

## Report to Safer and Stronger Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

16<sup>th</sup> January 2020

**Report of: Rachel Staniforth, Joint-Head of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit and Lee Berry, Superintendent and Joint Head of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit**

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**Subject: Update on the work of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit**

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### **Summary:**

This report explains the work of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and its links to the Council and other organisations working to prevent and reduce violence across South Yorkshire. It is being presented at the request of Scrutiny who wanted to know more about the work in this area.

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### **Type of item:**

- Reviewing of existing policy
- Informing the development of new policy
- Statutory consultation
- Performance / budget monitoring report
- Cabinet request for scrutiny
- Full Council request for scrutiny
- Call-in of Cabinet decision
- Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee Y
- Other

### **The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

The Committee is asked to read the report and provide "views, comments and Recommendations for future areas of work

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**Background Papers: none**

**Category of Report: OPEN**

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT: JANUARY 2020**

### **1. Introduction/Context**

On 19th June 2019, the Home Secretary announced that £35m would be made available to establish Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 18 Force areas, including South Yorkshire, were invited to apply for an amount proposed by the Home Office.

Following a successful application, South Yorkshire secured £1.6m in August 2019 to establish the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (SYVRU).

The three main elements of work are:

- Enhancing Partnership Arrangements: these arrangements are intended to lay the foundations of a sustainable, multi-agency approach, both at strategic and operational levels
- ‘Scale Up’: local delivery of tried and tested multi-agency public health approaches to reducing violence
- New Projects - To deliver a range of new interventions and initiatives with partners across the county focussed on violence prevention and violence reduction

The funding must support delivery of the VRU function, which the Home Office defines as being, “to offer leadership and, working with all relevant agencies operating locally, strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence”<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup><file:///C:/Users/747724/Downloads/20190619%20VRU%20application%20guidance%201.0.pdf>

The Home Office specifies two mandatory products to be delivered by the end of March 2020:

- A South Yorkshire **Area Profile** – identifying the drivers of violence in local areas and the initial steps to identify the people most affected.
- A South Yorkshire violence **Response Strategy** – setting out the multiagency response to be delivered by the SYVRU and partners across South Yorkshire.

VRU activity must support a multi-agency, **public health approach** to preventing and reducing violence. The ‘South Yorkshire Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction’ is outlined below.

### **2. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?**

A public health approach to violence starts with the needs of the public or population group rather than with individual people. This means the work will be focused on communities, and with communities, groups and partners.

There is already a vast amount of work ongoing in Sheffield and South Yorkshire. Success of the VRU will be built upon coordinating, utilising and learning from

existing initiatives and resources in communities with partners, to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling violence across the city and county.

### 3. THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

A public health approach has five common elements<sup>2</sup>.

- prevention
- data and evidence base
- looking at what causes violence
- taking a population level approach
- working together in partnership

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/uniformed-policingfaculty/Documents/Public%20Health%20Approaches.pdf>

A public health approach starts with the needs of the public or population group rather than with individual people. Understanding the situation in each local area, from different perspectives, is essential to enabling effective targeting of resources and helping avoid unintended consequences or assumptions. Skilled use and interpretation of data and the evidence base is central to taking a public health approach. Using evidence based, ‘what works’ approaches, agreed at local level, is central to our approach.

Taking a public health approach means analysing what drives violence. These are often ‘social determinants’ or ‘structural factors’ and include things like: access to services, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), childhood trauma, family and social support, education, housing, community cohesion, income, work and physical/mental health, all of which underpin people’s lives. These drivers illustrate the need for partnership working, which is central to taking a public health approach.

The volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous nature of violence (and the causes of it) makes collaboration across many professions and services essential. Each partner has access to different skills, levers and mechanisms to affect change.

Public health approaches always consider the wider system, including communities. It is our intention that we always start with the voice of communities across South Yorkshire, combining this with evidence of what works, to ensure a comprehensive approach that reflects the reality of life in local areas.

Public health approaches have prevention at their core. In the SYVRU, we will focus on six key areas:

- Solid foundation** – we are committed to using and developing evidence, developing excellent relationships between partners, good governance, process and multiagency intelligence.
- Primary prevention** – we are committed to stopping violence before it begins.
- Secondary prevention** – we will halt the progression of violence as early as possible through early detection and prompt, effective intervention, including providing positive alternatives.
- Tertiary prevention** – we will provide a way out for people with established violent

behaviour, or those affected as a victim.

**Enforcement and criminal justice** – we will continue to disrupt criminality that often involves violence, like organised crime groups (OCGs) through Fortify.

**Attitudinal change** – in some areas of South Yorkshire, violence has become normalised. We will work to change attitudes to all types of violence at a societal, community and personal level.

## 4. WORK SO FAR

### 4.1 Area Profile

The Area Profile document is in early draft format and is currently being considered by the Violence Reduction Executive Board (The Board). (This Board has been established to provide strategic direction and oversight of the work being undertaken). We have engaged a graphic designer to work with us. They will work to make the profile more accessible by designing an interactive Portable Document Format (PDF) and then producing a number of infographics to support the data.

In tandem with the development of this Area Profile, we are looking to develop an internal dashboard of data, which we could use to answer further questions arising from the Profile. We anticipate this to be a much longer-term piece of work, and is likely to extend beyond March 2020.

The final interactive PDF will be presented to the Board at its March meeting, for any final alterations before sending to the Home Office by 31 March 2020.

It is expected to be published in mid May 2020. We hope the profile becomes a useful tool for partners and community organisations.

### 4.2 Community involvement: Paid community working groups

In May 2019, an event was held on Youth Violence, Masculinity and Mental Health in Sheffield with community members, elected members and third sector organisations. A recommendation was made that the Violence Reduction Unit should pay community members for their input into our response strategy.

The VRU has commissioned Voluntary Action Sheffield to lead and coordinate this work; subcontracting to Voluntary Action Rotherham and Co:Create for Barnsley and Doncaster. Nine workshops were held across South Yorkshire during December, engaging up to ten members of the community at each (both adults and young people), to get their insight into what it is like to live in their area, as well as seeking their input into the South Yorkshire Response Strategy.

### 4.3 Response Strategy

We have engaged a strategy consultant, to support us with the development of our Response Strategy for South Yorkshire. They will interview key stakeholders in each area of South Yorkshire to produce a ‘plan on a page’ for South Yorkshire, and depending on the outcome of the interviews, possibly a localised ‘plan on a page’ for Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield.

Interviews will take place with stakeholders in each area during the month of January. As a result, the consultant will produce a draft plan-on-a-page that will also

include information from the paid community working groups. In addition to this, they will facilitate a session with members of the Board at the January meeting, to further develop the plans. The March board meeting will agree a final draft.

From April 2020, the intention will be to develop a South Yorkshire Violence Reduction delivery plan, with key performance indicators going forward.

#### **4.4 Scale Up existing Activity**

The main activity that we are looking to scale up across South Yorkshire relates to preventing and tackling organised crime, which goes under the name, Fortify. This activity is co-ordinated across the whole of South Yorkshire by South Yorkshire Police through the Organised Crime Partnership Board. The Organised Crime Partnership Board is chaired by South Yorkshire Police's, Head of Crime. A public health approach had already begun to develop within Fortify, before the Home Office VRU funding announcement. In Sheffield, local Fortify meetings are chaired by the Chief Superintendent and Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council, and involve a range of partners.

SYVRU funding is enabling an extension of that approach within Fortify. The Fortify Fund was set up for partnership interventions to take place to prevent, reduce and disrupt violence associated with organised crime. The closing date was 6th November, and all successful bidders have been notified. Some examples of interventions that have been funded are: prevention activity focussed on drug and alcohol outreach work; reducing serious violence in South Yorkshire prisons; and, disruption to the sale of illegal and counterfeit goods.

#### **4.5.New Projects**

There are a number of new projects that aim to develop or test out new approaches across the county, with distinct target groups. The intention behind these projects is to analyse, assess and build business cases with a view to potentially upscaling the most successful in future years. A number of the projects are detailed below:

##### **Navigators (Accident and Emergency (A&E) and Police Custody)**

Using A&E and police custody as a 'reachable' and 'teachable' moments for people in contact with violence, we are seeking to provide support and intervention to break the cycle of offending and violence. Navigators will provide appropriate pathways, addressing needs such as education, training, housing, and substance misuse.

##### **Assertive Outreach**

Detached youth workers (that are based in the community), will be working with looked after children who are at risk of exploitation, due to frequent and/or high-risk missing episodes.

##### **Violence Reduction Fund**

The Violence Reduction Fund was for local community-based and partner organisations to bid for up to £20,000 of funding to prevent and reduce violence across our six key areas. The closing date was 31<sup>st</sup> October, and all successful bidders have been notified. Details relating to the Violence Reduction Fund, including the successful projects, appear in the appendix. Some examples of the interventions that have been funded are: youth engagement activities; interventions focussed on addressing violence in schools; violence

prevention focussed upon the Night Time Economy such as search mitts; and interventions focussed on promoting healthy relationships amongst young people.

#### **4.6. Interventions**

The Home Office set an expectation that at least 20% of funding would be spent on interventions. Taking account of our 'Scale Up' activity and our 'New Projects', we are proud to report that we are aiming to spend over 50% of our grant funding on interventions.

### **5. VRU STRUCTURE**

#### **Accommodation**

The SYVRU is located at Shepcote Lane Police Station in a purpose built office. The location is central for the county, close to the M1 and M18.

#### **Staffing**

The SYVRU is led by Joint Heads: Lee Berry (Temporary Superintendent) and Rachel Staniforth (Public Health Professional). This gives South Yorkshire a unique advantage, as the Unit has both a public health and policing perspective. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has a strategic advisor into the VRU Linda Mayhew.

There are local partnership leads working within the VRU. These leads come from each of the four local authorities to ensure: local linkages; identification of current work; ready access to data; and utilisation of existing relationships and work. Angela Greenwood is the Sheffield partnership lead and the senior partnership lead for the VRU. The leads also have connections back to their local communities and third sector. The leads also act as the link to the Community Safety Partnerships and will take an update report to each board and theme groups as required.

The VRU has a full-time analyst Mike Parker and administration assistant Neepa Bandyopadhyay, as well as a seconded communications Manager Samantha Mawson.

#### **Governance**

The SYVRU is overseen by the Violence Reduction Executive Board. This Board meets monthly. Membership of the Board is directed by the Home Office and includes: Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Public Health and/or Directors of Children's Services, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), education representatives, community, voluntary and faith sector representatives, youth offending team representatives and the South Yorkshire Police Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable.

An Elected Member Reference group, with a representative from each of the four local authorities across South Yorkshire, has also been established, which meets on a bi-monthly basis.

#### **Communication**

Activities include:

Creation of a SYVRU website:

<http://www.southyorkshireviolencedreductionunit.com>

Twitter account established, @sy\_vru

Twitter 'chats'

Monthly newsletter will be distributed internally and externally in due course.

## **6. Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to read the report and provide views and comments..

**Rachel Staniforth, Joint Head of the SYVRU**

**Lee Berry, Joint Head of the SYVRU**

**Angela Greenwood, Senior Partnership Lead, SYVRU**

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