

1 What is the Serious Violence Duty?

Clauses 7-21 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSC) introduced a multi-agency 'Serious Violence Duty'. The Duty places a legal requirement on a range of specified authorities to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area. The aim of the Duty is to encourage organisations to share information, data and intelligence, and work in partnership rather than in isolation.

In Lancashire, the Duty is led by the Police and Crime Commissioner who acts as the local convener for the partnership. Funding for the Duty comes from a combination of sources including government grants, local authority budgets and other relevant funding streams.

2 Core Elements of the Serious Violence Duty

The Duty places several requirements on local areas to prevent and reduce violence:

Local Partnership Arrangement – specified authorities must agree on a local partnership arrangement, it does not however require the creation of a new bespoke multi-agency structure.

Definition of Serious Violence – specified authorities need to decide upon an agreed definition of serious violence to ensure consistency.

Data Sharing – consistent data sharing between organisations is essential for effective collaboration.

Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) - specified authorities must work in partnership to identify the kinds of violence that occur in the area, and the causes of that violence.

Strategy Development – specified authorities are required to consult with other relevant authorities during the preparation and implementation of the strategy and associated delivery plan.

7 Looking Forward

Initial Serious Violence Strategies were required to be published prior to January 2024. Lancashire has an overarching strategy, with each of the 14 districts within Lancashire having contributed to their local delivery plan. The strategy must be reviewed on an annual basis with specified authorities collectively deciding if any new action is required.

Lancashire's Serious Violence Strategy is due to be reviewed in January 2025.

3 Who must comply with the Duty?

Specified Authorities within a local government area are Police, Probation, Youth Justice, Fire and Rescue, Integrated Care Boards, and District and County Councils.

Relevant Authorities must be consulted in the creation of strategies and are required to collaborate if their involvement is requested. Relevant authorities are Prison and Youth Custody Authorities, and Education Authorities.

The Crime and Disorder Act has been amended to require Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. As a result, in Lancashire it has been agreed that the CSP is the most appropriate structure through which to fulfil the requirements of the SVD.

7 Minute Briefing

An Introduction to the Serious Violence Duty

6 Role of the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN)

Violence Reduction Networks aim to bring together community leaders and other key partners with police, local government, health, and education professionals to identify the drivers of serious violence and develop a response to them. In Lancashire, the existence of the LVRN has enabled effective planning and collaboration to support a longer-term approach to preventing violence. The Serious Violence Duty complements and assists the LVRN in preventing and reducing serious violence, by providing a strategic platform with the right regulatory conditions to support successful delivery of this multi-agency approach, including through the extended set of partners on whom the Duty falls.

5 Success Measures and Monitoring

The Home Office Key Performance Indicators for the prevention and reduction of serious violence are:

- A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object
- A reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by police.
- A reduction in non-domestic homicides recorded by police.

In addition to the specified success measures, local areas are expected to include specific focus on serious youth violence in public spaces when victims are under 25 years old. Partnerships are expected to self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the local strategy and delivery plans. In Lancashire, a Serious Violence and Community Safety Board is convened on a quarterly basis to monitor progress and provide advice and support as required.

4 Defining Serious Violence

The PCSC Act does not define serious violence for the purposes of the Duty but rather it states that authorities must work together to identify the types of serious violence occurring in the area. In Lancashire it has been agreed to use the crime types adopted by the LVRN, which are:

- Homicide
- Knife Crime
- Gun Crime
- Assault resulting in injury
- Rape
- Robbery
- Aggravated Burglary
- Domestic Abuse and Violence
- Child Exploitation (Sexual and Criminal)