

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	14TH OCTOBER 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/053/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	CFO PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM GARY OAKFORD	REPORT AUTHOR:	T/GM PAUL KAY
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	PETER OWENS (SECONDED OFFICER TO THE VIOLENCE REDDUCTION PARTNERSHIP)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY PREVENTING AND REDUCING SERIOUS VIOLENCE DRAFT GUIDANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members that following public consultation in July 2019, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new serious violence duty ("the 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.

Recommendation

2. That Members.
 - a) Note the impact the Serious Violence Duty will have on Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) and;
 - b) Endorse the work the Authority are undertaking through the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) to support the duty and reinforce the commitment to continue such work with the relevant partners.

Introduction and Background

3. The Duty (appendix A) is a key part of the Government's programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence; by public bodies taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, by focusing on prevention and early intervention and be informed by evidence.
4. The Duty aims to ensure that agencies are focussed on their activities to reduce serious violence whilst also providing sufficient flexibility so that the relevant organisations will engage and work together in the most effective local partnership for any given area.

5. The Duty requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to work together 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 Wales⁶

Health

- Clinical Commissioning Groups in England
- Local Health Boards in Wales

Local authorities

Violence Reduction Units

6. Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) are non-statutory partnerships established in areas of the UK that are most affected by serious violence and are supported with initial funding from the Home Office.
7. The core function of the VRU is to offer leadership, collaborate with all relevant agencies operating locally and provide strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence. The VRU has enabled a multi-agency 'public health' approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. There is an expectation that much of the VRU activity should focus on early intervention, whether that is with respect to delivery of the VRU's core function in leading and coordinating the local response to serious violence or with regard to the VRU's funding of specific interventions.

Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership

8. The Merseyside VRU is known as the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) its agreed aims are to
 - Tackle the causes of serious violence in Merseyside
 - Reduce serious violence in Merseyside and particularly youth violence in public spaces
 - Identify suitable responses to prevent violence before it becomes a part of someone's life
 - Provide opportunities for young people to fulfil their life chances away from the impact of violence and crime
 - Ensure its response is bespoke to the challenges in each area of the county

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. People who live in the most deprived areas are more likely to be exposed to violence, the suggested approach and associated duty will benefit such communities.

Staff Implications

10. A MFRS Officer is embedded within MVRP for 16 hours per week.

Legal Implications

11. The Duty applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas and officers continued collaboration across multi-agency will ensure officers discharge its obligations under its legal requirements.
12. Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 (“the PCSC Act”) and has been produced to support organisations and authorities exercising functions in relation to the Serious Violence Duty
13. Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requiring Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

14. MFRS has been successful in securing funding from MVRP (£57,000) to deliver our targeted youth interventions.
15. The programmes have been delivered across Merseyside. These include:
 - a. 10 Primary Beacon Courses $\text{£}4,514.26 \times 10 = \text{£}45,142.60$
 - b. 2 LIFE Courses $\text{£}2,574.04 \times 2 = \text{£}5,148.08$
 - c. 4 Healing Together (Pilot) Programmes $\text{£}1,656.99 \times 4 = \text{£}6,627.96$

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

16. There are no direct risk management, health and safety or environmental implications concerned with this report.

Contribution to Our Mission: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.

17. MFRS in relation to its responsibilities under the duty provides effective intervention programmes to children, young people and families affected by serious violence, (whether that be as perpetrators and/or victims) and provides

early interventions in order to prevent young people becoming vulnerable to such crime.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Serious violence – guidance for responsible authorities

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
