2020-2025

Lancashire Serious Violence Strategy

Revised May 2023

LANCASHIRE
VIOLENCE REDUCTION
NETWORK

Foreword

Serious violence affects all Lancashire communities. The impact can be life changing, whether you are a victim, you know a victim or you have witnessed an incident personally.

The financial cost of violent crime to Lancashire is £302 million (2022-2023) but the human impact is much greater. Therefore, whilst we recognise the importance of enforcement, agencies and communities continue to endorse the greater need for continuing the focus on early intervention and prevention. Only by doing this and solving the root causes will we be able to reduce violence and leave a lasting legacy to support the communities of Lancashire to remain and feel safe from serious violence.

We have undertaken a lot of work to understand the needs of our communities through producing our pan-Lancashire strategic needs assessment (SNA). This continues to be the foundation of this strategy and since 2019 has helped us to identify our priority areas. Our needs assessment has helped us to focus work in our schools, within hospital accident and emergency departments and police custody suites.

We are sponsoring several work streams and community projects to try to alleviate some of the impact of child poverty, deprivation and unemployment across many areas in Lancashire. We cannot do any of this work without working closely with communities and learning from people who have lived experience.

This strategy will help us to develop and co-produce our approach with our communities, the third sector and our statutory partners.

In January 2023 the 'Serious Violence Duty' was enacted. For the first time, it specified agencies that have a statutory duty to focus on prevention of serious violence. The work of Lancashire Violence Reduction Network and its partners will now double down on the priorities identified in the 2023/ 24 SNA to drive the tactical delivery of this new legislation.

Finally, thank you to all of the young people, their families, and professionals that have helped us to develop this strategy. Lancashire Violence Reduction Network looks forward to continuing this important work in the coming months and years.

Many thanks,

Sue Clarke

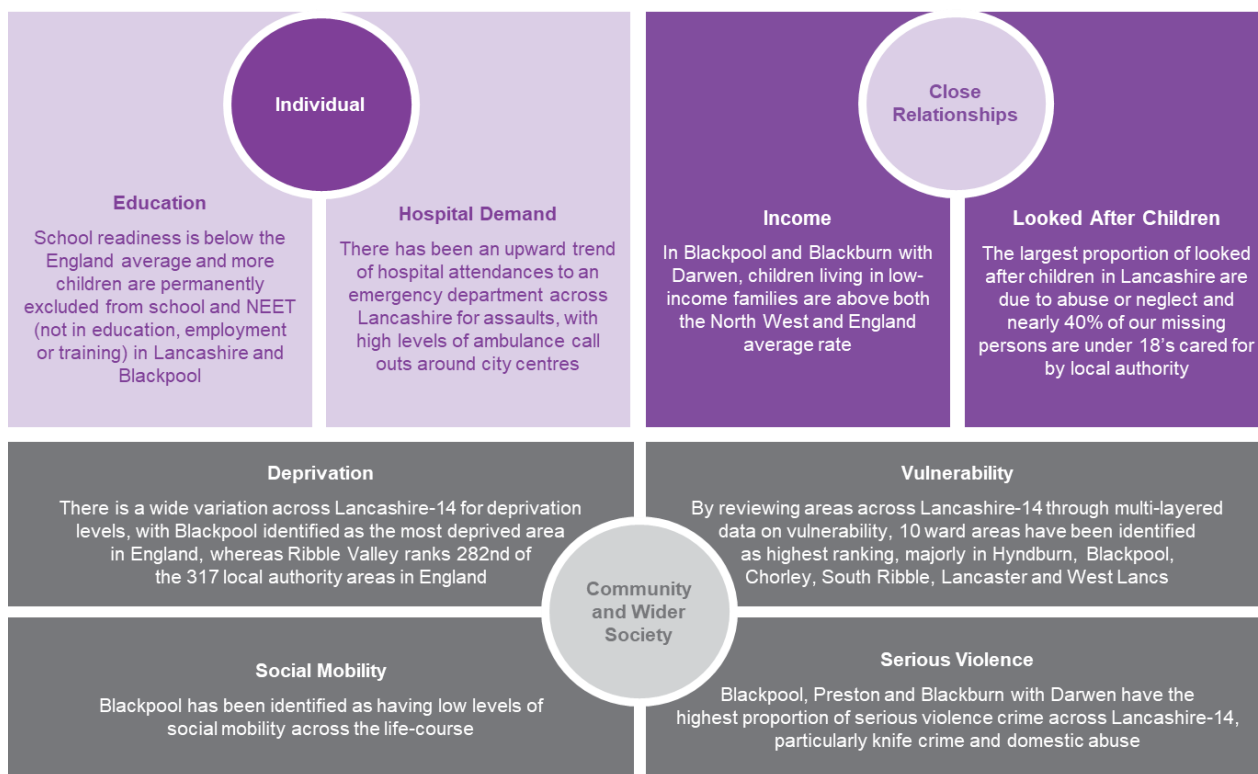*VRN Director*

Executive summary

Serious violence has devastating effects across all of our communities and destroys lives with intergenerational effects. At a national and local level it is a priority for government bodies and local communities as we all have a role to play to tackle serious violence and stop the needless loss of lives.

In July 2019, the Government announced Home Office funding to assist 18 police force areas to set up violence reduction units (VRUs). This was supported by a new national public health duty for serious violence, which covers the police, local councils, local health bodies, education representatives and youth offending services.

The duty places statutory responsibility on relevant services to work together by sharing data, intelligence and knowledge in order to understand and address the root causes of serious violence, including knife crime. It also requires organisations to target interventions to prevent and minimise the impact of violence.

Following the initial grant to establish a violence reduction unit based on local violent crime data, further funding has been received for the continuation of the LVRN until 2025. As an ongoing requirement of funding, a strategic needs assessment (SNA) is completed annually. The 2023 SNA made the following key findings (figure 1):

Figure 1

Individual

Education
School readiness is below the England average and more children are permanently excluded from school and NEET (not in education, employment or training) in Lancashire and Blackpool

Hospital Demand
There has been an upward trend of hospital attendances to an emergency department across Lancashire for assaults, with high levels of ambulance call outs around city centres

Close Relationships

Income
In Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen, children living in low-income families are above both the North West and England average rate

Looked After Children
The largest proportion of looked after children in Lancashire are due to abuse or neglect and nearly 40% of our missing persons are under 18's cared for by local authority

Community and Wider Society

Deprivation
There is a wide variation across Lancashire-14 for deprivation levels, with Blackpool identified as the most deprived area in England, whereas Ribble Valley ranks 282nd of the 317 local authority areas in England

Vulnerability
By reviewing areas across Lancashire-14 through multi-layered data on vulnerability, 10 ward areas have been identified as highest ranking, majorly in Hyndburn, Blackpool, Chorley, South Ribble, Lancaster and West Lancs

Social Mobility
Blackpool has been identified as having low levels of social mobility across the life-course

Serious Violence
Blackpool, Preston and Blackburn with Darwen have the highest proportion of serious violence crime across Lancashire-14, particularly knife crime and domestic abuse
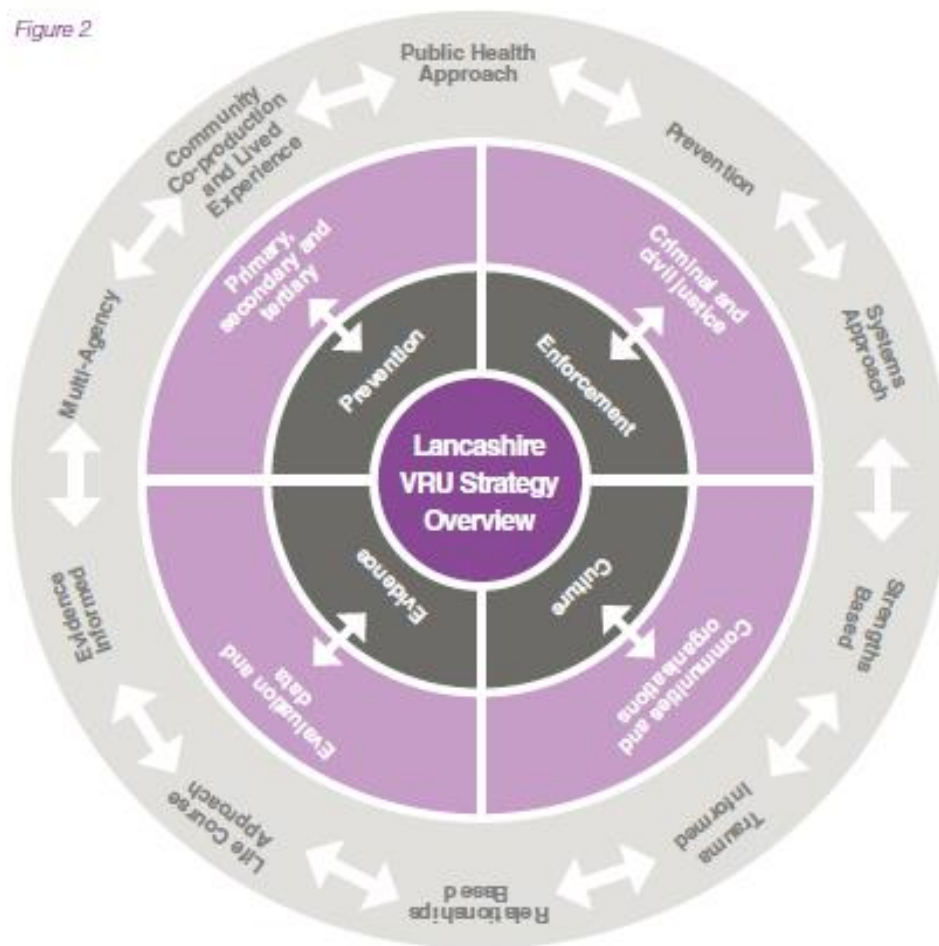
The Lancashire VRU has been named Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (VRN) and this strategy will deliver by prioritising action, leadership and system mobilisation in four priority areas (what we will do):

1. Prevention of serious violence

2. Enforcement

3. Cultural transformation and workforce development

4. Evidence: data and evaluation

Through delivery against these four priorities, the VRN and those signed up to this strategy will aspire and strive to ensure that 10 key principles become the 'golden threads' of action (how we'll do it). The strategy and associated principles are intrinsically linked and interchangeable as per the diagram below.

Our vision is for every person living or working in Lancashire to feel and be safe from violence and violent crime. We will achieve this through the four aforementioned priority areas (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2

Contents

1.0 Introduction to the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network

1.1 Background

In July 2019, the Government announced Home Office funding to assist 18 police force areas to set up violence reduction units. This was supported by a new national public health duty for serious violence to include the police, local councils, local health bodies, education representatives and youth offending services. The duty places statutory responsibility on relevant services to work together by sharing data, intelligence and knowledge in order to understand and address the root causes of serious violence, including knife crime. It also requires organisations to target interventions to prevent and minimise the impact of violence.

The Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner received a £1.16 million (April 2019 to March 2020) grant to establish a violence reduction unit based on local violent crime data. In year one, the Home Office grant stipulation includes the following expectations:

• Produce a problem profile and multi-agency long term strategy for reduction in serious violence;

• Offer leadership and strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence;

• Support a multi-agency public health approach to prevent and tackle serious violence;

• Focus on early intervention;

• Adopt the World Health Organization's definition based on data intelligence done with and for communities.

Preventing rather than reacting to serious violence has both human and economic benefits for individuals, families, communities, services and society as a whole. This strategy has been co-produced across the public, private and third sectors, reflecting a system wide commitment to tackling serious violence. This strategy documents the vision beyond the first year from 2020- 2025 and includes the long, short, and medium-term strategic aims of the Lancashire VRN.

1.2 The Lancashire vision

Our vision is for every person living or working in Lancashire to feel and be safe from violence and violent crime4 through four key priorities: prevention, enforcement, culture and developing an evidence-base of what works.

1.3 Our definition of serious violence

In April 2018, the then Home Secretary released the national Serious Violence Strategy, which acknowledges that there are many different types of serious violence, each with different drivers. There is no agreed inclusion or exclusion criteria for the crime types which make up 'serious violence.'

The Home Office funding criteria allows local violence reduction units to develop their own definition of violence and for the inclusion of domestic abuse and violence (DAV) as well as violence that occurs in the public realm. Taking a public health approach, the following approach to serious violence/violence will be adopted across Lancashire.

> *'Violence is 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, mal-development, or deprivation.'*
>
> *World Health Organization (WHO) definition of violence (2020)*

At the inaugural meeting of Lancashire Violence Reduction Network's leadership board, data was presented to contextualise the local picture. Lancashire's definition of serious violence was agreed to contain the following crime types and crime descriptors. In making this decision the group used Home Office guidance and high harm values (severity) based on the Cambridge Harm index (see figure 3):

Figure 3

Homicide	**Knife crime**	**Gun crime**
Assault resulting in injury	**Rape**	**Robbery**
Aggravated burglary	**Domestic abuse and violence (DAV)**	**Child exploitation (sexual and criminal)**

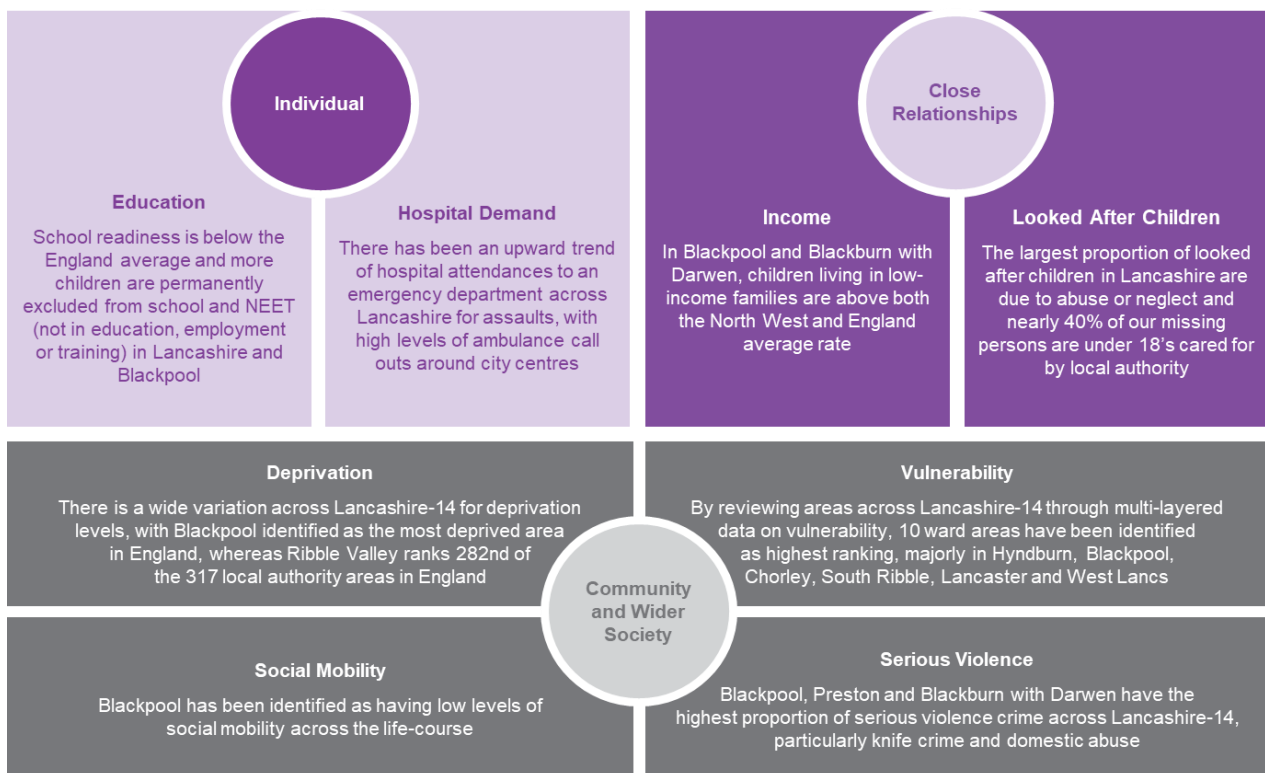## 1.4 What does Lancashire's needs assessment data tell us?

Violence and fear of violence can affect every member of Lancashire's communities and occurs in multiple scenarios, contexts and situations. It is not bound by any restrictions as it crosses cultures, race, gender, socio and economic statuses. For example, hospital admission rates for violence are around five times higher in the most deprived communities than in the most affluent (Bellis et al 2012).

Nationally, serious violent offences typically make up just 1% of all crime recorded by the police. However, they cause some of the most serious harms to individuals, communities and societies.

It is clear that there is a strong link between drugs and serious violence and the related harm and exploitation from county lines operations. The changing drugs market is identified as one of these drivers of the recent increase in violent crime. Therefore, Lancashire Constabulary and its partners are taking a range of actions to tackle county lines and the misuse of drugs and the links with violent crime in Lancashire.

Key findings from the Lancashire Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment are in figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Individual

Education
School readiness is below the England average and more children are permanently excluded from school and NEET (not in education, employment or training) in Lancashire and Blackpool

Hospital Demand
There has been an upward trend of hospital attendances to an emergency department across Lancashire for assaults, with high levels of ambulance call outs around city centres

Close Relationships

Income
In Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen, children living in low-income families are above both the North West and England average rate

Looked After Children
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Community and Wider Society

Social Mobility
Blackpool has been identified as having low levels of social mobility across the life-course

Serious Violence
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As suggested in the needs assessment, we will be taking the World Health Organization public health approach to serious violence to develop and embed the evidence base within our implementation plans going forwards. This will enable us to celebrate what is currently working in Lancashire and share best practice across the system (see figure 5).

1.5   How will the VRN achieve its aim?

The Lancashire VRN will achieve its aim through prioritising action, leadership and system mobilisation in four priority areas (what we will do):

1. Prevention of serious violence
2. Enforcement

3. Cultural transformation and workforce development

4. Evidence: data and evaluation

Through delivery against these four priorities, the VRN and those signed up to this strategy will aspire and strive to ensure that 10 key

principles become the 'golden threads' of action (how we will do it). The principles are detailed in section 2 of this strategy.

The implementation plans, which will sit alongside this strategy, will be regularly reviewed to ensure that delivery against the priorities remains appropriate.

1.5.1   Proportionate universalism

Like many population health concerns, the incidence of serious violence is affected by social inequalities (Lancashire Serious Violence Needs Assessment, 2019). In order to reduce the gradient of inequalities, Sir Michael Marmot describes the importance of proportionate universalism: doing something for everyone (a universal offer) but more for those who need it the most (targeted offer). Ensuring that there is a population, universal approach alongside targeted intervention ensures the maximise benefits for society as a whole (figure 6) and reduces inequalities in serious violence.

Figure 5

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Proportionate universalism
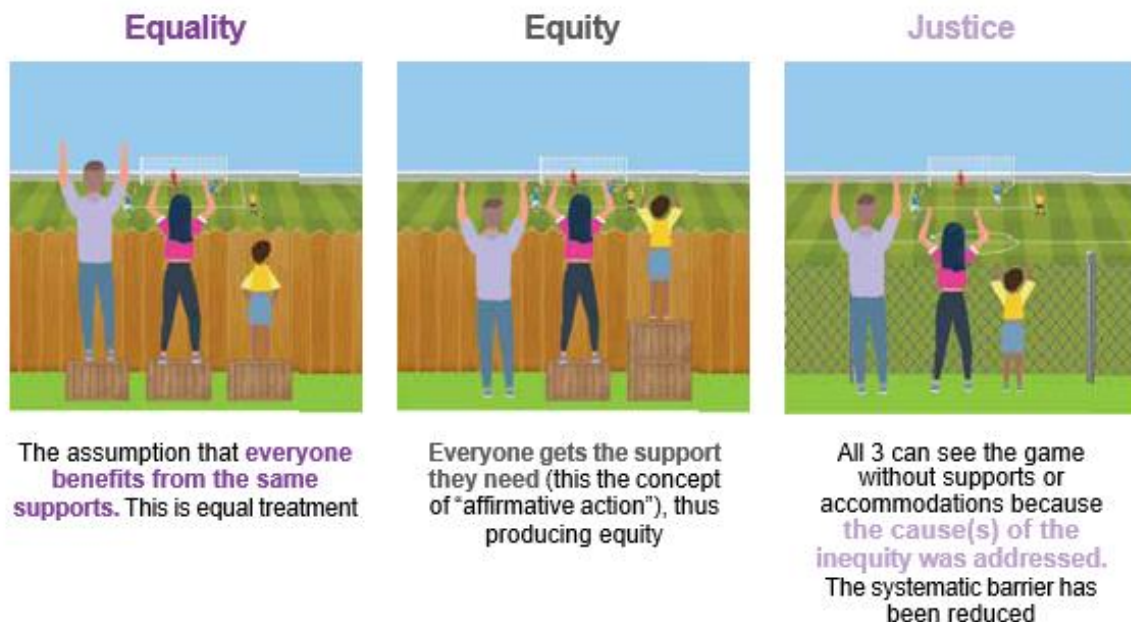
Through this approach, we will consider primary prevention opportunities at a universal level, targeted interventions for those at risk of being drawn into serious violence and to prevent re-offending by those who have already becoming involved. We will take this a step further through our cultural transformation priority. A contextual violence reduction and public health approach means not just looking at violence as an isolated incident. It does not mean excusing criminality, but it does mean that in order to genuinely change behaviour we need to recognise the context and influences that impact on individuals at significant points in their life; acknowledging that no individual

operates in a vacuum but is both part of and influenced by a huge range of other contexts.

1.5.2   Interdisciplinary team

The Lancashire VRN strategy will be driven and delivered by an interdisciplinary team incorporating (but not limited to):

education, youth justice, public health, health, police, probation, local government (including child and adult social care), criminal justice, third sector and victim services. Working closely with academics, health professionals and our communities, the VRN aims to provide a much richer insight into serious violence and how to best target resources to more effectively tackle the issue.

The approach to violence in Lancashire requires an integrated, system wide, multi-dimensional response recognising that the criminal justice enforcement led approach, whilst vital, is just one avenue to be pursued. It will include a broad range of activities encompassing public protection, identifying and supporting vulnerable people, building personal and community resilience and hope, and achieving joint aims of a healthy community environment. This will be a key role of the VRN to identify, promote, coordinate and develop opportunities for system leaders to explore and utilise.

1.5.3 Delivery, governance and interdependence

The violence reduction network's leadership board has been established to provide oversight and governance of the programme and to ensure that links are in place with other current work programmes addressing similar or complementary issues. As detailed in the Government's (2018) [Serious Violence Strategy](#), there already exists a number of programmes of work, which interrelate with the violence reduction strategy. Existing statutory arrangements and interdependencies include, for example: community safety partnerships; health and wellbeing boards; criminal justice boards; road safety partnerships; children's safeguarding assurance partnerships and adult arrangements; and youth justice boards.

In Lancashire, there are also many non-statutory, multi- agency governance groups and boards. The delivery and implementation of many elements of the strategy will capitalise on existing local delivery arrangements. Moving forwards, the VRN will continue to map out further interdependencies within the system in order to work together effectively and efficiently, to learn from and support existing arrangements, and avoid duplication. The VRN will work closely with the 11 Lancashire Community Safety Partnerships to deliver against the requirements of the new statutory public health duty for serious violence.

When thinking about violence reduction, extremism (as defined by HM Gov in 2015 as: the vocal or active opposition to British Values including rule of law, democracy, respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs, also regarded as extremism are the calls for the deaths of Armed Forces) and hate crime are just inclusions. Both extremism and hate crimes can manifest in violent behaviour and provoke community unrest, retaliation and perceived hostility.

In fact, the 'causes of the causes' for these are often similar to serious violence as a whole. The VRN recognises the impact that both hate crime and extremism can have and their interdependency with the wider VRN agenda.

1.5.4 A short, medium and long-term delivery plan

The VRN has one-year and five-year work plans which incorporate both violent and knife crime pilot work streams namely parenting, awareness raising, prevention, multi-agency violence reduction, accident and emergency department interventions, Lancashire Divert, prison and prisoner family programmes and family support to exploitation. The longer-term plan will focus on prevention, enforcement, cultural transformation, workforce development, evaluation and data. Full implementation plans will supplement this strategy.

1.5.5 Sustainability

The Lancashire VRN's strategy will have a focus on how to upscale what works and mainstream this once appropriate. This will include developing plans that ensure longevity, accountability, financial sustainability in order to respond to or prevent serious violence. As funding for the VRN is due to cease in March 2025, an options appraisal has been undertaken and work will begin to look at the best option for sustaining the workstreams and priorities. We will continue to work with partners across the system to mainstream good practice at the earliest opportunity in line with evaluation. We will continually review and evaluate the strategy and implementation.

2.0 Ten key strategic principles

The Lancashire VRN strategy and associated delivery programmes are underpinned by a number of key principles (Figure 2). These 'golden threads' are the foundations that we, our partners and the system will strive to underpin our strategic and operational activity.

Whilst these principles will drive the direction of the Lancashire VRN, they are not exhaustive and can be supplemented in the context of locally driven need.

It is important to note that these principles are not hierarchical; all the principles outlined are fundamental to the approach of Lancashire's VRN. However, there will be an aspiration to ensure that system leaders sign up to this strategy and the associated principles.

Figure 2
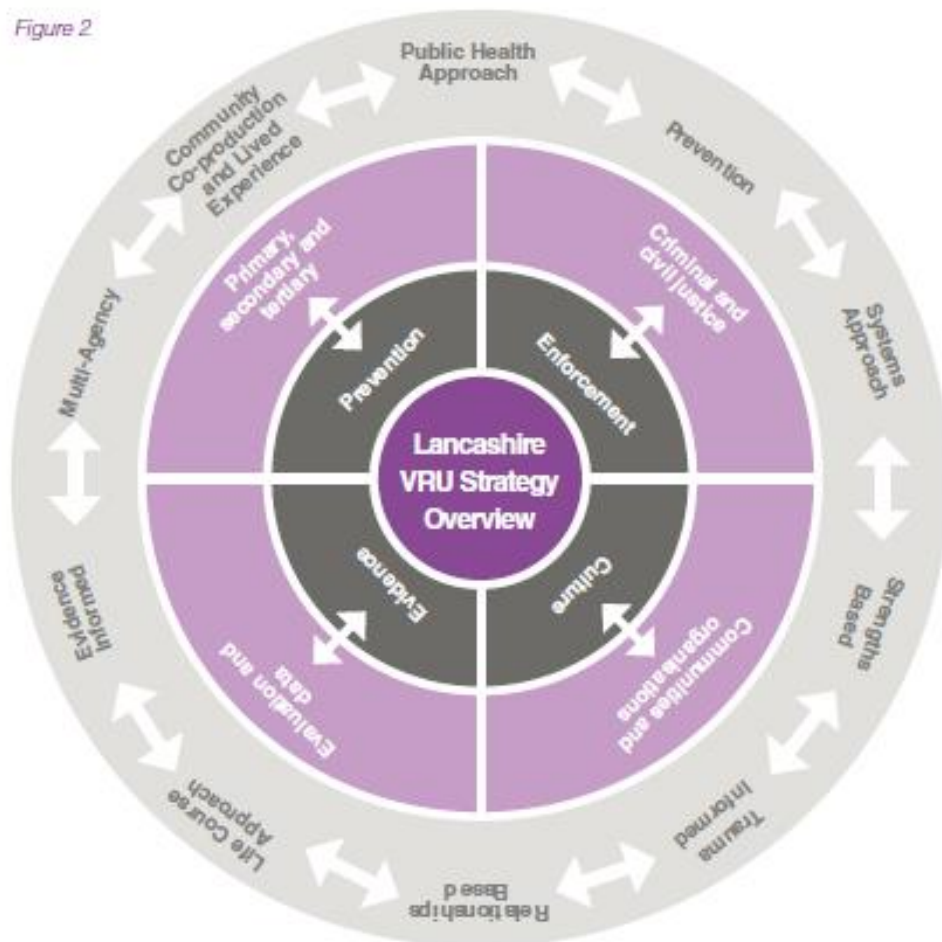
2.1 Principle one: Public health approach

A growing body of evidence tells us that violence is preventable. Since the publication of the World Health Organization's World report on violence and health in 2002, experience, research and intelligence has generated an understanding of the risk factors that contribute to violence, and the tactics, strategies and principles that can be implemented to prevent it. Further, we have a sound knowledge of the impact of violence and those most at risk of being either a perpetrator or victim.

The preventable nature of violence naturally lends itself to a public health approach with a strong focus on the 'causes of causes'. Furthermore, violence reflects many of the other common facets of important public health issues.

There are wide inequalities in the prevalence of violence, with the greatest impacts being felt by the most deprived communities. Further, there is a cyclic nature of violence, meaning, "much like many infections, violence is contagious".

For example, there is a solid understanding that exposure to violence in childhood (amongst other adverse childhood experiences), increases the risk of an individual becoming involved in violence in later life. Adversity in childhood is not deterministic and there are differing views about the appropriate use of the ACE methodology. Finally, there are masses of routine data sources from across a range of partners, which support the implementation of life-course prevention strategies from those at a universal through to a targeted level (see figure 7).The Government's Serious Violence Strategy (2018) advocates for a 'public health approach' (see figures 8 and 9 below), one that seeks to tackle the root causes as well as the immediate symptoms of violence, and that galvanises agencies beyond the police in support of this goal.
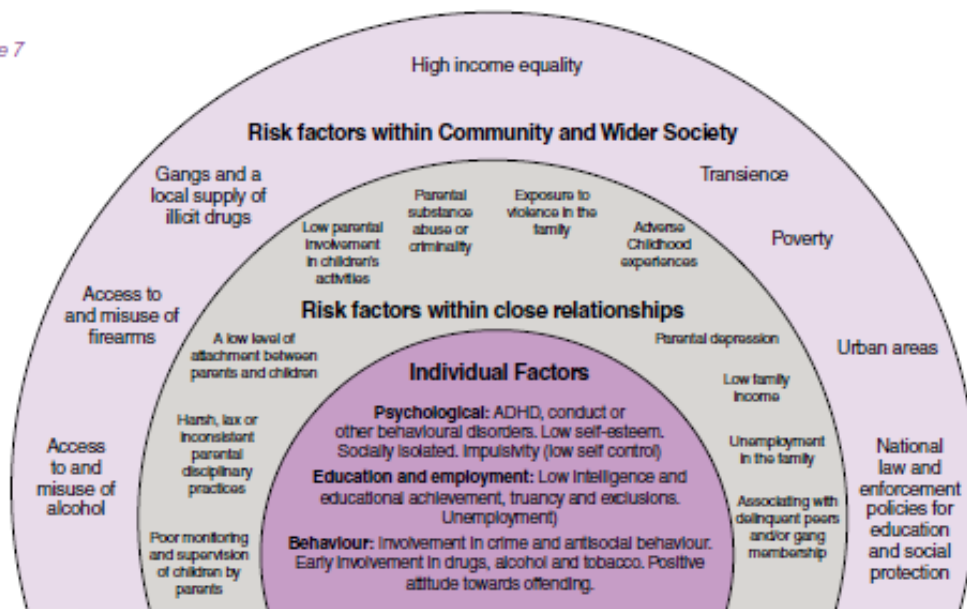

Figure 7

Figure 8

DATA AND EVIDENCE BASE

TERTIARY PREVENTION
SECONDARY PREVENTION
PRIMARY PREVENTION
PREVENTION

CAUSES OF THE CAUSES

POPULATION

PARTNERSHIP

Figure 9

Collaboration

Co-production

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS APPROACH

Counter-narrative

Cooperation in data and intelligence sharing

Further, the social determinants of health or 'causes of the causes,' combined with an understanding of approaches to behaviour change suggest that we need to consider interventions across all levels of the socio-ecological model. In terms of prevention or reduction of serious violence, this includes consideration of macro political and policy interventions, environmental design and structure as well as interventions aimed to support those most at risk of violence and primary prevention at population level (Figure 10).

Through appropriate Lancashire governance structures, the VRN will attempt to influence and develop local and national macro politics around violence reduction and public health approaches.

2.2 Principle two: Prevention

The Lancashire VRN strategy will focus on the whole spectrum of prevention opportunities available, from preventing the social determinants of serious violence (the 'causes of the causes'), to early identification of those at risk of serious violence and appropriate interventions to address this.

At the far end of the prevention spectrum, we will work with those who have committed serious violence to prevent re-offending, to reduce the harm of crime for victims, families and communities.' This model of prevention is often referred to as primary, secondary and tertiary prevention (figure 11). All partners in the VRN have the opportunity to consider, shape and mould their work, programmes and interventions to ensure that we maximise prevention across this whole continuum.
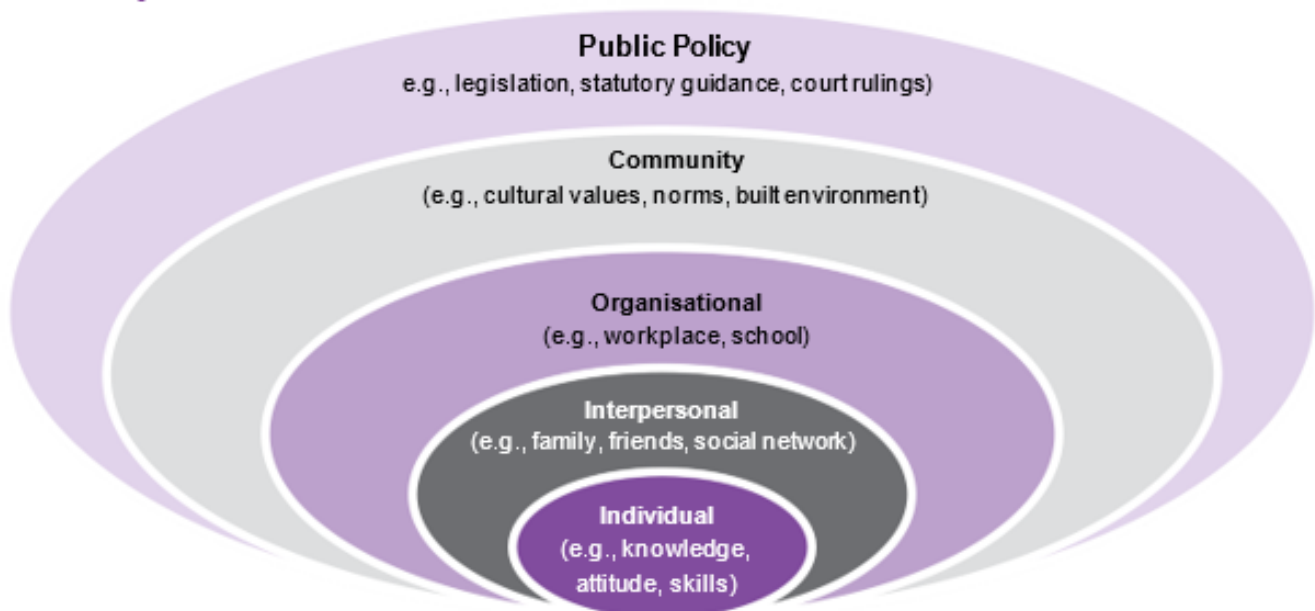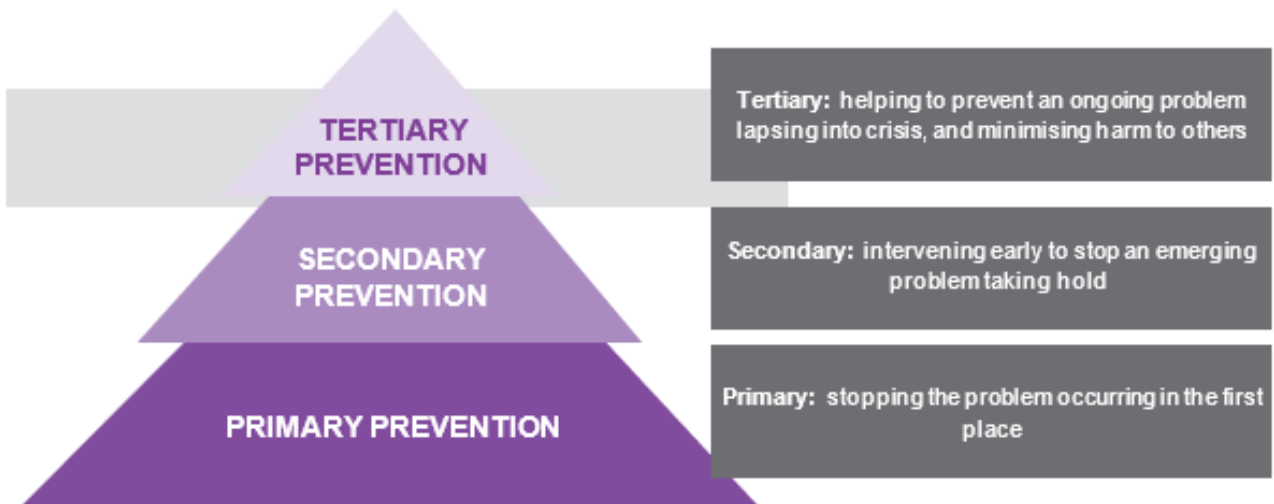
Figure 10

Public Policy
e.g., legislation, statutory guidance, court rulings)

Community
(e.g., cultural values, norms, built environment)

Organisational
(e.g., workplace, school)

Interpersonal
(e.g., family, friends, social network)

Individual
(e.g., knowledge, attitude, skills)

Figure 11

TERTIARY PREVENTION

SECONDARY PREVENTION

PRIMARY PREVENTION

Tertiary: helping to prevent an ongoing problem lapsing into crisis, and minimising harm to others

Secondary: intervening early to stop an emerging problem taking hold

Primary: stopping the problem occurring in the first place

2.3 Principle three: Community co-production and lived experience

Community co-production is about individuals and groups coming together to influence the work of the Lancashire VRN. The following four principles (although there are many more) are critical to putting co-production into action on a continual basis:

1) **Equality**: no one person or group is more important, everyone is equal and everyone has assets to contribute;

2) **Diversity**: we will work extra hard to involve people or groups who are more marginalised;

3) **Accessibility**: ensuring everyone has opportunity to take part (e.g. removing physical barriers and changing our language);

4) **Reciprocity**: everyone should get something out of contributing through a two-way process (e.g. learning, relationships, improved service or payment).

The VRN recognises the need to build upon existing community trust with organisations across the system in order to maximise the potential for community co- production and engagement.

Whilst community co-production involves any person or group - who may or may not have been involved in violence - lived experience is about drawing on the knowledge and understanding people gain when they have experienced violence (either as a victim, perpetrator or both) directly or indirectly. The Lancashire VRN will draw on community and lived experience co-production to plan and develop our approach and work plan.

2.4 Principle four: Whole systems approach

A whole systems approach is based on the idea that if something happens in one part of the system, other parts will also be affected. Another founding belief of systems theory is that it is not the individual elements that are important but the relationships and interactions between the parts, which enable a system to function. One version of a systems approach is the 'Vanguard Method,' which uses a 'check-plan-do' cycle to organise, manage and progress work. The Lancashire VRN will adopt the Vanguard Method, as follows:

• **Check**: How the system is currently working;

• **Plan**: Re-design a new purpose and system from the expertise of people who use services;

• **Do**: Implement the plans, evaluate its success and assess the sustainability of the new system.

In order to prevent and reduce violence, we will not complete the three steps once but we will engage in a continual cycle of improvement as we repeat the process over and over again to keep updating the system.

We aspire that the VRN strategy is communicated, adopted and delivered with all levels of the system in Lancashire e.g. Communities, frontline practitioners, middle and senior leadership.

2.5 Principle five: Life course approach

Life course and developmental factors are the ecological contexts, experiences, outcomes, and individual factors across the lifespan that increase or decrease the chances that a person will engage in violence. During childhood, a combination of individual characteristics, genetics, social and physical environmental experiences lead to increased risk of violence or development of protective factors, which protect against it. Taking a life course perspective to serious violence will allow the Lancashire VRN to understand the points at which individuals are most likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence. Taken within the wider socio-ecological model, the life course approach allows appropriate targeting of both population and individual programmes (figure 12).

Figure 12

18

2.6 Principle six: Trauma informed approach and practices

SAMHSA describes individual trauma as:

'An event, series of events of set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual wellbeing.'

Trauma is a term that refers to an emotional response to a distressing experience. The Lancashire VRN will adopt a trauma informed approach which:

• Refers to an understanding of trauma;

• Realises the potential neurological, biological, psychological and social impact of trauma;

• Recognises that anyone we come into contact with may have experienced trauma;

• Responds to the impact of trauma;

• Moves aware from blaming and judging people for their behavioural and psychological reactions, which may play out in acts of violence, to recognise that these responses may be a result of trauma;

• Understands that people with a history of trauma may find it more difficult to trust and engage with people, particularly professionals who are often seen to be in a position of power and authority;

• Promotes strengths, protective factors and resilience;

• Recognises the importance of relationships;

• Emphasises the importance of support mechanisms for professionals and families to reduce the impact of secondary vicarious and secondary trauma.

2.7 Principle seven: Relationship based approach

Relationships based practice is founded on the argument that relationships are of paramount importance and should be at the heart of all good practice. Physically, emotionally and sexually abusive relationships; emotionally and physically neglectful relationships; interpersonal conflict; relationships breakdown; and bereavement are all examples of traumatic events, which increase the risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence.

Unsurprisingly, given their importance throughout life, relationships also play a fundamental role in preventing, triggering and responding to violence. Relationships play a pivotal role in rebuilding a sense of safety, trust and self-worth. For these reasons, Lancashire VRN will aim to develop healthy and supportive relationships, to prevent violence and enable people to recover from trauma.

2.8 Principle eight: Strengths based approach

Through a strengths-based approach, the Lancashire VRN will work with individuals and communities to draw upon a person's or local area's assets and resources to reduce and prevent violence.

People who are victims of violence may have low self-confidence, feel unworthy or may even feel guilty for being involved in behaviour that is not socially acceptable. Similarly, perpetrators may feel a sense of guilt that they have broken moral standards. Whilst guilt refers to having been involved in wrongdoings ("I have done bad things"), shame is seen as more destructive and long lasting, where an individual actually believes "I am a bad person". Both guilt and shame are emotions, which can prevent people from seeing their own strengths.

Enabling a person to recognise their strengths can be key to changing a person's self-perception and building protective factors. A strengths based approach demands a move away from labelling, blaming, stigmatising or judging people who have been involved in violence, to focus on capitalising on available personal and community assets to enable them to find turning points to live safer and happier lives.

2.9 Principle nine: Evidence informed approach

Lancashire VRU takes an evidence-informed approach. Adopting a research in practice perspective, evidence- informed practice is not only about applying academic research to practice situations. It is a two-way process whereby practice informs evidence and evidence informs practice. Whilst we support, value and aim to embed the use of academic evidence, we do not consider it superior. Instead, we follow a model that brings together various forms of evidence:

• Lived experience and wider community perspectives;

• Professional experience and expertise;

• Local, national and international data;

• Published and grey literature.

We define our evidence-informed approach as a process of integrating evidence-informed interventions with community and professional experiences to reduce violence. Although, we strive to take into consideration "what works" and the "best" evidence, we remain aware that evidence is limited as people, programmes, practices, resources and wider societal factors change, evidence develops and new findings emerge.

Evidence informs us about the impact of an intervention, at a particular point in time, in a particular place, with a particular population. It does not mean that the same programme will necessarily have the same impact or be the "best" approach within Lancashire. Even within Lancashire, different communities will benefit from different interventions.

Taking into consideration the limitations to "what works" and "best" evidence whilst adopting a systems approach, we note:

• **Evidence constantly evolves**: therefore, we need to re-evaluate and adapt our response;

• **There is a need for continual monitoring**: a lack of evidence does not necessarily mean that an intervention is 'ineffective,' often this can be for a whole host of different reasons (e.g. a programme is in the early stages of development or has not yet evaluated outcomes). It is therefore fundamental to continue to reflect and monitor programmes.

• **Evidence forms part of a bigger system**: evidence of effectiveness is useful to guide our approach, but the evidence forms part of a larger picture that involves consideration of resources and the needs of different local populations.

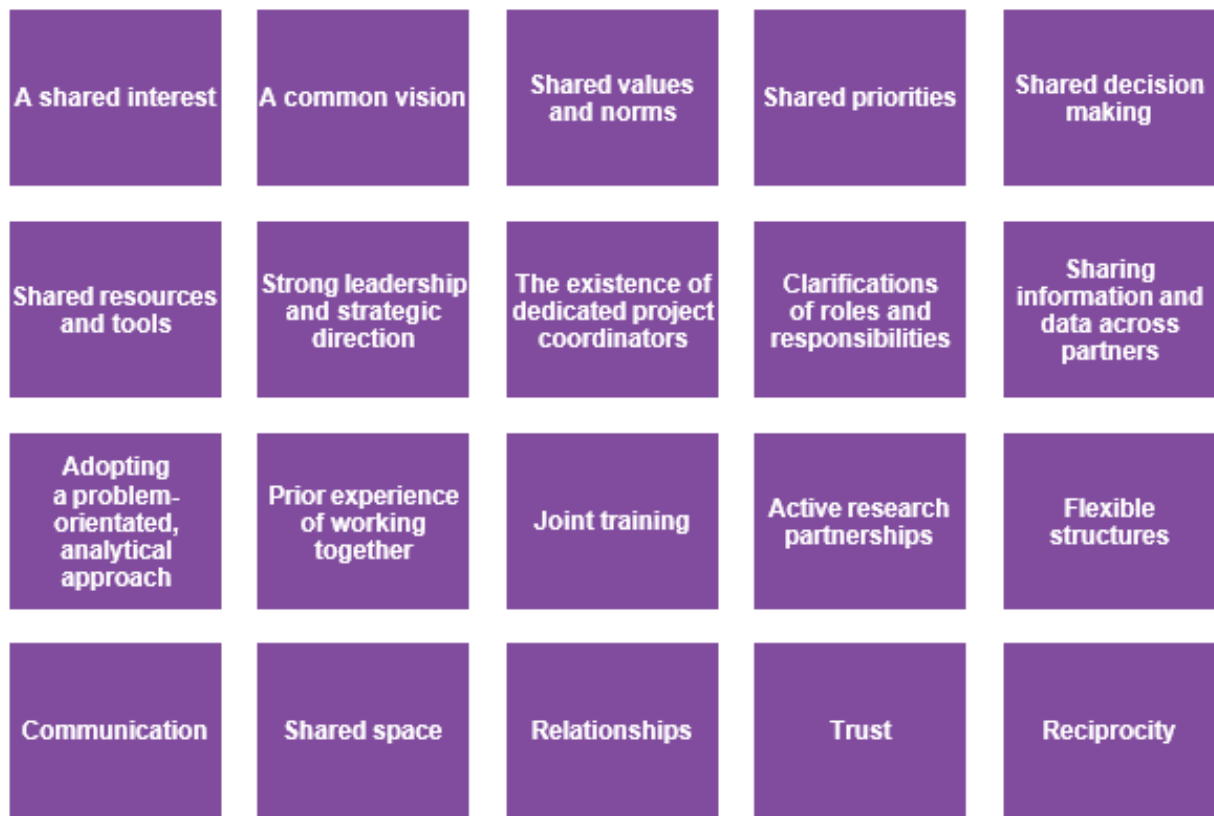## 2.10 Principle ten: Integrated approach

'Partnerships enable different people and organisations to support each other by leveraging, combining and capitalising on their complementary strengths and capabilities'.

Preventing violence goes beyond the responsibilities, competencies and expertise of any one agency or profession. There is no single cause or solution to violence. As a result, in order to identify where there is a risk of violence, and to respond accordingly, we need to work in collaboration.

A collaborative approach brings stakeholders together from public, private and third sectors – from a broad range of backgrounds and disciplines, across practice and research, at all levels – to jointly develop and take ownership of preventing violence. Our approach in Lancashire moves beyond "multi" agency working, where multiple organisations work in parallel, yet maintain distinctive professional and organisational boundaries. Instead, we advocate an "integrated" approach, which is associated with a greater degree of engagement, interaction and merging of ideas to form new practices.

Lancashire's VRN will challenge traditional organisational structures to: combine and coordinate effectively the contributions of different actors towards a collective and clear understanding of the problems; jointly deliver appropriate interventions; work in partnership to evaluate impact; and capitalise on different expertise in order to continually learn and adapt. We will work together to build mechanisms associated with effective partnership working including (but not limited to, see figure 13):

Figure 13

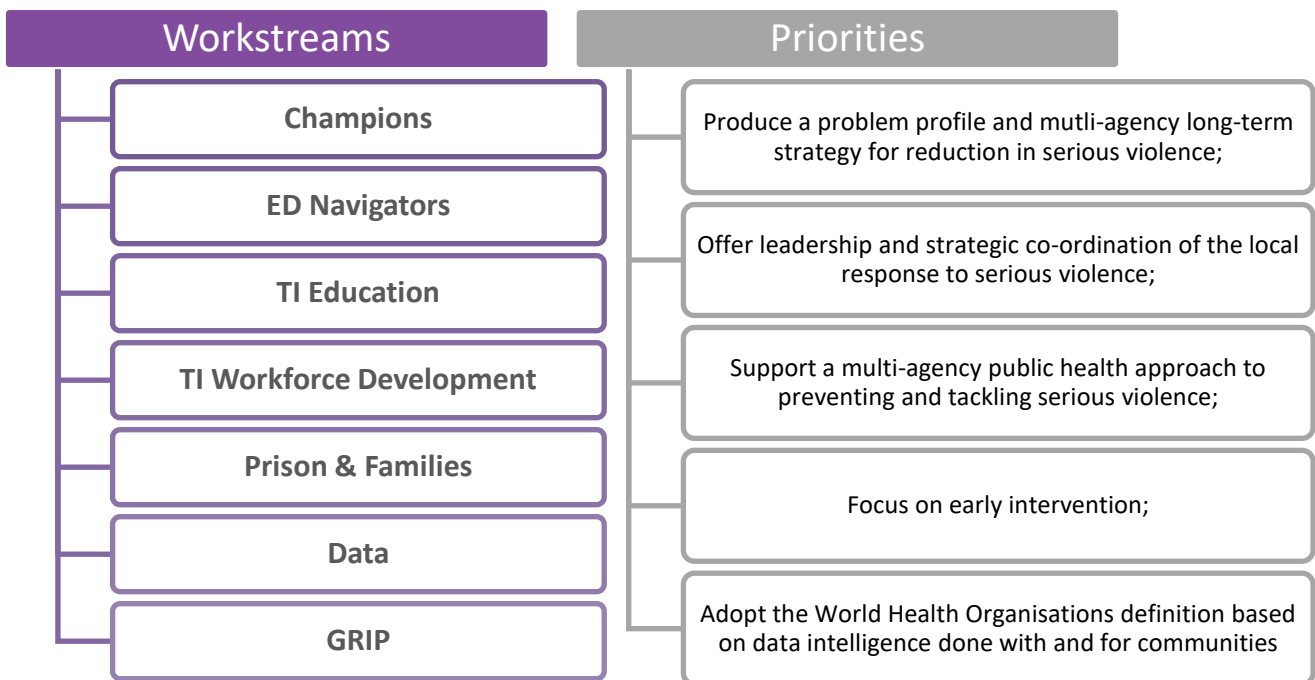| A shared interest	A common vision	Shared values and norms	Shared priorities	Shared decision making
Shared resources and tools	Strong leadership and strategic direction	The existence of dedicated project coordinators	Clarifications of roles and responsibilities	Sharing information and data across partners
Adopting a problem-orientated, analytical approach	Prior experience of working together	Joint training	Active research partnerships	Flexible structures
Communication	Shared space	Relationships	Trust	Reciprocity

3.0 Priorities

Whilst the principles of this strategy provide a golden thread for the way that the VRN will develop its approach and work programmes, the four priority areas (prevention, enforcement, cultural transformation, including workforce development, evaluation and data) set the plan of action and direction of travel for work programmes 2020-2025 (see figure 14).

The initial priority objectives have been designed to address the findings of the strategic needs assessment at the outset of the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network.

The work programmes under these are likely to flex and develop over the period of the strategy in accordance with identified need and evidence base, locally, nationally and internationally. This will also include learning from developing practice within the Lancashire VRN and that of our partners in other VRUs across the UK.

We recognise that the development of a successful VRN, which has significant impact for and with our communities will require us to take calculated risks, undertake pilots and experiments and learn along the way.

Figure 14

Workstreams	Priorities
Champions	Produce a problem profile and mutli-agency long-term strategy for reduction in serious violence;
ED Navigators	Offer leadership and strategic co-ordination of the local response to serious violence;
TI Education	Support a multi-agency public health approach to preventing and tackling serious violence;
TI Workforce Development	
Prison & Families	Focus on early intervention;
Data	Adopt the World Health Organisations definition based on data intelligence done with and for communities
GRIP	

3.1 Priority 1: Prevention

3.1.1   Aim

To prevent and reduce violence and its social determinants.

3.1.2   Objectives

The aim of this priority will be achieved through three levels of prevention:

• Primary prevention: Preventing the problem occurring in the first place. Acting to prevent the 'causes of causes' or risk factors for serious violence. Action to reduce inequalities in the risk factors for violence.

• Secondary prevention: Early identification of risk factors of serious violence. Intervening early when risk factors of serious violence are identified to prevent violence incidents.

• Tertiary prevention: Reducing reoffending or the negative consequences of serious violence.

3.1.3   How will this reduce violence in Lancashire?

The strategic needs assessment identifies priority areas for prevention of violence in Lancashire. These priorities include both for the 'causes of causes' or social determinants of violence, and for specific violence types, victim profile and offender profile. The most recent SNA split the priorities into individual factors, protective factors within close relationships and protective factors within communities and wider society. Some of the areas for action may span the three objectives of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention approaches. Programmes of work will be evidence informed. Overall VRN spending will aim to take into consideration opportunities to maximise primary prevention.

Prevention programmes will continue to be developed over the course of the strategy in line with the strategic needs assessment and ongoing understanding of local needs and assets. A full delivery programme and action plan will be developed for each year of this strategy implementation to work alongside existing practice and ethos such as contextual safeguarding.

The current SNA provides recommendations in line with all three prevention stands. The Lancashire VRN will work in partnership across the system in Lancashire to influence, deliver and support prevention programmes.

3.1.4 Outcome measures, process and delivery

• At least 50% of VRN prevention activity delivering primary prevention interventions (both VRN funded and VRN team membership activity)

• Prevention programmes which span the life course of serious violence

• Prevention considered as a key interdependency in all other priority areas where appropriate

3.1.5   Prevention programme outcomes

• All programmes within the VRN influence and delivery will consider how they can demonstrate outcomes which show improvement in the social determinants of health (the causes of the causes), particularly those highlighted as areas of concern or need for Lancashire within the SNA

• All prevention activity will provide outcome measures for impact on serious violence incidents

3.2 Priority 2: Enforcement

This VRN strategy places strong emphasis upon the recognition that we cannot enforce our way out of the problem of serious violence. However, enforcement activity remains a component of the overall strategy as a complementary element of the approach.

3.2.1 Aim

To reduce serious violent crime and the opportunity to commit serious violent crime within Lancashire.

3.2.2 Objectives

• To direct proactive operational enforcement activity within hot-spot areas across Lancashire to target serious violent crime.

• By using a problem analysis approach to identify the location, offender and victim will inform multi-agency operational activity.

• To carry out proportionate enforcement activity that is focused on the identified problem profile.

• To develop innovative evidenced-informed multi- agency enforcement activity across Lancashire and use appropriate civil and criminal legislation to do so.

• To maintain the 4P delivery framework of: prepare, prevent, pursue and protect in line with the National serious and organised crime strategy.

• To strengthen the restorative and rehabilitative approach to our enforcement practice throughout Lancashire.

3.2.3 How will this reduce violence in Lancashire?

The primary objective is to reduce serious violence in public places.

It is essential that Lancashire continues to pursue, disrupt and prosecute those who commit serious violent crimes, ensuring an effective policing and criminal justice system response, especially for victims in the future. This strategy's message is that a multiple strand approach is essential to tackling and reducing serious violence.

A proactive robust response to law enforcement remains a critical strand within this approach. Force and regional strategic assessments and serious and organised local profiles have identified new and emerging global threats affecting Lancashire's communities. All this presents a complex demand profile that needs the support of partners at local, regional, national and international level to ensure the government 4P approach is delivered effectively.

The threat of serious and organised violence is often hidden and/or unreported. The most direct harm continues to be through the distribution and supply of controlled drugs, the adverse impact of drugs and vulnerabilities associated with these crimes remains one of the most significant threats within Lancashire.

The secondary impact from drug dealing is associated violence and threats, including the use of weapons and firearms and the harm it causes amongst the community. The work of the Lancashire VRN will support key interdependencies with the 'Pursue' activities of the Serious Organised Crime Strategy.

In Lancashire we know that violent crime tends to be concentrated in small areas, usually urban, and by focusing resources and activities on these 'hotspots,' evidence shows that crime is reduced not only in these specific areas but potentially also in the wider geographic area. Hot spot targeting been found to be particularly effective for offences involving violent crime, especially when used in conjunction with problem- oriented partnership approaches.

Lancashire VRN will endeavour to ensure resources with the requisite capabilities and capacity are dedicated to delivering against the strategy. A wider response with co-ordinated use of organisations tools and powers will commission resources from statutory, private and third sector organisations to provide effective enforcement where required to address serious violence through an integrated multi-agency response.

3.2.4   Outcome measures

Our focus will include serious violence that is identified as a key trend in exploitation, domestic abuse, county lines and drug supply. Primary measures of success at a national level for knife crime are as follows:

• A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25;

• A reduction in knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25;

• A reduction in all non-domestic homicides and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives.

The key serious violence outcome measures include:

• Reduced homicide

• Reduced rape

• Reduced knife crime

• Reduced gun crime

• Reduced violence with injury

• Reduced robbery

• Reduced aggravated burglary

• Reduced domestic abuse

• Reduced child exploitation

• Reduced re-offending for serious violence

• Increase trust and confidence in public service

3.3 Priority 3: Cultural transformation and workforce development

3.3.1 Aim

To develop Lancashire into a trauma-informed county, entitled 'Trauma-Informed Lancashire'.

3.3.2 Objectives

The VRN will contribute to this aim by:

• Harnessing and sharing resources and good practice on the implementation of a trauma informed approach;

• Challenging resistance to change;

• Supporting the development of trauma informed practice across Lancashire through a phased approach

• To embed and deliver the workforce development strategy

• To assist system leaders with their organisational development strategies in line with trauma informed principles and practice.

• To work with those with lived experience to develop trauma informed practice.

• To develop trauma informed community models with local communities

3.3.3 How will this reduce violence in Lancashire?

It will help communities and the workforce understand violence and its relationship to trauma, by focusing on eight principles:

1) Recognise trauma: find out if a person has experienced trauma.

2) Safety: Enable those accessing services feel culturally, physically and psychologically safe.

3) Avoid re-traumatisation: Be conscious to prevent triggering feelings of powerlessness.

5) Trust: Transparent organisational procedures and decisions, including timely, accurate and honest information about what is happening, what will happen next and why.

6) Collaboration: Understanding power imbalances and working to 'flatten the hierarchy' and make shared decisions.

7) Empowerment: Enable people to feel valued, recognise their strengths, develop new skills and become independent.

8) Choice: Promote choice.

3.3.4 Outcome measures

Year 3:

• Paradigm shift for partners with regard to their culture around TI Practice – implementation and monitoring (most changes to policy, practice or environment have been initiated)

• Less burnout and compassion fatigue/ attendance at work/better health and well-being

• Capacity building and sustainability through completion of all phases of the TI Practice Strategy Model addressed – (incl. reflection/ review of policies and procedures)

• Phased approach to trauma intervention and recovery

Year 5:

• TI Cultures evident through the: adoption of changes within policies and procedures, which have been documented; whole system

• Data used to validate the need for trauma informed cultures

• Impact of TI communities change is evaluated for staff, service users and the whole system

3.4 Priority 4: Evidence, data and evaluation

3.4.1 Aim

To capitalise on the use of evidence, theory, data and evaluation to reduce violence and serious violence within Lancashire.

Provide the right level of information about vulnerable children and families, at the right time, in an easy way for the relevant Children's Workforce and Early help professionals, tactical managers, and strategic leaders to support delivery of better outcomes for children and their families.

3.4.2 Objectives

• Develop the evidence-base to understand the prevalence, problems and needs experienced locally in relation to serious violence (e.g. via an update to the annual Strategic Needs Assessment [SNA]).

• Take into consideration the "best" available evidence (e.g. evidence from the 'What Works' Centres and meta-analyses and findings from the SNA) when designing, developing, commissioning and implementing interventions to reduce and prevent serious violence within Lancashire.

• Carry out evaluations to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions, thereby contributing to continual learning.

• Utilise the 'Pan-Lancashire Data Group' and the 'Pan-Lancashire Data Ethics Working Group' to collaborate, consult, and align partners regarding data sharing initiatives and current areas of discussion.

• Support the development of the Family Hubs Information Sharing Service FHISS) which will: significantly improve quality and fluidity of data sharing; provide professionals with confidence that data sharing is legal, ethical and has robust governance; transparent with the public; and established in a way that removes costly data matching exercises.

3.4.3. How will we use evaluation and data to reduce violence in Lancashire?

We will:

1) Establish the extent to which evidence-informed approaches, including parenting programmes, good quality early years education, life and emotional skills training, bullying prevention programmes and therapeutic approaches for young people at greatest risk of becoming involved in or already involved in violence:

   a) Are currently provided across Lancashire;
   b) Have been evaluated and what the findings suggest;
   c) Could be implemented.

2) Target resources and promote shared understanding of local approaches to "hotspot" policing, "place-based" approaches, "problem-orientated policing" and restorative justice and establish their effectiveness and potential for further development.

3) Establish the prevalence and patterns of violence in Lancashire and implement approaches that address the associated risk factors and enhance protective factors, based on learning from well-evidenced approaches. If the evidence-base appears to be limited in an area, it will be important to:

   a) Conduct literature reviews to establish the availability and quality of evidence regarding approaches to prevent violence;
   b) Pilot new approaches, whilst ensuring rigorous evaluation of such pilots prior to further expansion.

4) Monitor the success of interventions.

5) Keep up-to-date with new evidence.

6) Embed learning and recommendations in order to adapt Lancashire's approach to successfully prevent and reduce serious violence in the future.

3.4.4 How will we use and develop data to reduce violence in Lancashire?

Through the development of the FHISS, it is anticipated that several business benefits will be realised, including:

• Providing practitioners with better quality data thus a more holistic view of individuals

• Readily available information for practitioners, enabling them to refer to other services

• More targeted support before escalation

• Practitioners saving time on manual tasks, enabling more quality time for better outcomes

• Families not having to re-tell their stories and thus adopting a trauma informed approach

• Reduction in duplicate analysis across the local authority and partnerships

3.4.5 Outcome measures

The Home Office key success measures for VRUs are a reduction in:

1) Non-domestic homicide rates;

2) Hospital admissions for injury/ assaults caused by a knife/ sharp object

3) Police-recorded knife crime.

The LVRN key outcomes are a reduction in serious violence, and risk factors associated with serious violence. In particularly, focus will be on measuring positive changes in terms of the needs of Lancashire, as identified in the Lancashire Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment. Each programme of work will have its own theory of change, detailing the short- and longer-term outcomes, and impact. For example, as part of the Emergency Department Navigator's programme of work, we will work with health colleagues to ascertain whether there has been a reduction in emergency attendances at hospitals as a result of serious violence.

In relation to the prisoners and prisoners' families work stream, we will look for reductions in reoffending.

The LVRN will also take part in the national evaluation work, funded by the Home Office. This central evaluation work focuses on evaluating VRUs as a whole, meaning the totality of the strategic multi-agency response to serious violence, rather than the individual interventions implemented by the VRUs. To avoid duplication, the focus of the Lancashire VRN local evaluation work will be on understanding what works at an intervention level. Dependent on the stage of each intervention, we will conduct feasibility, process, impact and economic evaluations of VRN programmes

Figure 15

Example outcomes and measures (based on SNA)	
Outcomes	**Measures**
Improvements in education	Rates of persistent absentees; exclusions; academic attainment and school readiness
Improvements in child development	Child development problem solving/ communication/ 'good' level of development
Improved mental health/wellbeing	% of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs; mental health hospital admissions
Improved poverty and employment	Numbers of homeless people/children in low in-come families; numbers of unemployed adults
Reductions in hospital admissions for substance and alcohol 'misuse'	Numbers of hospital admissions due to substance 'misuse'/alcohol issues
Reductions in serious violence	Numbers of arrests/charges; attendances at A&E by assault; referrals to YOT; reported crime
Improved feelings of safety	Community perceptions; reported crime

4.0 Communications Strategy

Our VRN communications strategy focuses on keeping both partners and wider community, informed, and involved with VRN activity.

Our communications strategy is split into three top tier strands which allow us to provide communications and engagement in the most effective way (see figure 16). We are continuously working to both **involve, inform,** and **consult** members of the public on the realities of violence in Lancashire,

including what causes violence, to encourage a more compassionate Trauma Informed culture.

An example of this is our knife crime work where we have implemented an in-depth research programme which is now informing our communications approach including channels, messaging and imagery. This continues to be monitored with ongoing feedback.

Figure 16

1. Involve

Involve programme users, wider communities and partners in shaping our workstreams in line with key objectives. Encourage two-way interactions and promote these interactions through our channels.

2. Inform

Through a variety of channels and platforms, inform partners and communities on what activity is happening within the VRN. Keep website and both external and internal communication channels up to date and relevant.

3. Consult

Consult with young people within our communities and use findings to inform and influence activities. Ensure feedback from consultations is communicated internally and use this to shape ways of communication.

The value of both providing and receiving information should not be underestimated. In terms of promoting the work of the VRN and receiving news and feedback externally, below is an indication of some of the communications channels we use.

- Regular updates to LVRN website, including news features, reports and resources section which features both our own, and partners resources.
- Regular updates to the Trauma Informed Lancashire website which currently predominately includes the news and events section but is being expanded to feature a community's area to further share the work going on within Lancashire.
- Publication of regular newsletter shared both internally and externally.
- Social media is used alongside other communication channels to promote partnership working, news published on the website. Continue to build on this in order to reach as many people as possible.
- Publish relevant news from within the VRN internally through Sherlock and The Beat.

- Youth advisory groups and regular contacts with schools and PRUs across the county.
- Production of literature and branded marketing materials that are in line with our programmes to further spread the word of work the VRN is doing. An example of these could be our Operation Sceptre knife crime leaflets and Operation Night Guardian drink testing strips.
- Share appropriate and relevant information such as programme successes with the press through press releases.
- Create engaging content to support existing communications, such as case study videos.
- Both attend and host events to learn and share VRN activity.
- Utilise partner communication channels to further spread the work being done. An example of this could be the football community trusts promoting the work of the Champions programme across their websites and social media channels to inform a new audience of the VRN.
- Utilise 'In The Know' to share external messages with the public and to gain feedback.

5.0 Response Update

5.1 SNA Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Further develop relationships with schools and services working with the 0-5 cohort to address attainment and exclusions	• 5 of our schools participating in the TI Schools programme are primary Schools (one incl. Nursery). This cohort of staff, across Early Years' classrooms will be key in helping us to address TI guidance specific to the 3-5 year old age group, an area for development in the next academic year.
Recommendation 2: Expand trauma-informed education workstream to focus on schools with high exclusions rate, low attendance, or low school readiness	• We have evolved a clear framework of how to embed TI practice in schools and a 'Relational Approach to Managing Behaviour toolkit'. We are seeking to evolve a system wide approach to challenge and support schools to reduce exclusions, improve attendance and enhance engagement.
Recommendation 3: Explore opportunities to collaborate with ICS regarding high demand areas through data-driven approaches	• Through the data workstream, we are collaborating with the ICS regarding a serious violence dashboard. This product will allow visualisation of high-demand areas where data is matched in terms of health demand (ambulance call outs etc), and recorded crime (police).
Recommendation 4: Due to the evidence suggesting there is a link between low-income families and offencing, further exploration is required of engagement with families and services offer of support (incl. positive parenting programmes)	•Lancashire County Council offer the 'Triple P' parenting programme with the aim of significant and sustained change within families. Blackburn with Darwen also offer a 'Revive' parenting programme to improve home stability. Audits are currently being completed to understand their impact.
Recommendation 5: Exploring opportunities to work and support private residential and secure care services, building on learning from trauma-informed training with local authority professionals	•LVRN are engaging with local authority, specifically Outreach and Residential services. A TI response is being co-developed to roll out over 2023/24. However, there are challenges in terms of engaging with private services where there is a reliance on Ofsted enforcing areas of focus.
Recommendation 6: Roll out Op Paramount to support the identification of children with incarcerated parents and collaborate with the prisons	•LVRN have met with the team at Thames Valley police (orignators of Op Paramount). Our initial assessment is Op Paramount is replicable across the Lancashire area. We are recuriting a post to undertake an implementation action plan, bespoke to Lancashire (summer of 2023).
Recommendation 7: We will focus on specific interventions on reducing violent crime in sepcific geographical areas highlighted for deprivation and vulnerability	•In addition to existing LVRN workstreams aimed at reducing violent crime in geogprahical areas (e.g. ED Navigators, Champions and GRIP), we will continue to support existing smaller initiatives operating within local areas with high prevalence of deprivation and vulnerability.
Recommendation 8: Explore opportunities to support local authorities and services with education and employment opportunities for communities	•The current MASP model operating in Preston and Fleetwood to reduce vulnerability of young people to CCE will be rolled out across Lancashire, supported by the appointment of a MASP Coordinator. Additionally, the VRN is closely linked in with the 'Changing Futures' programme across the county.
Recommendation 9: Build on evidence from GRIP hotspot analysis and focus on areas of high prevalence of serious violence	•LVRN co-oridnate GRIP (hotspot policing) activity across the whole county. Initial findings show substantial reductions in serious violence, likely as a result of the POP long-term approach taken to ensure sustainability. This is in addition to VAWG prevention tactics simultaneously being rolled out.

5.2 YEF Toolkit

The following is an outline of how the LVRN has taken learning from the YEF toolkit to guide our funded interventions. Following a 'gap analysis' of services across the Lancashire footprint, the LVRN are ensuring that resource is not duplicated, but where there are areas lacking focus, providing support.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Within Lancashire, the 'Strength Inside' programme has been rolled out within the prison setting. The 'Strength Inside' programme uses a combination of dialectical behaviour techniques - the recommended treatment of choice for dysregulated emotions such as anger and also acceptable for prison inmates - as well as cognitive behaviour therapy, which has been the treatment of choice within the criminal justice sector for decades. Throughout the course, facilitators use proven therapeutic techniques to facilitate change in the participants.

Pre-Court Diversion and Mentoring

One of the LVRNs key workstreams is 'Champions'. This programme is an innovative intervention programme supporting young people, aged 10-25 across Lancashire with experience of/ at risk of offending behaviours. Adopting a trauma informed approach, mentors give their time with genuine interest to create a trusted relationship which promotes personal development, wellbeing gains and consequently reducing their experience of offending and antisocial behaviours. The programme is confidential and non-judgemental. Mentors don't work for the police and aren't involved in criminal proceedings.

Hotspot Policing

Led by the VRN, Operation Grip delivers a combination of knife crime education, community engagement and enforcement activity to reduce and prevent knife and violent crime in hotspots across Lancashire.

GRIP will continue over the remaining funding period following on from the substantial reductions in all crime, and specifically serious violence found across the county in GRIP hotspot areas.

Multi-Systemic Therapy

Across Lancashire there are multiple organisations and services offering family-focused therapy and parenting programmes, examples being 'Triple P' (Lancashire County Council), and 'Revive' (Blackburn with Darwen). However, there is a recognition of a gap when it comes to 'Multi-Systemic Therapy' due to challenges with resourcing, cost, demand and so forth. As part of the wider LVRN trauma-informed workstream, this gap will be explored.

Restorative Justice

Lancashire Constabulary currently operate a restorative justice model. For this reason, LVRN did not pursue a restorative justice model or intervention as to not duplicate existing resource and process, but rather fill gaps.

A&E Navigators

One of the LVRNs key workstreams is 'ED Navigators'. The emergency department navigator scheme helps people to access support services across the county and aims to support people aged 10-39. Trained staff may engage with anyone, but they particularly look to talk to those young people who attend hospital with violence related injuries and who feel they are living in difficult or dangerous situations and feel anxious for their own safety.

Learning will continue to be taken from the YEF toolkit for the remainder of the funding period to ensure that the interventions and activity of the LVRN are evidence-based, high-impact and value for money. Simultaneously, there will be a focus on continuous evaluation to contribute to the existing evidence-base and identify areas of both improvement and best practice.

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