

Meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - 24th April 2023

Report of the Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

Serious Violence Statutory Duty and Strategy

Purpose of report

1. To provide information to Scrutiny on the new statutory duty regarding serious violence upon local authorities and other specified authorities and to report on current activities to meet this duty.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Scrutiny:-
 - note the contents of this report and the associated draft strategy.
 - Support the work of the Safe and Sound Board in undertaking the statutory duty around prevention of serious violence on behalf of the local authority.

Background

3. The government published the national Serious Violence Strategy in 2018 stating it was

“Determined to do all it can to break the deadly cycle of violence that devastates the lives of individuals, families and communities.”

Following public consultation in July 2019, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new serious violence duty on public bodies which will ensure relevant services work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence altogether.

4. The 2022 Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill places a duty on Community Safety Partnerships to have a strategy in place tackling violent crime.
5. The requirements of local partnerships are to:
 - Identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area.
 - Identify the causes of serious violence in the area, so far as it is possible to do so.
 - Prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area.
6. The duty requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce serious violence:
 - Police
 - The Chief Officer of police for police areas in England and Wales
 - Justice
 - Probation Services
 - Youth Offending Teams
 - Fire and Rescue
 - All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales
 - Health
 - Integrated Care Boards in England
 - Local authorities
 - A district council
 - A county council in England
7. Consultation must also take place with educational, prison and youth custody providers. Locally, we recognise that other agencies, including the Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership, and service providers will also be vital partners in delivering the borough's strategy.
8. For the purposes of this duty, serious violence includes
 - Violence against the person
 - Domestic abuse
 - Sexual offences
 - Violence against property
 - Threats of violence

This duty does not include terrorism within its remit.
9. The partnership may also identify further areas of serious violence, such as child abuse and communal violence. This strategy recognises the role of existing strategies, including those around domestic abuse and safeguarding children.

10. The Serious Violence Strategy also sets out specific types of crime of particular concern, including homicide, violence against the person which may include both knife crime and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing. However, there is flexibility within the duty to consider other types of serious violence such as domestic violence, alcohol related violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery, or gender-based violence.
11. The definition of what amounts to serious violence in any given area must consider several factors, which are:
 - The maximum penalty which could be imposed for any offence involved in the violence.
 - the impact of the violence on any victim.
 - the prevalence of the violence in the area.
 - the impact of the violence on the community in the area.
12. The World Health Organisation (WHO) define violence as “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”.
13. WHO has stated that violence is a global public health problem and should be tackled with a public health approach. This requires us to:
 - Use data to identify the problem
 - Identify risk and protective factors
 - Develop and interventions based on evidence
 - Evaluate programmes and scale up if effective.
14. Public Health England also define violence as a public health issue. Living without fear of violence is a fundamental requirement for health and wellbeing. Violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing and is strongly related to inequalities, with the poorest fifth of our society suffering rates of hospital admissions for violence five times higher than those of the most affluent fifth. It impacts on individuals and communities and is a drain on health services, the criminal justice system, and the wider economy.

Finance

15. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Relevant services will be funded within budgeted resources.

Law

16. This report outlines the statutory duty on local authorities relating to the 2022 Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Risk Management

17. There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

Equality Impact

18. This report outlines the statutory duty and response to serious violence which largely affects some of the most vulnerable people in our community. There is also a geographical inequity regarding violence which also affects the most socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods.
19. The associated strategy will highlight the disproportionality regarding ethnicity and gender in those involved with the Youth Justice System both nationally and locally. Boys and young men of black and mixed ethnicity account for a much higher proportion of both perpetrators and victims of serious violence than accounted for by demographics.
20. The government guidance regarding local responses to the Serious Violence duty specifies a focus on youth-on-youth violence and the impact of knife and gun crime. Violence and knife crime was the second highest concern for 9,539 young people in Dudley who took part in the 2019 Mark Your Mark survey.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

21. There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

Commercial/Procurement

22. There are no procurement implications arising from this report

Environment/Climate Change

23. There are no environmental or climate change implications of this report

Council Priorities and Projects

24. Dudley the borough of opportunity
 - Children and young people benefit from the best start in life in our child friendly borough

25. Dudley the safe and healthy borough
 - Residents live in safe communities where safeguarding of vulnerable people of all ages protects them from harm and supports the prevention of crime and exploitation
26. The impact of the activity to reduce and prevent serious violence will improve community safety and reduce impact of crime in our communities



Mayada Abu Affan
Acting Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

Report Author: Angela Cartwright
Telephone: 01384 817184
Email: angela.cartwright@dudley.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dudley Serious Violence Prevention Strategy