



**West Yorkshire  
Violence Reduction Unit**  
*Tackling Violence Together*



**Tracy Brabin  
Mayor**  
of West Yorkshire  
Policing and Crime

## REPORT FOR THE WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL WEST YORKSHIRE VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT UPDATE REPORT

### KEY INFORMATION

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Date: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Subject: An update report from the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit

### PURPOSE

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1.1 To provide members of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel with a current update on the work of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

### 2021/22 VRU FUNDING

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2.1 The VRU team have completed the recent Home Office bid process for £3.37million. With the support of partners, there was a quick turnaround of signatures to support this. The GRIP (Surge) bid was also completed and submitted. The formal grant agreement to confirm the funding for the VRU has now been received from the Home Office and the GRIP funding for £1.5 million is awaiting final approval.

2.2 In the previous financial year, £2 million of VRU funding was spent on over 36 projects and interventions across West Yorkshire supporting over 14,000 young people.

### GOVERNANCE

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3.1 The VRU have now moved into WY Combined Authority and report into these new exec arrangements. The West Yorkshire Serious Violence Reduction Executive Steering Group continues, and the recent meeting was chaired by the new Mayor. The Partnership Delivery Group also continues in its previous format.

## **STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT**

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4.1 The majority of the vacant posts within the VRU have now been filled, which include the Senior Analyst post, Research & Evaluation Officer, Programme Deliver Manager for Engagement, Education secondment post and Information Governance Lead.

## **DELIVERY 2021/22**

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5.1 The VRU have refreshed the Needs Assessment and Response Strategy and has started to shape its delivery plan for the next 12 months. As highlighted through the Needs Assessment and Response Strategy, the following outcomes/aims to achieve are:

1. System leadership and sustainability across West Yorkshire
2. WY&H is a trauma informed and responsive system, working to prevent vulnerability and exploitation
3. West Yorkshire will have a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to support the system around serious violence, exploitation and will be trauma informed
4. Preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system and to reduce reoffending.
5. Young people affected by domestic violence and abuse will be supported
6. A&E departments will provide navigator support for young people
7. Specialist support will be provided to promote educational inclusion and attainment
8. The night time economy will be a safe, healthy and prosperous environment
9. Victims of serious violence will be able to access appropriate support and advice.
10. We will address the determinants and root causes of serious violence and contribute to reducing inequalities

5.2 Following the success of the Task and Finish approach we followed for several of our work streams last year, the Education Inclusion work stream is currently under review, where partners have already met to discuss next steps.

5.3 The VRU team are also currently working with each Community Safety Partnership to determine local delivery in line with the Needs Assessment, Response Strategy and learning from the last 18 months.

## **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

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6.1 The Knowledge Hub team will continue with local and national evaluation processes into the new financial year. It is a requirement within the funding application that 10% of intervention costs are invested into evaluation through the year.

## **6.2 Education inclusion**

6.2.1 Crest Advisory have been exploring the impact of school exclusions on serious violent crime. The purpose of the research has been to understand the West Yorkshire context of patterns and trends of school exclusions (including temporary/ permanent/ off-rolling) and what the contributory factors are. This research will be crucial in driving the education Inclusion work-stream over 2021/22.

## **6.3 Addressing the root causes of serious violence and exploitation of young people**

6.3.1 Crest Advisory have been completing the research into understanding and addressing the root causes of serious violence and exploitation of young people. It is exploring how the following factors impact a young person's vulnerability to serious violence:

1. The determinants of health and health inequalities
2. Self-worth and autonomy
3. The economic and social impacts of COVID-19 (namely increased inequalities in and between different population groups)
4. The specific challenges facing women and girls

6.3.2 This work remains underway, with Crest consolidating their evidence review, building up their COVID related data and recently holding a youth led focus group with young women.

## **VIOLENCE AND VULNERABILITY UNIT (VVU) WORK**

7.1 The Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) are a national team of gang and county line experts who have been commissioned by the Home Office to deliver targeted support to local areas who are being adversely affected by gangs, county lines and the associated violence and exploitation of vulnerable people. In addition to providing a better understanding of local drug markets and how they drive violence, to aid reconfiguring treatment services, they also do work to enable partnerships to link more effectively with local schools and academies, to reduce exclusions and identify and support those at risk of criminal exploitation and offending.

7.2 The VRU commissioned the Violence and Vulnerability Unit to undertake locality reviews of Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees, as well as a Strategic Framework Assessment of West Yorkshire.

**7.2.1 Locality Review** – This was a broad-brush set of interviews and focus groups with front-line practitioners to gather information, knowledge and perception whilst building a qualitative picture of the key issues and drivers around county lines, gangs, youth violence and vulnerability.

**7.2.2. Strategic Framework Assessment - As** part of this Strategic Framework

Assessment, the VVU conducted interviews with senior managers within various agencies and units with the key outcome being the production of a county wide strategic framework to address violence, vulnerability and exploitation across the county.

## STREET GAMES

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8.1 Street Games work was also new for Quarter 4. During November 2020, the VRU Knowledge Hub produced and circulated a Youth Engagement Survey to schools across West Yorkshire. Aimed at 11-16 year olds, the survey sought pupil's views and perceptions on various topics, including: community safety, available support, violent crime, exclusions and the impact COVID-19 has had on these. The unit received just over 1000 responses to this survey from a range of schools across West Yorkshire.

8.2 These responses from young people in schools showed that there was a clear appetite among them to become involved in sport out of school. The VRU funded Street Games to look at an approach to reduce and prevent violence through sport and physical Activity.

8.3 As part of their funding, Street Games delivered two Knowledge Exchange Sessions for VRU and CSP staff;

### 8.3.1 Session 1

- **Articulating the change** – using sport to enhance positive outcomes for young people in the context of Serious Youth Violence
- **What good looks like** – a deeper understanding of the offer, mentoring and volunteering within community sport

### 8.3.2. Session 2

Engaging with community sport – considerations for funders and partners in developing effective relationships with the sector

- Capturing the effectiveness of community sport

8.4 Then they also undertook some mapping work, which has now been concluded. The mapping provides an overview of the current depth and breadth of youth community sport provision that currently exists across West Yorkshire. The report:

- Identifies the level of youth community sport intervention that each organisation currently provides.
- Analyses youth community sport provision in the context of identified vulnerabilities associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in violent crime as a victim or perpetrator.

- Makes recommendations on how to successfully mobilise the community sports sector to support the aims of the West Yorkshire VRU.

## **NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY-NTE (PUBLIC HEALTH REDUCING SERIOUS VIOLENCE NETWORK)**

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9.1 Work is ongoing within the network to develop a framework for the NTE as it is reopening. By pulling together the existing data, intelligence and plans around the NTE in West Yorkshire (as well as nationally), the VRU will be able to pull together our ambition of ‘what good looks like’ across West Yorkshire for a safe, healthy and prosperous night time economy.

9.2 As this work continues to be developed, the group had inputs in the meeting early this month around:

- a. **Licensing SAVI** – a new initiative, online self-assessment tool for licensed premises.
- b. **Smart Tag** – A deterrent method that can be used in the NTE. A canister, which emits a non-harmful spray that has a forensic marking unique to the canister that can uniquely identify a person.
- c. **Purple Flag** – the team are looking at the potential of a bespoke Kite Mark Scheme in West Yorkshire. Essentially all areas, even if not ready to achieve Purple Flag status, are still doing good work and this could help to get that good work recognised.

## **ANTI-RACISM CAMPAIGN/MOVEMENT**

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10.1 This is work the VRU have co-commissioned with the WY&H Health Care Partnership, the primary objective of which is to develop a robust anti-racism movement for WY&H Health Care Partnership that is both internal and external facing.

10.2 The Project Group identified “Intent Health” to deliver this campaign/movement, who have just completed an insight report from focus groups, which covered the messages and visual identity of the movement, as well as their views on racism.

## **VRU COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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11.1 The community engagement groups have now commenced and will support the VRU with delivery over the next 12 months. The Community Advisory Group met for the second time in May and a community chair for this meeting has now been decided. The Young Peoples Lived Experience Group will also be meeting again in May and further work is being done to invite more volunteers to join this group. The Community Co-production pilot has now also

commenced in Leeds.

## DATA HUB

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12.1 There has been good partnership buy-in with data sharing for the new data hub. This was developed with Liverpool John Moore's University and will allow West Yorkshire wide partners to share data on this platform to give a broader picture of serious violence. This brings exciting opportunities going forward.

## COMMUNICATIONS

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13.1 The VRU supported the national anti-knife crime campaign Operation Sceptre with local awareness raising messages. Other key media highlights include:-

- **Education Inclusion-** The findings of the VRU funded Crest Advisory research is being published externally as part of a communications package, which includes a press release accompanied by media messages.
- **Licensing SAVI-** Funding from the VRU has also been provided to enable a toolkit that will assist licensed premises post COVID and ensure the safety of customers during the nigh-time economy
- **A&E Navigators-** working with NHS Leeds Teaching Hospital, plans are in place to publicise the VRU funded A&E Navigators project, which signposts support to those who come through the doors of the A&E with injuries connected to violent crime. This is being co-ordinated against an internal communications launch in the hospital setting.