 1,000 of the population).

However, **there is significant variation in the levels of serious violence across the area**, with some areas being impacted to a much greater extent than others.

The rate of police recorded serious violence offences has increased in Norfolk broadly in line with the national pattern. This could be attributed to a number of factors including more serious violence incidents occurring and being reported, improvements in recording practices, and changes in police activity.

In Norfolk, different individuals and groups are disproportionately affected by different forms of serious violence. This highlights the importance of tailored approaches, developing a greater understanding of the impact of unreported violence and working together to increase trust and confidence in services.

Violence is not caused by any single factor. It is caused by a complex interplay of many risk factors existing within and across the individual, their relationships, their community and society as a whole. Equally, a range of protective factors also exist across these three levels which reduce the risk of victimisation and perpetration of violence.

It is important to recognise that **many of those committing serious violence offences have also been victims**, and vice versa, highlighting the need for a trauma informed response.

Considering the risk and protective factors of serious violence, the evidence highlighted the following areas of interest:

- There is a clear link between **deprivation** and children who have been affected by serious violence ([Department for Education, 2023](#)).
- Levels of **educational attainment and attendance** are lower amongst those affected by serious violence ([Department for Education, 2023](#)).
- **High volumes of anti-social behaviour** correlate with areas experiencing high volumes of serious violence offences ([Norfolk Insight, 2023](#)).
- Evidence shows a link between drug usage/markets and serious violence. Evidence also suggests that **substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) and mental health** concerns represent an area of need.

Participants, across our strands of engagement emphasised the extremely harmful impacts of violence, including beyond physical harm. They shared their perceptions on the local drivers of violence, the impact of social media, the hidden, under-reported nature of serious violence and highlighted ways in which the local response could be developed.

Defining and taking a public health approach

Partners in Norfolk are taking a public health approach which encourages a whole-system multi-agency approach to preventing serious violence that is place-based, evidence-led and incorporates public health principles. The public health approach to serious violence means thinking about violence, not only as a problem for the police, but as a preventable consequence of a complex range of factors which influence the likelihood of being affected by violence. It recognises that to effectively tackle violence an approach is needed which does not just focus on those who are already affected by violence but also by addressing the underlying risk factors.

The underlying principles of a public health approach applied to serious violence:

- Violence is preventable
- Interventions are guided by evidence where available and developing the evidence base where it is absent, and informed by data
- Focused on a defined population, often with a risk in common. Victims, perpetrators and sometimes bystanders are all vulnerable to further involvement in violence
- The approach is with and for communities, reflecting the voices and experiences of the communities served. This should also involve taking a trauma-informed approach

- Commitment to a system-wide approach underpinned by mature and committed partnership arrangements
- Focused on long-term impact, acting on the root causes of the problem as well as short-term consequences and emphasising early intervention

A public health approach is underpinned by five key partnership ways of working:

- Collaboration
- Co-production
- Co-operation on data and intelligence sharing
- Developing a counter-narrative response
- Gathering community consensus

The public health process involves a cyclical process comprising four stages of work. First areas should undergo **surveillance**, using data and intelligence to identify what the local problem of serious violence is. Next, **identifying risk and protective factors** on an individual, relationship, community and societal level will outline the causes of serious violence. Areas should then **develop and evaluate interventions**, using and informing the available evidence base and good practice to target work at key cohorts.



Figure 1: Public Health Model

Interventions should be spread across the three levels of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and include targeted and universal programmes. Areas should **implement these interventions**, scaling up effective policy and programmes, and continuing to assess the local picture of serious violence to inform ongoing work.

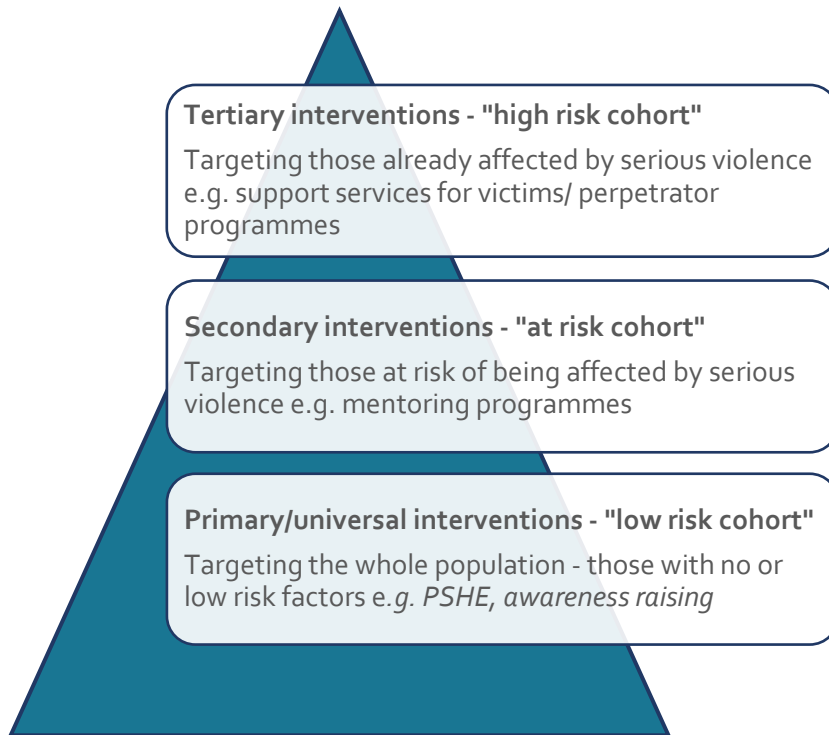


Figure 2: Public Health Model Interventions

Delivery Plan – how do partners plan on preventing and reducing serious violence?

This strategy sets out the Norfolk-wide strategic partnership response to serious violence. Evidence from the strategic needs assessment has identified four distinct priority areas. These priority areas are mutually exclusive, although it is acknowledged there will be links between them. The priorities may change and develop over the period of the strategy, responding to any emerging trends and changes in local need.

Strategic priorities

- A focus on **safety of young people**, reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors, for all forms of serious violence.
- A focus on the **prevention of domestic abuse** across all age groups. Interventions are to be aimed at all three levels of the public health approach (primary, secondary, and tertiary), with a particular focus on preventing perpetration.
- A focus on **combating drugs and alcohol** as a driver of serious violence, adopting an evidence-led all age approach, addressing all forms of serious violence.
- A focus on **places and spaces where the most serious violence occurs**, tailoring preventative action to each area based on contextual factors and the local violence profile.

Cross cutting activities

The partnership has identified a number of foundational activities which underpin the four priority areas explored below. These activities outline the Partnership's approach to achieving success in the identified priority areas, working towards building a whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence.

- Improve awareness of the public health approach to preventing and reducing serious violence i.e. through promotion of core elements of the Serious Violence Duty response, key principles of the public health approach (i.e. trauma informed practice) and learning and sharing of resources across the Partnership. This includes being able to engage professionals across the specified and relevant authorities, voluntary and community sector and members of the public in the strategy for Norfolk.
- Continue to align the Serious Violence Duty strategy with relevant Partnership arrangements to maximise the whole system approach to tackling serious violence.
- Establish a community engagement plan with the aim of empowering a wider network to play a role in preventing and reducing violence. This will include activity to increase trust and confidence in services.
- Support continuing development of partnership working between agencies and stakeholders i.e. opportunities for joint events, co-production, training and communities of practice.
- Work in partnership to improve partnership data capabilities and the evidence base across the system.
- Further understand the inequalities/disparity related to serious violence locally.
- Secure the sustainability of serious violence prevention and reduction through the development of a sustainability plan.

Priority group: under 25s

Aim

A focus on the safety of young people, reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors, for all forms of serious violence.

Why do we want to focus on under young people?

Norfolk young people's definition of safety:

“When you feel comfortable, equal, secure, consensual, in control, valued, confident, free and protected in everyday existence. Safety is trusting the people around you, the community, the place you live, your wider surroundings and this should be felt by everyone. A place where you can be your true self, with absence of fear.”

Young people are particularly important in the prevention of serious violence. Recent trends indicate younger people are more likely to be affected by serious violence than any other age group. Violence affecting young people has a dramatic effect on the lives of children, families and the wider community. The wider context of experiences in childhood are important to understand for those children who are affected by violence, including exposure to abuse and extra-familial harm.

Serious violence affecting young people is complex and can be driven by a range of factors. From a public health perspective addressing the risk factors which increase the risk of children and young people being affected by violence is key to future serious violence prevention and harm reduction.

Our engagement work shows that exposure to and experience of violence is a reality for some children and young people in Norfolk. Young people told us they were particularly concerned about the link between violence and substance misuse needs, knife crime and robbery. Young women and girls specifically highlighted sexual violence, exploitation and predation from older men or boys as threats.

The young people we spoke with had conflicting views on the direct impact of social media as a cause of violence however there was a general agreement that these platforms play a role in making violence more visible.

Young people in Norfolk have given us clear direction about how organisations can work together to promote their safety and security in their communities. The Serious Violence Duty offers an opportunity to work across existing partnerships, building on current activity and responding collaboratively.

Outcomes

1. The partnership shares and analyses information in order to better understand the local profile of serious violence affecting young people, including factors that make young people more vulnerable to serious violence.
2. The partnership uses the analysis to inform:
 - a. Effective multi-agency strategy, planning and action, including commissioning services to meet local needs.
 - b. Decisions about interventions in places and spaces to make young people safer. This includes work with the community businesses, education providers and parents and children.
3. Partners have a greater understanding of the causes and consequences of serious violence affecting young people, targeting resources on prevention, early intervention and transitions, using evidence-based approaches. Once risk is identified, evidence and risk-based interventions are used which meet the needs of the individual.
4. The local partnership promote multi-agency learning about identifying, assessing and responding to serious youth violence.

Outcome measures

Data and intelligence

- Data and intelligence are proactively and regularly shared between agencies.
- The quality of the data and intelligence contributions between agencies/partners are identified, on a wide range of metrics/topics related to serious violence and its vulnerability factors.
- Data and intelligence are analysed, and this is of sufficient quality to form an enhanced understanding of the local picture of serious violence affecting young people.

Commissioning services and interventions

- Multi-agency planning and action is evidence-based and informed by local need, namely decisions about interventions are based on an understanding of signs of risk, including focusing on places and spaces where young people are most at risk.
- Commissioning decisions are linked to specific drivers of violence identified through analysis, and opportunities for joint-commissioning or joint-delivery of services are identified and utilised.
- Partners regularly engage with community businesses, education providers, parents and young people to design and inform the response to serious violence.

Prevention, early intervention, transitions and risk-based interventions

- Increased practitioner awareness of the vulnerability factors to young people's involvement in serious violence and practitioners have increased confidence in responding appropriately to these.
- Young people are referred to appropriate support based on an assessment of their needs.
- Young people between the ages of 18-25 are supported through preventative, diversionary activities, especially if they were previously known to youth services.

Multi-agency learning

- Local partners and multi-agency bodies feel engaged in the local response to serious violence
- Training is in place for key practitioners regarding the identification of those at risk of involvement in serious violence, assessments of risk, and improved responses to vulnerability.

Alignment with existing work

In developing this strategy, the partners have worked closely with existing partnership groups who will continue to be essential in supporting this strategic priority. These include the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership and their Vulnerable Adolescent Group and the Norfolk Youth Justice Board. Responding to this priority will also contribute to the Flourishing in Norfolk strategy, being delivered by the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance, which has a number of relevant subgroups such as prevention and early help, mental health and emotional wellbeing and Special Educational Needs And Disabilities.

In responding to this priority, the Serious Violence Duty and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Programme Group will ensure that the links remain strong between the relevant boards and groups to provide a coordinated response. This is likely to include shared management or allocation of actions where this is most appropriate.

Activity to meet this priority

Activity

- Work collaboratively to mature data analysis and insight to inform prevention, early intervention, identify trends and support reduction in offending and victimisation.
- Work in partnership at a locality level to develop comprehensive multi-agency plans, which include community and school-based interventions, with the aim of creating and/or maintaining safety for young people in the places and spaces they spend time.
- Work collaboratively with the Local First Inclusion programme to support with relevant data analysis and insight, the implementation of new policy and practice, and contribute to the development of training and guidance materials.

- Take preventative action to target knife carrying. Currently there is lack of evaluative work on the impact of knife crime education and surrender programmes nationally, this provides an opportunity to pilot and evaluate an intervention locally.
- Scope the multi-agency training need for serious youth violence and related topics.
- Contribute to the Safeguarding Partnership review of transitional safeguarding and explore opportunities for a transitional pilot programme for 18-25s.
- Review how the partnership can better respond to potential harms of social media and secondly, how best to utilise social media for good, both in terms of empowering children and young people and in for enforcement in terms of evidence and intelligence gathering, particularly preventatively.
- Utilise the county-wide exploitation awareness raising campaign to deliver bespoke communications for young people.

Priority crime type: domestic abuse

Aim

A focus on the prevention of **domestic abuse** across all age groups. Interventions are to be aimed at all three levels of the public health approach (primary, secondary, and tertiary), with a particular focus on preventing perpetration.

Why do we want to focus on domestic abuse?

A large proportion of serious violence offences in Norfolk are related to domestic abuse and the number of offences has increased over time. This is likely driven by nationally recognised improvements in police recording practices and increased awareness of domestic abuse. Whilst improvements have been made, it is understood that a large amount of domestic abuse remains unreported.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Domestic abuse can also manifest itself in specific ways within different communities. Females are disproportionately more often the victim of domestic abuse and men are disproportionately more often the perpetrators in police recorded crime and Crime Survey of England and Wales data. Some groups may experience additional barriers to seeking support and reporting generally, for example those with additional communication needs or individuals with no recourse to public funds.

The consequences and impact of domestic abuse are diverse and enormously harmful. In April 2021 to March 2022, there were 134 domestic homicide victims across England and Wales. This makes up 29% of all homicides and there are additional concerns about its effect on suicides.

While domestic abuse is a form of serious violence in its own right it is also important to recognise that exposure in childhood can have devastating impacts and is a risk factor for other, later forms of violence and harm.

Tackling domestic abuse requires a whole system response. A whole system response incorporates activity at all levels of prevention (primary, secondary and tertiary) across the work of all key statutory and non-statutory partners working in the 'system' who victims and perpetrators come into contact with. The approach also involves a robust enforcement process for those who commit offences (SafeLives, 2023).

Outcomes

1. The partnership continues to develop a collaborative and coordinated 'whole systems' approach to domestic abuse.
2. More people are engaged in interventions to prevent the perpetration of domestic abuse.
3. More victims of domestic abuse, including children and young people, are identified earlier and are able to access the most appropriate support at the point of need.

Outcome measures

Whole systems approach

- Increase in referrals between support services/statutory agencies for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Information is shared between support services/statutory agencies more effectively and efficiently
- Opportunities for joint-commissioning or joint-delivery of services are identified and utilised
- Actions from Domestic Homicide Reviews are effectively implemented.

Prevention of perpetration

- More individuals are engaged in preventative support or interventions
- Increased use of civil and criminal justice protection measures
- Increased use of intensive multi-agency management of high-harm, high-risk domestic perpetrators
- Increased feelings of safety and freedom (space for freedom) for all victim-survivors including children

Early identification and access to support

- Increase in at-risk individuals identified
- Increase in reported domestic abuse incidents

- Increase in victims engaging with support services
- Increased recognition of children as victims of domestic abuse

Alignment with existing work

There are strong existing multi-agency partnerships responding to domestic abuse and sexual violence. Norfolk already has a domestic abuse strategy which is managed through the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership. The Norfolk domestic abuse strategy encompasses:

- Improving the partnership understanding of domestic abuse (data and insight, learning from statutory reviews)
- Including authentic voice to drive the development of the response (victims, survivors and families)
- Changing attitudes (education and awareness raising, including in schools and education institutes)
- Early identification and early help (trained and professional curious workforce)
- Support to victims and survivors, and challenging offending behaviour (access to information and tailored support, perpetrator programme, delivering on victims' rights).

In addition, Norfolk has a Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy which outlines how Norfolk County Council will work with the domestic abuse victim-survivors, district councils and other key stakeholders, to provide safe accommodation for adults and children. Under this strategy council's in Norfolk are working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.

In developing this strategy, the partnership has maintained close links with these existing partnerships and the Serious Violence Duty provides an opportunity to support these arrangements further.

Activity to meet this priority

Activity

- Support the existing workstreams of Norfolk's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Group (DASVG), namely:
 - Data and insight
 - Whole systems approach
 - Communications and engagement
 - Training

- Management of Domestic Homicide Reviews and supporting the application of learning from DHRs and other partnership reviews
- Domestic Abuse perpetrator prevention

- Consider how the serious violence strategy could focus on supporting identification and management of high harm domestic abuse offenders.

- Support preventative action with young people focused on addressing the emergence of harmful behaviours and attitudes in relationships.

- Work in partnership to address identified gaps in commissioning of victim support services, with a particular focus on services for those who face additional barriers in accessing support.

- Work in partnership to further develop the local response to children as victims of domestic abuse.

Priority driver: drugs and alcohol

Aim

A focus on combating **drugs and alcohol as a driver of serious violence**, adopting an evidence-led all age approach, addressing all forms of serious violence.

Why do we want to focus on drugs and alcohol?

Evidence shows a clear link between illegal drug markets and serious violence. Drug markets are inherently violent, and drugs can also fuel violence due to their pharmacological effects (committed while under the influence) and economic-compulsive effects (gaining money or goods to obtain drugs). Drug dealing can be highly visible in communities and can contribute to adverse effects on feelings of safety within communities.

The impact of drug use on individuals goes far wider than the risk of violence, with detrimental effects on mental and physical health. Nationally, drug use is understood to be more prevalent in adolescents and young adults (16-24- year-olds) than in older adults supporting an emphasis on preventative activity. We also know that substance misuse can make people extremely vulnerable to wider abuse, exploitation and harm, which often goes unreported.

Our engagement work highlighted concerns about the local risks of violence associated with drug markets (predominantly, although not exclusively linked to county lines), violence associated to substance misuse and addiction and the impact of parental drug use on children and young people. Other risks were also discussed, including poverty and a lack of opportunities, but these were widely seen as less significant than drugs. In many cases, these other risks contributed to the existing problem of illegal drug use and trafficking in the area.

The Government's Serious Violence Strategy recognises that a substantial proportion of violence is linked in some way to alcohol. For the years ending March 2020 to March 2022, 19% of homicide victims and 13% of homicide suspects were under influence of alcohol, in England and Wales.

Rate of admissions for alcohol related conditions is significantly worse in Norfolk than England as a whole. Whilst there is a lack of local data available which identifies a causal link between alcohol consumption and violent incidents, evidence suggests an association. Further analysis is required to understand this further.

Outcomes

1. The partnership is able to deliver a more collaborative and coordinated response to drugs and alcohol, including enforcement of drug markets, particularly focusing where there are connections to serious violence.

2. Public Health commissions drug and alcohol services in Norfolk, using the evidence base of 'what works', to support those most affected by substance misuse and serious violence and/or exploitation, as well as where there is an overlap with mental health.
3. Fewer serious violence incidents are linked to substances. More people are diverted away from involvement in drug markets, including but not limited to county lines. The partnership will focus on ensuring that fewer serious violence offences are driven by substances. This includes safeguarding children and adults and disrupting drug markets (including county lines). Furthermore, professionals across Norfolk need to be able to understand and recognise the signs of exploitation.

Outcome measures

Collaborative and coordinated response

- More individuals involved in the supply and use of substances are identified and supported
- Gaps in the current provision are identified and areas for improvement are agreed
- Identified drug markets are disrupted
- There is a greater understanding of the impact of alcohol on serious violence

Services for those affected

- Existing or new commissioned services are equipped to identify those at risk or affected by serious violence
- More people engage positively in these drug and alcohol support services
- There is a reduction in serious violence offending by individuals engaged in these tailored substance misuse services

Safeguarding, diversion and disruption

- Improved identification of those exploited or at risk of exploitation from drug markets
- Increased understanding of the risks of substance misuse and potential associated exploitation
- Increased number of individuals completing diversionary interventions

Alignment with existing work

While there are strong local responses to the use of substances, more work could be done to focus on the cohorts supplying and using substances caught up in, or at risk of being involved in, serious violence. The Serious Violence Duty and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Programme Group will take ownership of the Norfolk response to the government's drug strategy and will be responsible for the delivery of the objectives agreed by the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership (NDAP) Strategic Group. Through these governance arrangements, Norfolk will be well positioned to identify gaps in current provision and areas for improvement. In addition, the response will ensure appropriate join up between relevant partnership groups such as locality based community alcohol partnerships.

Activity to meet this priority

Activity

- Collate and analyse data on serious violence incidents linked to drugs and alcohol, in order to further understand the causal link.
- Review the effectiveness of current services in meeting the demand presented by those involved, or at risk of being involved in, serious violence, including identifying substance misuse concerns, how referral pathways are set up and used and how well individuals engage in these services. This is particularly important for the under 25 age group.
- Develop preventative and targeted approaches for properties of concern related to drug markets and/or anti-social drinking, including supporting communities to report properties that are being used for such purposes.
- Consider how the Information to Tackle Violence (ISTV) data set could further inform partnership activity in relation to drugs and alcohol as a driver of violence.
- Further develop the Norfolk partnership response to adults at risk of exploitation, including the partnership response to cuckooing and provision of training.
- Identify opportunities to utilise the county-wide exploitation awareness raising campaign for tailored and targeted messaging for key stakeholders.
- Work in partnership to ensure a coordinated, collaborative response to the evening and night time economy, strengthening violence prevention and feelings of safety in these settings.
- Support the multi-agency response to drugs markets (including the county lines model) by considering the joint opportunities to respond.
- Further develop the partnership arrangements through the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership/ Serious Violence Duty Programme Group

Priority locations: places and spaces

Aim

A focus on **places and spaces where the most serious violence occurs**, tailoring preventative action to each area based on contextual factors and the local violence profile.

Why do we want to focus on places and spaces?

The evidence base clearly demonstrates that serious violence is centred on certain areas in Norfolk. The places in Norfolk with the highest volumes of serious violence offences accounted for a large proportion of all serious violence offences in Norfolk compared to the proportion of Norfolk's population they house.

When looking at different crime groupings, locations within the same areas of Norfolk are repeatedly impacted, suggesting these are key areas for the local response to serious violence to focus upon. Within Norfolk, the highest volumes of anti-social behaviour occur in line with areas experiencing the highest volumes of serious violence offences.

These identified places and spaces also have a greater prevalence of serious violence risk factors, including lower employment rates, higher rates of deprivation, and greater indicators of substance misuse and mental health concerns.

The Serious Violence Duty offers an opportunity to ensure places and spaces have tailored plans informed by a range of information to ensure an effective and localised response. The partnership will do this by bringing together partners to share data, intelligence and other sources of information to produce a holistic assessment of spaces (for example, using contextual assessments, practitioner intelligence, deeper analysis of place-specific data and community engagement).

An important element of this approach is to ensure the communities affected by higher rates of serious violence are involved in these assessments.

The partnership will also look more broadly to understand correlations between serious violence and other aspects of criminality and wellbeing, including drugs and alcohol, anti-social behaviour and modern slavery. Additional datasets will be identified and brought together to understand the links between violence and non-violent offending.

The overarching aim is to create safer spaces for communities in these areas and increase feelings of safety. This will involve building relationships with key stakeholders in affected areas, including business owners, licence holders, community representatives and local grassroots organisations.

Outcomes

1. Partners have an increased understanding of the picture of serious violence in the places and spaces most affected, and why it is occurring, who is involved and in what contexts (including linking to licensing responsibilities).

2. Partners develop action plans which are tailored to local need and deploy a range of tactics, based on the increased understanding.

Outcome measures

Increased understanding

- Data from a wide range of sources is overlaid and analysed and these findings are used to inform partners about the causes of serious violence in identified places and spaces.
- Partners have a more in-depth understanding of the drivers of serious violence in particular places and spaces.
- Engagement is undertaken with communities to understand their perceptions on serious violence in these places and spaces.
- Opportunities for reducing and preventing serious violence in places and spaces are identified based on a better understanding of the causes of serious violence in identified places and spaces.

Tailored action plans

- Each identified area has a comprehensive action plan for reducing and preventing serious violence, including relevant outcome measures
- Increased feelings of safety amongst those living and working in areas, measured through engagement with communities
- Data and intelligence sharing processes are in place to monitor the impact of local action plans, including monitoring for any unintended outcomes such as displacement of serious violence to other areas.

Alignment with existing work

There is a lot of existing work to build on in taking localised approaches to crime and public safety. The emphasis of the partnership work under this priority is ensuring that a more complete picture of these places and spaces is formed, rather than duplicating existing insight and analysis. The response will be aligned with the work of local partnerships which are already functioning in this space.

Activity to meet this priority

Activity

- Deliver coordinated and comprehensive action plan with partners in identified places and spaces, with the aim of strengthening community engagement related to serious violence issues and building resilience amongst hotspot areas.

- Work collaboratively to formalise the partnership contextual assessment process.
- Utilise the evidence base to focus targeted youth outreach in places and spaces.
- Consider alcohol misuse in places and spaces as a joint area of action by the SVD/NDAP Programme Group and/or or utilising existing partnership arrangements i.e. Community Alcohol Partnerships and the Evening and Night Time Economy Strategic Delivery Group, engaging key stakeholders such as business owners and licence holders. This work should include developing a greater understanding of the impact of sexual entertainment venues on serious violence.
- Continue to collaborate with the Safer Streets Fund 5 programme, to address ASB and neighbourhood crime in affected areas.
- Identify locations which may benefit from targeted messaging under the exploitation communication campaign.

Reviewing the strategy

This strategy will be reviewed annually in accordance with the Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance, informed by a refreshed strategic needs assessment.

The Serious Violence Duty and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership Programme Group will be responsible for the reviewing the strategy and its associated delivery plan.

The strategy is built around four priority areas:

1. Priority group
2. Priority crime
3. Priority driver
4. Priority locations

The strategy has been developed in this way so that the Norfolk partnership can respond to any emerging trends and changes in local needs. Ongoing monitoring via the partnership serious violence outcomes framework will allow for proactive identification of trends meaning that the Norfolk partners will respond dynamically rather than waiting for the annual review cycle.

Monitoring and evaluation framework

The members of the Serious Violence Duty and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership Programme Group will take responsibility for this strategy as responsible and relevant authorities under the Serious Violence Duty.

The first phase of the strategy will be confirming a clear prioritised delivery plan incorporating the activities set out in this strategy. This will include establishing the appropriate alignment across Norfolk's wider partnership boards and groups to ensure all the relevant expertise is utilised and effort is not duplicated.

The delivery plan will be maintained through the Serious Violence Duty and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership Programme Group and/or its subgroups, with short term progress and updates monitored through the programme group. Updates will be reported to the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership (NCSP) on a quarterly basis and scrutinised by the NCSP Scrutiny Sub Panel.

The Serious Violence Duty outcomes framework will allow for monitoring of short and long-term outcome measures, linked to a theory of change. This will allow the partnership to monitor progress of activities during the year.

A range of measures will be monitored but will include the three key success measures specified within the Serious Violence Duty statutory guidance:

1. A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object
2. A reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police
3. A reduction in homicide recorded by the police



Communities and the voluntary sector will play a key role in our approach to monitoring and evaluation. Our communications and engagement plan will specify the actions the partnership will take to ensure that community voice is incorporated into this process.

We will work in partnership to continue to develop the robustness of evaluations, contributing to the evidence base of what works in relation to preventing and reducing serious violence in Norfolk.

Annex 1 – Governance structure

The below diagram outlines the governance structure for the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) and Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership (NDAP) Programme Group. Additional sub/task and finish groups may be added as the response to the strategy develops.

