

Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit

Briefing – December 2019

Introduction

Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit has been up and running for six months and brings together individuals from a range of services across the county.

We have team members representing youth offending teams, schools and colleges, public health, police, children’s social care, probation, community safety partnerships, Lancashire PCC, Lancashire County Council and the NHS.

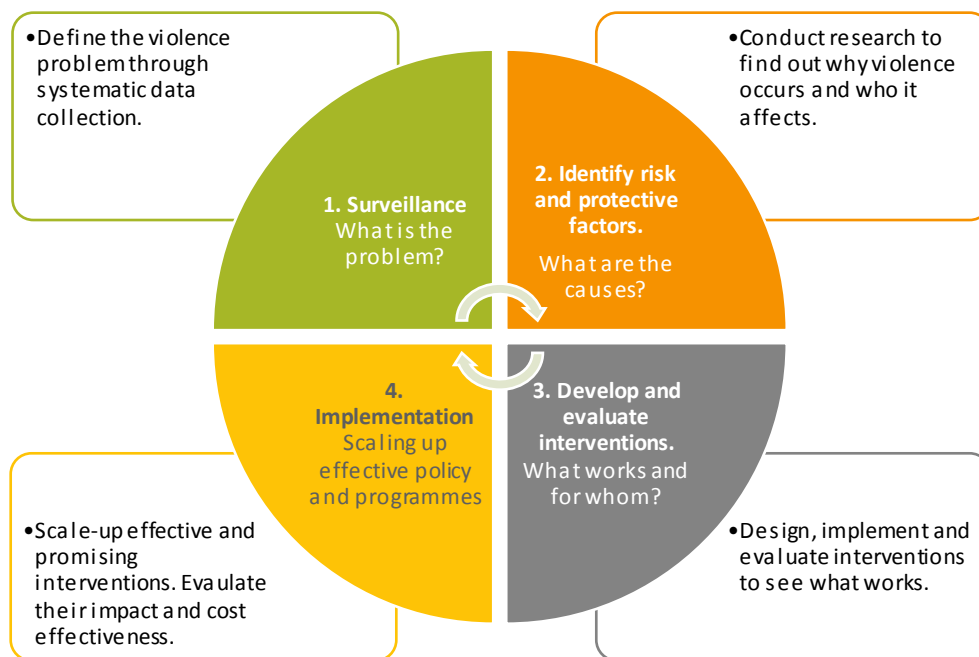
Taking a public health approach to tackling violence

Our approach is rooted in public health with prevention at the core.

This broadly means that we work to prevent the circumstances that lead to violence from happening.

To do this we’re taking a system-wide, multi-agency approach and are basing our decisions on evidence.

Here’s the public health process:



Strategic needs assessment and problem profile

We’re working together to develop a strategic needs assessment and problem profile to give a baseline understanding of violence in Lancashire and the prevalence of any risk factors.

We’ll use this assessment to develop the Lancashire VRU strategy and implementation plan.

The problem profile will be available in January.

Partner consultation events for the VRU strategy are being arranged for January and February, before we ask partners to sign off the strategy, ready for us to submit it to the Home Office.

We are working on seven work streams and have updates on some of these below.

Knife crime

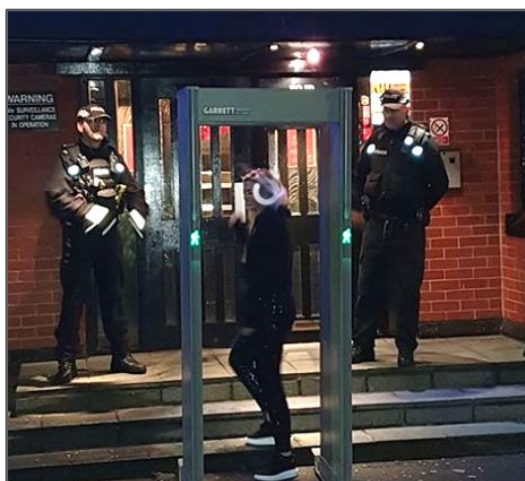
The Home Office has allocated funding specifically for tackling knife crime across four key areas:

- Hotspot locations
- Individuals and groups
- Investigative response
- Equipment and technology

What have we used the funding for?

Knife arches

We've acquired a number of knife arches and wands and are taking them out to targeted areas. So far these have been used in Preston city centre, Blackpool, Whalley (Ribble Valley), and Lancaster, with more operations planned over Christmas and the New Year.



1 Knife Arch being used outside a night club.

Knife bins

We've acquired 16 knife bins to ensure people have safe places to surrender knives and other bladed items.

Engagement and consultation

The funding has enabled a detailed piece of work to take place on understanding the drivers and causes of knife crime. We'll use this insight to develop a range of effective, evidence-based programmes for use in schools, colleges and community settings.

Test purchasing exercises

These are being carried out in partnership with trading standards officers.

Grants for community projects

The Police and Crime Commissioner allocated a portion of the grant to fund third sector and community organisations to deliver projects that help to tackle knife related crime.

There is a particular focus on those that aim to address the known underlying causes and drivers of knife crime. Of the 42 bids received, 11 have been successful, and will receive a total funding of over £180,000.

While programmes will be delivered across Lancashire there will be focus on identified hot spot areas where there is a particular need to input and support.

What have we achieved?

- Over 1,500 knives and weapons have been seized.
- Police use of stop and search has increased significantly in hotspot areas across the county.
- Police officers have visited 28 addresses after intercepting weapons and knives that had been bought online.



Figure 2 Knives and weapons intercepted at a mail distribution centre.

Trauma informed practice

Trauma-informed care means treating a whole person, taking into account past trauma and resulting coping mechanisms.

It's an approach that's being used to understand individuals' behaviour so that

they can be helped and treated more effectively.

Lancashire VRU and our partners will help communities and the workforce to understand violence and its relationship to trauma.

In particular, understanding the root causes of violence including adverse childhood experiences and the needs of the whole Lancashire population.

To raise awareness about trauma informed practice, the Lancashire VRU are developing strategies which incorporate core principles of safety, trust, collaboration, choice and empowerment.

We are developing the infrastructure needed to provide the leadership, challenge and direction for agencies to be trauma informed so that they can:

- understand trauma in the context of our communities and workforce
- help the workforce: identify and safely respond to people affected by trauma; understand the barriers and strategies to overcome these; offer emotional support through reflection and/or supervision
- prevent children, young people and vulnerable adults from taking violent actions and provide opportunities for developing life chances.

Look out for details of the trauma informed practice awards ceremony being held on March 27th 2020.

Save the date!

Friday March 27th 2020

Violence Reduction Unit Strategy launch and Trauma Informed Practice Awards Ceremony.

Further details to follow.

Divert

Divert is a Lancashire Police custody programme designed to divert 18-25 year-olds away from offending and into employment, development and education.

Working with community trusts the programme connects to a vast network of local provisions.

Our custody intervention coaches, based directly in police custody, speak with young adults with the ultimate aim of changing their direction so that they don't reoffend and have a reduced chance of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.



Working separately to the criminal justice system, and on a tailored approach within police custody, the programme uses time in custody as a teachable moment.

We speak with people arrested for possessing knives and weapons including offences that also drive violence including drug possession and supply.

This isn't a soft option; this is about that young adult taking responsibility and making better choices to change their life.

After they have left police custody, whatever the outcome our custody intervention coaches work in a proactive and timely way to secure opportunities for the young person.

Prison and prisoners' families

Within Lancashire a significant number of adults over the age of 18 are incarcerated each year.

Within that figure, we are aware that large numbers of children are affected by this enforced absence from their parent.

Well-evidenced studies of the impact of ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) demonstrate the impact this has on the emotional development and health and wellbeing of a child.

The Lancashire VRU, through its focus on resettlement and reducing violent reoffending will offer a programme designed to help people understand their own, and other people's behaviour more, to build skills to manage stress and to resolve problems and conflict effectively.

This programme will be offered to prisoners and a sister programme offered to members of their families in the community.

The aim of this support is to increase the family's wellbeing, assist in reintegration and reduce further offending post release.

The programme uses core skills recognised as effective in clinical practice and occupational practice such as sport.

This programme is set to be run across three Lancashire prisons and will be delivered in accordance with trauma informed practice methodology.

Violence Reduction Partnership Board

Governance of the Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit is provided by a partnership board with representatives from all of the key partners.

The board is chaired by the Director of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Angela Harrison and currently meets on a monthly basis.

- Friday 17th January
- Thursday 13th February
- Wednesday 18th March

Financial governance for both the knife crime funding and the VRU funding is provided by a Police and Crime Commissioner's Funding Oversight Group, which reports to the partnership board.

Want to know more?

Members of the VRU team are available to come and present to your organisation or team with an update on the work and developing role of the VRU.

You are also welcome to visit us in the VRU offices in County Hall, Preston.

For further information or to discuss a visit please contact:

Robert Ruston – VRU Programme Manager

T: 01772 533658

M: 07747 761853

E: Robert.ruston@lancashire-pcc.gov.uk

Lancashire Violence Reduction Unit

County Hall, Preston, Lancashire

lancsvru@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

01772 532397