


PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version:

Force	Staffordshire
Police and Crime Commissioner	Ben Adams
Chief Constable	Chris Noble
Title of inspection	An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence
Inspectorate	 <p>His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services</p>
Summary of inspection	<p>In 2018, the Home Office published its Serious Violence Strategy, setting out its response to increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. It stated its approach wasn't focused on law enforcement alone, but "depends on partnerships across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services and victim services". The following year, the Home Office began funding violence reduction units (VRUs) in 18 parts of the country with high instances of violent crime.</p> <p>This inspection looks at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How the police work with violence reduction units and partner organisations to reduce serious youth violence 2. How well do police use their powers to reduce serious youth violence, and do they understand racial disproportionality? 3. How well do the police work with partner organisations to take a public health approach to serious youth violence?
Grade	
Recommendations	<p>Recommendation 3 By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.</p> <p>Recommendation 4 By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.</p>
Areas for improvement	

Police Crime and Commissioner's initial response

Serious Violence is acknowledged as a national and local priority. In March 2021, a Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Violence Reduction Alliance (VRA) was established to provide a local resourced multi-disciplinary approach to serious violence. Staffordshire PFCC host the Programme Lead role for Serious Violence funder by the partnership and although PCCs are not a specified authority, the PFCC has an important convening role and are expected to carry out several functions relating to the Duty. New burden funding for the Duty has been confirmed and will be channelled via PCC's in line with local agreement.

The police, local authorities, youth offending teams, probation, fire and rescue and health authorities (ICBs) are specified authorities and therefore subject to the SV Duty. Educational institutions and prisons/youth custodial institutions are under a separate duty to co-operate with core duty holders. There is a requirement for the partnership to consult with all such institutions in their area.

Underpinned by a Violence Reduction Strategic Needs Assessment the Serious Violence Strategy implementation is managed by a partnership Violence Reduction Delivery Group which meets every 6-8 weeks to deliver the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty. The VRA have already delivered several strands of improvement across the Serious Violence agenda including a Systems Analysis tender with significant engagement across the ICB and VRA Partnership, with regular updates provided to the Partnership Board and Delivery Group. The final version of the Systems Analysis report is due by 31 March 2023 at which point the report will be presented to the appropriate Governance Boards with the Partnership Board taking responsibility for the dissemination within their own organisations.

A Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Service has been commissioned with the national charity, Catch 22. The service comprises a prevention-led education programme, an early intervention team to offer individuals and families case work support to stop issues escalating, support workers in A & E and custody to identify and support those already affected by serious violence and a lived experience worker. The service commenced in March 2020 and has since been extended to enable the timelines to coincide with the recommissioning of the Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation Service. Staffordshire Commissioners Office fund two PSHE Coordinator to develop a more consistent and quality assured approach to community safety-related educational delivery. Staffordshire Commissioners Office has worked with The Prince's Trust to deliver a peer support programme within schools (based on projects operating in Glasgow and the West Midlands). Identified pupils receive training and support to be contact points within schools for other young people worried or affected by serious violence / exploitation.

Staffordshire Police has ring fenced a resource to support the advancement of the Serious Violence Strategy, VRA and prevention approach to serious violence. The Police Violence Reduction Team have a Chief Inspector, Inspector (equivalent), Sergeant, Police Officers/Staff and support staff assigned to supporting Primary, Secondary, Tertiary prevention along with enforcement where necessary. The Team are working closely with partners on a number of Police operations. A targeted place-based operation has been developed with the Core Team and is focussed on some of the key violence hotspots. This has involved a problem profile being developed, supported by designing out crime reports and subsequent action plans being developed which include targeting both times and locations. Various 'Operations' have been developed across the VRA and more broadly to tackle violence and exploitation, and have seen some success. Work is underway to develop this resource as part of the Public Protection Unit (PPU) review, which partners have been invited to provide input. Executive Board members agreed to jointly fund the VRA Communications and Engagement Officer who has been in post since October 2022.

A review of the whole-system is being progressed; this includes a review of risks, processes, pathways, capacity and alignment with the VRA approach. This work is underway across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and an Action Plan is being developed; which will be cross referenced with the relevant delivery plans. A Violence Reduction Alliance website has been developed and is now live. It currently holds the violence against women and girls resources and is being further developed to include the serious violence information and resources. Staffordshire PFCC were successful with the Partnership bid in each round of Safer Streets funding resulting in significant investments in target hardening, education and community awareness initiatives.

Chief Constable's response

Staffordshire Police recognise that the importance of effectively addressing Serious Violence and have a partnership approach to Youth Violence through the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Violence Reduction Alliance (VRA). Staffordshire Police welcomes the launch of the Serious Violence Duty to further support the efforts to share data, understand the issues, collectively problem solve and deliver plans to address local issues.

Staffordshire Police recognise the importance of ethically using Outcome 22 and have, through its work in improving investigations, ensured that staff are trained in its use. Training has been through focused guidance and briefings, part of supervisor 'Masterclass' training and included in readily accessible reference material. Staffordshire Police are also seeking to further enhance the use of diversionary outcomes and exploit those pathways through the expertise of an 'Out of Court Disposal' champion who will review and enhance our current position. Lastly, we are increasing our quality assurance and audit capability to ensure compliance with this and other outcomes.

Staffordshire Police and the wider VRA are very cognisant of national and some local evidence of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence. Our approach to understanding and addressing these issues is based on good data collection, sharing of that data and information, together with interpretation and analysis. Our VRA are working towards a collective data asset that will track youth cohorts involved in or at risk of serious violence. Further we are working with Keele University on understanding the drivers across public service that result in disproportionality so that we can better understanding how our approach, policy and tasking can address issues.

Police Crime and Commissioner's overall comments

Correct and effective use of Outcome 22 and other crime outcomes are key performance indicators for the PFCC and regularly scrutinised at public performance meetings with the Chief Constable and the PFCC. Effective and accurate recording practices which form recommendation 4 of this report are important to fully understand the impact of the Violence Reduction Alliance delivery plan and ensure all partners fully understand the impact of disproportionality in the local area. The PFCC is also raising the profile of accurate ethnicity recording across all partners in the Local Criminal Justice Board to assist in decision making and setting of delivery plans.