



Report to: Police and Crime Panel

Date: 9th September 2022

Subject: West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit – update report

Report of: Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The following report provides members of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel with a current update on the work of the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).
- 1.2. As a condition of the funding received from the Home Office the VRU must produce an annual refresh of our Needs Assessment and Response Strategy. These documents can be found here: [VRU Needs Assessment & Response Strategy - West Yorkshire Combined Authority \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/vru-needs-assessment-response-strategy).
- 1.3. The Response Strategy provides a West Yorkshire framework for preventing and reducing serious violence. Informed by an evidence base, the strategy sets out The VRU's understanding of serious violence, local needs and how it will respond to this. A refresh of the previous annual Serious Violence Response Strategy, this Strategy brings together a more evidenced based, developed, integrated partnership understanding and vision of tackling serious violence. The Response Strategy therefore provides the framework for the work of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and also that for wider West Yorkshire partners
- 1.4. The activity of the VRU and its partners supports Priority 3 from the Police and Crime Plan 2021-24 - Safer Places and Thriving Communities, which outlines how the Police, Mayor, and partners will focus on the harmful and unacceptable behaviour that targets different communities of West Yorkshire through an ongoing commitment to Neighbourhood Policing and partnership locality working.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1. As reported as part of Item 7 at the July 2022 Police and Crime Panel meeting, organised crime, serious violence and the use of weapons, are often linked and we must all work to protect, educate and divert people away from these crime types. The Mayor will continue to oversee and support the response to major threats and serious violence provided by our regional teams, local partners and neighbourhood police teams in identifying and preventing major threats and serious violence within our communities.
- 2.2. The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) continues to develop their innovative approaches to tackling serious violence in, and with communities, through their ground-breaking work. Taking a public health approach, the VRU seeks to improve the health and safety of all members of the community by addressing the underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence.

3. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BENEFITS AND IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. Wherever there are equality, diversity and inclusion benefits and/or implications, these are highlighted in the report.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN WEST YORKSHIRE

- 4.1 Whilst VRUs have flexibility to adopt a broader definition of serious violence, the focus cohort is young people under the age of 25.
- 4.2 The Home Office have outlined three key success measures for VRUs which all relate to young people:
 - I. A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object and especially among those victims aged under 25,
 - II. A reduction in knife-enabled serious violence and especially among those victims aged under 25,
 - III. A reduction in all non-domestic homicides and especially among those victims aged under 25 involving knives.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Any financial implications will be part of the report where applicable.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Legal considerations and implications are made at each stage of the processes described in the document.

7. EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

7.1. The VRU followed a varied consultation approach. Further details of which are described in the report.

7.2. Extensive external consultation took place for the Police and Crime plan and continues with the resumption of the Your Views survey and the various mayoral consultations.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. That the Police and Crime Panel accept this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) update paper

Appendix 2 – Delivery Interventions Overview

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Appendix 1 - West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) Activity 2022/23

A.1 2022/23 VRU Funding and Home Office conditions

A.1.1 The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has received £5.8m in 22/23 to continue its role to lead and coordinate the local response to serious violence. This is part of a three-year arrangement with indicative funding available during 2023/24 and 2024/25.

A.1.2 The VRU will continue to work in close partnership with Operation Jemlock, who have been awarded a further £1,651,943 to support the operational response to knife crime in West Yorkshire.

A1.3 For this three-year period the Home Office have introduced an increasing match funding requirement to the VRU programme to maximise available investment and further drive the financial sustainability of each VRU. VRUs will be required to demonstrate that they are receiving contributions from local partners across the three years of funding (2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25). Match funding requirements for each financial year are as follows:

- 2022/23: 10% of a VRU's 2021/22 allocation = £337,000
- 2023/24: 15% of a VRU's 2021/22 allocation = £505,500
- 2024/25: 20% of a VRU's 2021/22 allocation = £674,000

A.1.4 Current funding has to be spent by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

A.1.5 As in previous years the VRU is required to work in partnership with core members, including:

- The Chief Constable;
- The PCC;
- The local authority/ies with responsibility for the geographical areas principally targeted by the activities of the VRU. Directors of Children's Services and the Director of Public Health may be suitable representatives;
- The local relevant CCG (Integrated Care Board from 1st July – or the most appropriate representative in the new health structures if required);
- Regional Office for Health Improvement and Disparities representative (formally PHE);
- The Youth Offending Team;
- A representative(s) of local educational institutions 5 ;
- A representative(s) of communities and young people served by the VRU, and;
- A representative of the voluntary sector

- A.1.6 There are also a number of mandatory documents that the VRU must produce and submit to the Home Office including a refresh of the Needs Assessment and Response Strategy, an Annual Report as in previous years and a new requirement to produce a 5-year Sustainability Plan. Consultancy support is being commissioned to support the refresh of the Response Strategy and the development of a Sustainability Plan.

A.2 Governance

- A.2.1 The VRU continues to report into the Policing and Crime Executive, chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and accountability also continues through the Home Office reporting arrangements and through the Partnership Executive Group (PEG).
- A.2.2 The West Yorkshire Serious Violence Reduction Executive Steering Group continues, and the recent meeting was chaired by the Deputy Mayor. The Partnership Delivery Group also continues. A review of the approach for this meeting has been undertaken with the frequency moving to 6 weekly and the meetings now made up of two parts, Standing Items and Focus Topic/Themed Discussion, with the next meeting looking at Violence Against Women and Girls.

A.3 Staffing and Recruitment

- A.3.1 A revised, uplifted staffing structure has been proposed and provided to the Home Office with our successful application for funding. Recruitment to these new posts is ongoing, alongside replacing a number of existing posts following staff leaving the team.

A.4 Knowledge Hub Activity

Research

- A.4.1 Research projects were completed during the previous financial year for a number of areas (commissioned externally):
- The experiences of young people with low level mental health issues and violence.
 - Aspirations raising in young people and key transition points in a young person's pathway / impacts of trauma.
 - Impacts of social media and vicarious trauma
 - Drugs and alcohol – impact of parental abuse, pandemic, services available and protective factors.
 - Neurodiversity – particularly amongst young people, and links to violence.

All of our VRU research documents are published on the following webpage: [Research - West](#)

[Yorkshire Combined Authority \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

A.4.2 A programme of research projects has been developed for the 2022/23 financial year to build on our solid research foundations. Topics are expected to include:

- Whole Family Approach
- Alcohol harms campaign
- Housing
- Expansion on previous Neurodiversity research
- Place Based microanalysis
- Kirklees College research
- Social Media
- Stalking & Harassment

Evaluation

A.4.3 The Home Office outlined that the VRU was to spend the equivalent of 10% of our 2021/22 delivery intervention funding on evaluations. Therefore, in addition to internal evaluation work, partners were also secured to evaluate some of the core programmes the VRU funded.

All of our VRU evaluation documents are published on the following webpage: [Evaluation - West Yorkshire Combined Authority \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk).

A.4.4 For 2022/23, the Home Office have once again included the need to evaluate relevant projects with an evaluation budget equivalent to 10% of the 2022/23 delivery intervention budget. This requirement also comes with direction that interventions will progress through levels of robust evaluation until either evaluation reaches a robust level (e.g. level 4 on the Maryland scale or its equivalent) or the decision to cease delivery of the intervention has been taken. Level 4 evaluation require comparison of outcomes for those who did and did not receive the intervention/take part in the programme and by nature will require the VRU to collect additional data to follow up individual outcomes.

A.4.5 A programme of evaluation has been developed for 2022/23 and all opportunities have or will be published externally. These will include evaluation of the A&E Navigator functions, Community Links and Focused Deterrence Car interventions, feasibility study of the proposed education delivery (Sports and creative arts and mentoring work), continued development and learning evaluation of the Adversity, trauma and resilience workstream and impact assessment of the HMYOI Wetherby work to name a few.

A.4.6 The VRU Knowledge Hub will also commission a partner to help develop a local West Yorkshire evaluation toolkit to support our partners with developing Theory of change, outcomes-based accountability frameworks and undertaking evaluation of projects to support partners and projects in understanding the impact of their initiatives and seeking sustainable funding.

Data Hub

A.4.7 The VRU Violence Reduction Data Hub continues to run and develop, with regular feeds from:

- Yorkshire Ambulance Service - ambulance attendances to assault incidents within West Yorkshire.
- West Yorkshire Police – violent crime
- West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service - deliberate fire incidents and reports of attacks on crews
- Emergency Department data – assault attendances at hospitals within West Yorkshire and other Data Hub covered areas where the patient resides in West Yorkshire. This is currently received from:
 - Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Trust
 - Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
 - Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

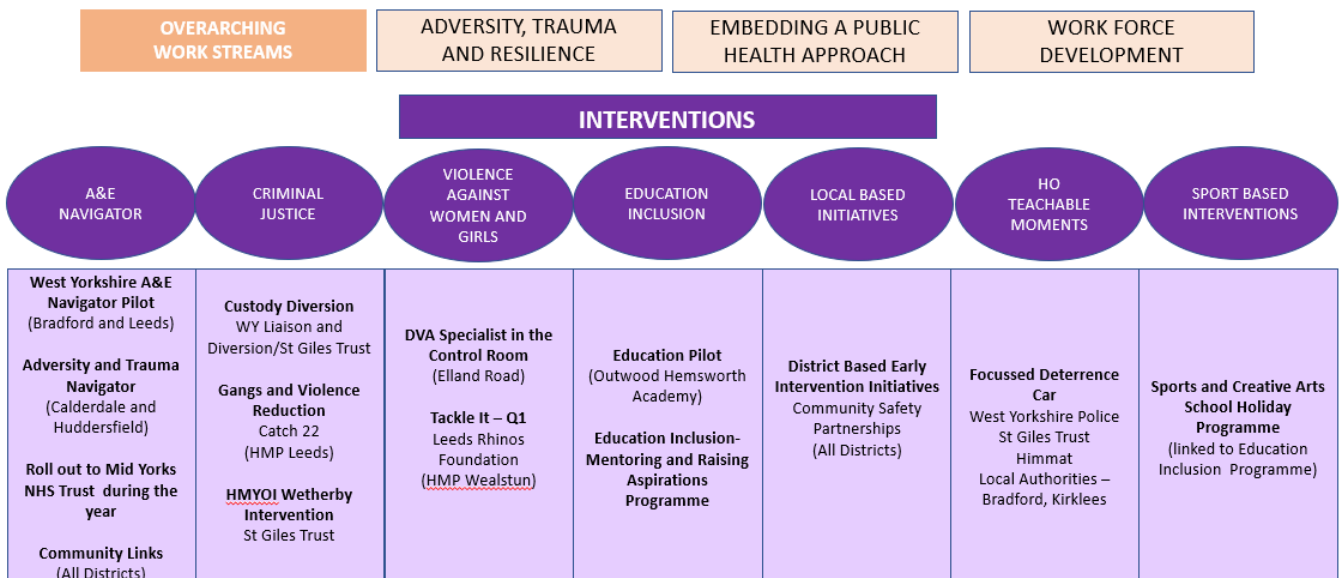
A.4.8 Additional data is included on:

- Index Multiple Deprivation data (split by individual categories)
- Education & Schools data
 - Pupils eligible for free school meals
 - Persistent absence rates
 - Permanent exclusions and suspensions

A.4.9 A number of developments are planned this financial year to include improved outcome frameworks, new census data and provision mapping.

A.5. Delivery 2022/23

A.5.1 A delivery plan for our full programme of work has been agreed with the Home Office with details on the graphic below. Whilst the Home Office have indicated a three-year agreement, we have only been asked to submit a delivery plan for 2022-23. The budget for this is currently £3,310,646 or approximately 56% of the overall funding for the financial year.



A.5.2 Further information on each of the workstreams is available on Appendix 2.

A.6 VRU Community Engagement

Community Advisory Group (CAG)

A.6.1 The CAG has been refreshed with 10 new members at the start of the financial year, 3 of which have lived experience. The membership will stay open throughout the year to continue to encourage new and diverse membership.

A.6.2 The group met on 22nd June and received an update from the VRU Director with regard to the 3-year funding deal as well as consulting on the VAWG survey which was open to schools at that time. The group also discussed the joint Communications and Engagement Strategy which has been created and is mentioned in more detail below. Members raised the need for the VRU to support schools to implement interventions.

Lived Experience

A.6.3 Lived experience remains to be a really important aspect of our engagement work. An active CAG member kindly created a video case study to be played at the Mayor's International Women's Day event in March. She spoke about the need for professionals to listen to the voice of lived experience and how important it was to be trauma informed. The full video is available here - [\(25\) Meet Dawn - poet, artist and member of the Community Advisory Group | International Women's Day 2022 - YouTube](#)

A.6.4 She is a campaigning poet and artist and is reading her Coproduction poem at the commissioning events running throughout July.

Focus Groups

A.6.5 As part of the VRU Violence Against Women and Girls Literature Review, the Engagement lead and Knowledge Hub teamed up to conduct a series of focus groups with women from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds. The team spoke to 51 women and girls between February – June about their experiences of domestic abuse, access to services such as maternity services and what could be done to support women from a minority group. The next target groups for focus groups are women from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds, and women with learning difficulties as these were also gaps in knowledge.

Coproduction in Kirklees

A.6.6 The coproduction project to tackle knife crime ended with a celebration event in May this year at Huddersfield Town Hall. Each of the 5 projects attended and spoke about their work, including the challenges faced and the suggested learning which the VRU could take forward to a future project in another district. Some of the key learning included reducing barriers such as language or childcare and the impact

this has on parent engagement and travel being a barrier for young people to access provision and whether this should be factored into project budgets moving forward.

A.6.7 A full press release including links to the project videos is below.

A.7 Communications

Kirklees Co-Production

A.7.1 In May 2022, a [press release was issued](#) about the VRU co-production work conducted in Kirklees, which saw over 200 young people in the District benefit. Communities across Ashbrow, Dewsbury West, Greenhead and Newsome worked in partnership with the VRU and Safer Kirklees.

A.7.2 Local people shared their experiences and views on key themes such as knife crime, leading to the delivery of 5 projects specifically designed to respond to the issues raised. Safety for Music (SIM), Team Hanson, LS2Y, Trillz and Ravensthorpe Community Centre were each involved.

A.7.3 Representatives from each of the projects attended the event at Huddersfield Town Hall in May to reflect upon their achievements with partners.

A.7.4 A series of videos from each project were also recorded and posted across social media.

VRU Communications/Engagement Strategy

A.7.5 A communications and engagement strategy is currently being developed that will provide a framework to amplify the messages and achievements of the VRU, alongside partners. This has been presented to our Community Advisory Group for observations and feedback.

VRU Summary Annual Report

A.7.6 A summary version of the 2021/22 VRU annual report has been developed that will be published shortly across our external channels and shared with partners for their reference.

VRU Logo

A.7.7 The VRU has revised its logo to a fresh modern design that aligns to the style of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. This will be shared with partners in various formats and with accompanying guidance around its use.

A.8 Current Performance

A.8.1 The VRU's success is measured in a variety of ways. The complexity of the challenges it is tackling mean that we use a variety of quantitative and qualitative information, including detailed evaluations, to measure our effectiveness, learn, improve and offer solutions nationally. Whilst the Home Office set three key metrics, they are only one part of the story and need to be considered alongside a wealth of other information.

Performance against the VRU 3 key aims in West Yorkshire

A.8.2 *(Note: The figures shown below are a measure of the period before the COVID pandemic in 2019. This period has been recognised nationally as the baseline when measuring performance against previous crime data)*

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

Latest available figures in the 12 months to May 22, is 215 admissions compared with 250 admissions in the same period 2019, **14% reduction**.

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

There were 2666 offences involving knife-enabled serious violence in 2019, compared with 2369 in the last 12 months (May 2021- July 2022), a **11% reduction**

Victims under 25, 997 offences recorded in 2019, compared with 865 in the last 12 months (May 2021- July 2022), a **13% reduction**

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

There were 28 non-domestic homicides recorded in 2019, compared with 20 recorded in the last 12 months (May 2021- July 2022) a **28% reduction**.

Victims under 25, in 2019 was 5, (last 12 months May 2021- July 2022), 6, **20% increase**

(with regards to homicide the last 12 months figures are subject to change, as some of these offences are still under investigation and haven't been formally recorded by the Coroner as homicide).

Headlines from independent evaluations of VRU programmes

A.8.3 It is a mandatory requirement from the Home Office that the VRU spend 10% of intervention spend on evaluations. Although some of the VRU evaluations have been done internally the majority have been commissioned out to external evaluation partners who have provided detailed reports on their findings. This is allowing a better understanding of the impacts of work and also allowing the VRU to learn and adjust responses if needed. Some summary headlines of the evaluation findings are as follows:

A&E Navigator Evaluation - summary

A.8.4 Reach – The programme exceeded expectations in relation to reach, reaching 428 young people (171.2% of outlined target) in Leeds and 506 (253% of target) in Bradford.

Value for Money - successful engagement and prevention per individual on the programme creates a unit cost avoidance. For example, the cost of A&E treatment on average when a person is stabbed is £7,196 per victim.

Impact and Learning - Several learning points were identified in the evaluation, particularly regarding information sharing between medical staff, youth work staff and referral services. However, the programme was found to be performing well; effectively engaging the correct cohort and broadly delivering value for money against national indicators.

Core Programmes evaluation- summaries

A.8.5 **Tackle it** – Cost effectiveness was a positive, with a unit cost of £855 per course participant and the overall benefits to society of around £7800 per case.

HMP Leeds Gangs and Violence Reduction Programme - Of the 56 people that participated in the programme, 59% (33 out of 56) self-reported that their offending behaviour had been addressed. It also showed improvements in protective factors for participants.

St Giles Trust Custody Diversion Programme – Showed positive improvement in several protective factors for participants, including: the well-being, confidence, and self-esteem of those young people on the programme; improved relationships with their family; and going on to further education and training, or improved their employment status.

Police Control Room IDVA - The main benefit of the scheme is that the IDVAs provide rapid support to victim-survivors who have been the subject of recent call.



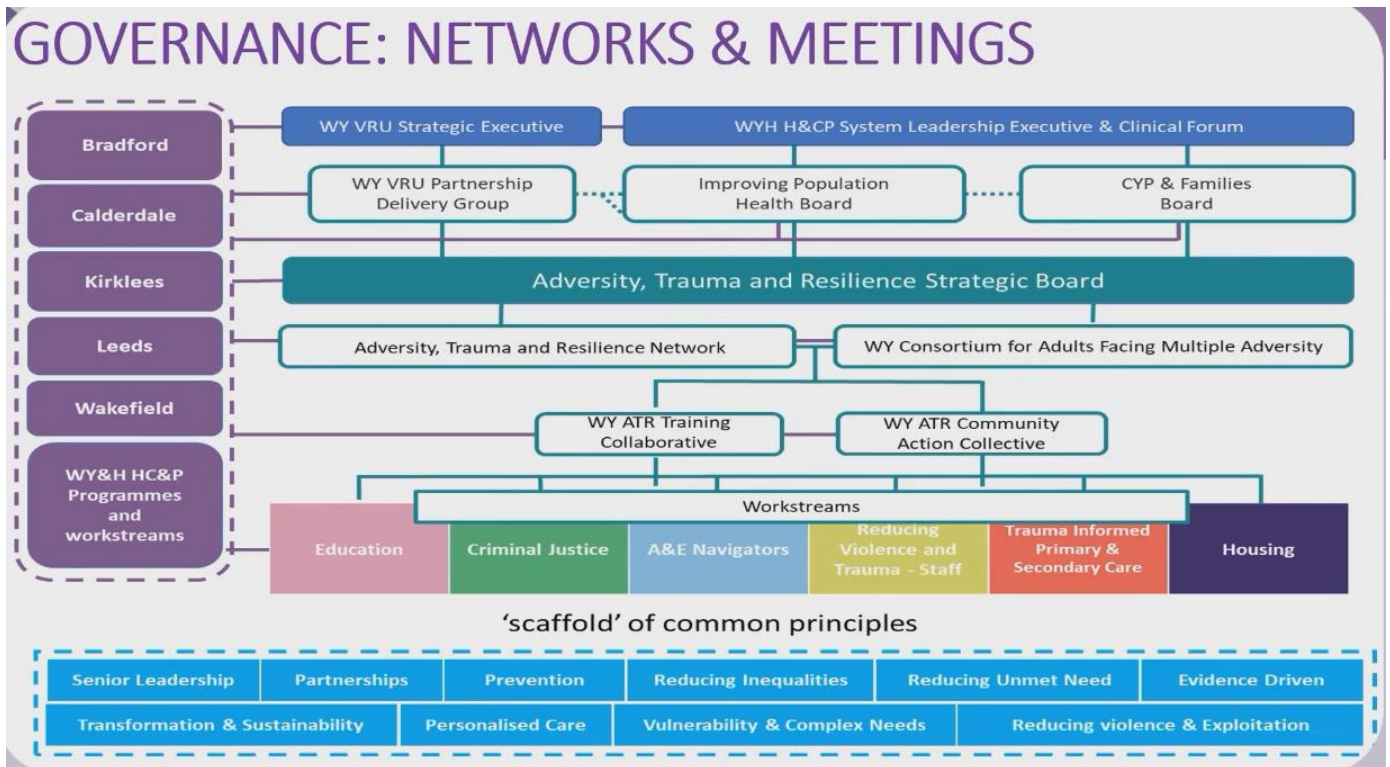
Appendix 2 – Delivery Interventions Overview 2022/23

B1 Adversity Trauma and Resilience, Embedding a Public Health Approach and Workforce Development

B.1.1 Adversity, Trauma and Resilience, Embedding a Public Health Approach and Workforce Development are three overarching work streams that are considered in all of the interventions we design, commission or support.

B.1.2 In partnership with the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership we have a shared Adversity, Trauma and Resilience (ATR) programme formed to increase knowledge and practice in relation to trauma informed practice and enhance partnership working to deliver this. The ATR programme started in June 2020 and has a ten-year workplan to influence system change across the combined authority area and an underpinning strategy to deliver this change is currently being co-developed by the partnership. The programme has a shared ambition for **West Yorkshire to be a Trauma Informed and Responsive system by 2030 and develop a whole system approach to responding to multiple disadvantage.**

B.1.3 The governance and meeting structure of this programme as at April 2022 is below:



- B.1.4 The current workstreams are being expanded to include Social Media and Online Harm and Trauma Informed Organisations, with plans to also develop a Trauma Informed Inclusion Group and a Trauma of Racism Group.
- B.1.5 The first 3-day ATR Knowledge Exchange was held during March 2021 and a second event took place during April 2022. All the presentation and resources for these events can be accessed online.
- B.1.6 Next steps for the programme include the development of a framework and launch of an online hub for professionals, continued rollout of Trauma Informed Training for professionals and development of guides and resources to support organisations to become trauma informed.

B.2 A&E Navigator

A&E Navigator and Community Links

- B.2.1 Continuation of delivery in Leeds General Infirmary and Bradford Royal Infirmary, with trained Youth Workers available at the hospitals to identify and support young people presenting with injuries following incidents of violence, and or with other presenting issues such as mental health concerns, at risk of or experience of exploitation, domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse and experiences of trauma.
- B.2.2 This programme is supported by an ongoing specialist package of support through Community Links, based at place. During this year, work has continued to roll the hospital navigator service out across West Yorkshire trusts with the addition of the two hospitals that make up Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust.
- B.2.3 During 2022-23 the model in Calderdale/Huddersfield will continue to be implemented and we have started discussions with Mid Yorkshire to build this offer in to planned change to their existing approach over the next 12 months.

B.3 Criminal Justice

Custody Diversion Service

- B.3.1 Jointly delivered by the West Yorkshire Liaison and Diversion Service and St Giles Trust, this programme has continued to deliver support to young people across West Yorkshire who are identified following an arrest and attendance in police custody, following voluntary attendance at the police station for questioning and when no further action is being taken following investigation.

Gangs and Violence Reduction Service – HMP Leeds

- B.3.2 This Catch22 intervention aims to reduce the risk posed by gang affiliated individuals, both in their involvement in violent incidents within the custodial estate and in the community post release. The targeted cohort is disproportionately more likely to be perpetrator and/or victim in violence, therefore they can encourage

desistence and support gang exit to reduce the risk of future involvement.

- B.3.3 The approach focuses on offering alternatives to the status and safety provided by gangs, which has been shown to be more effective than the suppression-only approaches used in many prisons.

HMYOI Wetherby Violence Reduction

- B.3.4 Working in the local Youth Offending Institute, St Giles Trust have developed a bespoke programme to deliver, working with an identified cohort of boys and girls, which will contribute to a reduction in knife-related violence and reoffending after leaving custody.

- B.3.5 To achieve this, the service is using both existing and newly recruited and trained Facilitators/Mentors, with lived experience of the criminal justice system, custody, and youth violence, embedded within HMYOI Wetherby and will work closely with the prison to identify young people most at risk of violence and reoffending.

B.4 Violence Against Women & Girls

Domestic Violence and Abuse Specialist in the Police Control Room

- B.4.1 This programme of delivery has been ongoing since the VRU was first established in 2019, however changes to the model have been made this year to further strengthen the offer available and build in capacity, so the specialist service is available 6 days per week.
- B.4.2 This service offers early access for domestic abuse victims to a trained specialist at the point they first contact the police to report an incident and also provides additional specialist advice for the police officers and control room staff dealing with the incident.
- B.4.3 In addition to the intervention that will continue this year listed above we also have indicative budgets for delivery with a focus on:
- Change from DA to a wider VAWG focus
- B.4.4 We will be working with partners to determine further delivery that sits within this workstream during this financial year.

B.5 Education Inclusion & Sports Based Intervention

- B.5.1 The Education Inclusion pilot in Wakefield in conjunction with Outwood Academy Hemsworth and a number of its feeder primary schools continues.

Sports and Creative Arts intervention

- B.5.2 We have recently commissioned Place-Based sports and creative arts provision in Leeds and Bradford to place over the 6-week summer break, and other half term

breaks during the 22/23 financial year, with a possible extension into 23/24. The intervention will be targeted at a small group of young people who are most at risk and will need to utilise multiple methods of engagement as well as offering both creative arts and sports-based methods of intervention. We have worked with the successful providers to refine the offer and co-design it with the school and possible beneficiaries.

Mentoring and Support Intervention in Identified Schools

B.5.3 We have commissioned Place-Based mentoring and support provision that will be embedded within identified schools from September 2022, running until 31st March 2023 with possible extension subject to funding. The intervention is targeted at a small group of young people who are most at risk and will need to utilise multiple methods of engagement. We expect providers to define both a targeted offer of support that engages both identified young people who are most at risk and their families and a universal offer that informs the wider school community. We will work with the successful provider to refine the offer and co-design it with the school and possible beneficiaries.

B.6 Home Office Teachable Moments

West Yorkshire Focused Deterrence Car

- B.6.1 This pilot was established following a successful bid to the Home Office during 2021/22 for additional money to deploy a 'Focused Deterrence Car' carrying Experienced Youth Workers/Support Workers with lived experience, and a West Yorkshire Police non-uniformed officer.
- B.6.2 This enables them to intervene at the 'teachable moment' following an incident involving young people or as part of proactive engagement in 'hot spot' locations.
- B.6.3 The service has spoken to approximately 2000 young people from September to March, across West Yorkshire, and been able to offer ongoing support to around 200.
- B.6.4 It has also provided a learning and development opportunity for both the youth worker/support workers and the police officers involved and valuable learning for the VRU and partners, and we are continuing to fund a revised model of this intervention in 2022/23.

B.7 Local Based Initiatives

Place Based Local Interventions

- B.7.1 The VRU also works closely with the five local Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and have been able to provide funding for a number of local initiatives that aim to deliver against the local priorities identified by the VRU Knowledge Hub. We are currently working with each of the CSP's to agree interventions to be funded.