



Home Office

Serious Violence Duty

Preventing and reducing serious violence
Draft Guidance for responsible authorities

May 2021

[Issued on behalf of UK Government]

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Summary

About this guidance

1. This guidance is issued by the Secretary of State as statutory guidance under [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.
2. The guidance sets out case studies demonstrating effective partnership working, advice on data sharing, information on monitoring and inspection and advice on working with the voluntary and community sector and young people. This guidance also provides links to existing guidance and information rather than repeat or reproduce it here.
3. The guidance also outlines the changes made to 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.
4. This guidance is for specified authorities defined in [Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act] (Chief Officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Local Health Boards, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services), prison authorities, youth custody authorities and educational authorities (as defined in [Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act]), local policing bodies, and any person prescribed in regulations under [section 9 of the PCSC Act].

Chapter One: The Duty

Introduction

5. Following public consultation in July 2019¹, 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.
6. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships by making sure they have a strategy in place to tackle violent crime.

The Duty

Why has the duty been introduced?

7. Serious violence has a devastating impact on victims and their families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. For example, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 84 percent between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020.
8. It is within this context that we have introduced the Serious Violence Duty. The Duty is a key part of the Government’s programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence; taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focused on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.
9. In addition to tough law enforcement we need to understand and address the factors that cause someone to commit violent crime in the first place. The Duty aims to ensure that agencies are focussed on their activity 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.

What is the duty?

10. The Duty covers the requirements set out in [Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act]. It requires specified authorities² to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area,

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/serious-violence-new-legal-duty-to-support-multi-agency-action>

² As defined in [Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act].

the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities³ for the area in the preparation of their strategy.

11. The Duty does not require the creation of new multi-agency structures. Local senior leaders, as set out in this guidance, should use existing local structures where possible to comply with the requirements of the duty to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local areas and, ultimately, to improve community safety.

12. The Duty requires the specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. In doing so, local areas are encouraged to adopt the World Health Organisation's definition of a public health approach, which can be summarised as follows:

- Focussed on a defined population;
- With and for communities;
- Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries;
- Focussed on generating long term as well as short term solutions;
- Based on data and intelligence to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities;
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem.⁴

13. It should also be recognised that enforcement and criminal justice-based activity is a critical part of a public health approach. In adopting a public health approach, this should not be seen to in any way undermine or prevent the need for the valuable and vital work of the police and other partners in relation to enforcement and criminal justice-based activity. This is clear in advice from the College of Policing and Public Health England concerning public health approaches in policing.⁵

14. Partnerships across England and Wales must identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, and, so far as possible to do so, identify the causes of that violence. In order to do so partnerships should undertake an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence within their area and use this analysis to develop a local strategic needs assessment which should inform the local strategy. The strategy, which partnerships must prepare and implement, should contain bespoke solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. This must

³ As defined in [Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act].

⁴ https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/public_health/en/

⁵ <https://www.college.police.uk/about/public-health>

be kept under review, which should be done on an annual basis and updated when necessary.

15. The Duty is intended to create the right conditions for authorities to collaborate and communicate regularly, to use existing partnerships and to share information and take effective coordinated action in their local areas. All organisations and agencies subject to the duty will be accountable for their activity and co-operation.

Who must comply with the duty?

16. 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
 - A district council
 - A county council in England
 - A London borough council
 - The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
 - The Council of the Isles of Scilly
 - A county council in Wales
 - A county borough council in Wales

17. The Duty does not specify a 'lead' organisation or person whose responsibility is to coordinate activity or prescribe a structure within which specified authorities are expected to work. It is for the specified authorities to come together to decide on the appropriate lead and structure of collaboration for their area. Some localities may choose to use VRUs to lead on the work (if there is one present) or their local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), whilst others may use other partnerships such

⁶ This includes Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners solely in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions.

as the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, Criminal Justice boards or Health and Wellbeing boards. It may also be the case that collaboration via a number of different partnership structures is preferred depending on the local context.

18. Local policing bodies, being Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority, may choose to collaborate with local partnerships and take a convening role in order to support the development and implementation of the local strategy. In line with the current arrangements within CSPs, responsible authorities must co-operate with local policing bodies when expected to do so. This also applies to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
19. In recognition of the vital role schools play in safeguarding children and young people, educational institutions⁷ including: local authority maintained schools, academies, independent schools, free schools, alternative education providers and further education providers, must be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. [Section 14 of the PCSC Act] also provides that educational authorities must collaborate with specified authorities if their involvement is requested. This means that individual institutions are required to collaborate when requested to do so by the specified authorities for the area. Educational authorities can also request to participate in partnership arrangements of their own volition, and in this event the specified authorities would be required to collaborate with them. Educational authorities may also be required under the duty to carry out actions specified in a strategy, and to collaborate with another educational authority, prison or youth custody authority in the local government area. However, in certain circumstances those duties do not apply⁸. A strategic education representative for the local area should be nominated by the partnership to provide a link between the responsible authorities and individual institutions.
20. Prisons protect the public and can play an integral role both in the rehabilitation of those prisoners who have committed violent offences and who may in the future, and have been, or may in the future, be among those more likely to be subject to violence. As with educational authorities, prison and youth custody authorities are required to be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy. [Section 14 of the PCSC Act] also provides that they must collaborate with specified authorities if their involvement is requested. This means that individual

⁷ As defined in [Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act].

⁸ [Section 14(7) of the PCSC Act provides that an educational authority is not subject to a duty in subsection (3), (4) or (5)(b) of section 14, if or to the extent that compliance with the duty: (a) would be incompatible with any other duty of the authority imposed by an enactment (other than subsection (5)(b)), (b) would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions, (c) would be disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area to which the duty relates, or (d) would mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs. Subsection (8) provides that in determining whether subsection (7) applies to an authority, the cumulative effect of complying with duties under this section must be taken into account].

institutions are required to collaborate when requested to do so by the specified authorities for the area. Prison and youth custody authorities can also request to participate in partnership arrangements, and in this event the specified authorities would be required to collaborate with them. Prison and youth custody authorities may also be required under the duty to carry out actions specified a strategy, and to collaborate with an educational authority, or another prison or youth custody authority in the local government area. However, in certain circumstances those duties do not apply⁹. The duties described above are placed on the governor or director of the relevant custodial institution. However, for adult prisons, Prison Group Directors may ensure engagement between prison authorities and specified authorities where it is considered relevant and necessary for the prevention and reduction of serious violence. They may also be nominated to represent relevant youth custody authorities.

21. Partnerships may wish to engage with educational, prison and/or youth custody authorities in order to:

- Seek local intelligence which may contribute to the diagnosis of the local strategic needs assessment
- Request data to feed into an evidence-based analysis of local causes of serious violence
- Deliver any actions resulting from the strategy at an individual institution level which have been pre-agreed with the relevant institution/s
- Assess the effectiveness and outcomes of any actions resulting from the strategy involving or delivered by individual institutions

Defining Serious Violence

22. [Section 12 of the PCSC Act] provides that, for the purposes of this duty, violence includes violence against property and threats of violence but does not include terrorism. [Section 12] also provides that in considering what amounts to serious violence in any given area account must be taken of a number of factors, which are:

- a. the maximum penalty which could be imposed for any offence involved in the violence;

⁹ [Section 14(7) of the PCSC Act provide that a prison authority and a youth custody authority is not subject to a duty in subsection (3), (4) or (5)(b) of section 14, if or to the extent that compliance with the duty: (a) would be incompatible with any other duty of the authority imposed by an enactment (other than subsection (5)(b)), (b) would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions, (c) would be disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area to which the duty relates, or (d) would mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs. Subsection (8) provides that in determining whether subsection (7) applies to an authority, the cumulative effect of complying with duties under this section must be taken into account].

- b. the impact of the violence on any victim;
- c. the prevalence of the violence in the area, and
- d. the impact of the violence on the community in the area.

This approach allows the response to take account of new and emerging forms of serious violence as they develop and are identified and recognises the geographical difference in the prevalence of different types of serious violent crimes.

23. In considering how to define serious violence within their area, specified authorities should encompass serious violence as defined for the purposes of the Serious Violence Strategy¹⁰ and include a focus on issues such as public space youth violence. The Serious Violence Strategy was published in response to rises in certain types of public space violent crimes.
24. The Serious Violence Strategy 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. These crimes should be at the core of any definition of serious violence for the purpose of its reduction and prevention.
25. However there is flexibility for specified authorities in local areas to take account of their evidence-based strategic needs assessment and include in their strategy actions which focus on other related types of serious violence, this could include (but is not limited to) domestic violence, alcohol related violence, sexual abuse, modern slavery or gender-based violence.

Defining the Local Area

26. The “local area” within which specified authorities are expected to work collectively is, at a minimum, within a local government area.¹¹
27. The legislation is intentionally flexible to allow specified authorities to determine the geographical extent of their collaboration (subject to the minimum specified area). There is no universally “correct” approach when determining the size of the area within which the partnership will operate. The chosen area will most likely align with the local partnership through which the duty is delivered. Representatives from the specified authorities should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership through which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the duty.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

¹¹ [A local government area is defined in section 10 of the PCSC Act as: (a) in relation to England, a district or London Borough, the City of London, the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly; and (b) in relation to Wales, a county or county borough].

28. In order to comply with the duty it is not necessary to create a new partnership, instead the specified authorities should use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications. For example, specified authorities may wish to create a sub-committee to an already established partnership with a specific serious violence remit. The Duty is an opportunity to simplify and add focus to existing partnership arrangements rather than add any additional complexity to the current multi-agency landscape.
29. [Section 8 of the PCSC Act] allows two or more specified authorities to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence in a “relevant area”¹². This means that authorities are permitted to work across local government boundaries and in doing so, collaborate on strategies which cover areas greater than that which they primarily provide services in. This could include collaboration with authorities in neighbouring areas or those further afield. Where appropriate, bodies and agencies may choose to work across local government boundaries and even nationally where there is the need to tackle specific serious violence issues (e.g. in the case of county lines drug dealing or instances where individuals are placed in custody or care outside of the local authority responsible for them).

What are specified authorities expected to do?

30. Once the specified authorities have identified a partnership structure, the core elements of the duty are:
- a. Understanding local issues: In order to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their areas, and so far as it is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence, the partnership should work together to establish the local ‘strategic needs assessment’ – identifying the drivers of serious violence acting in the local area and the cohorts of people most affected or at risk. This will require the sharing of relevant data and intelligence held by the individual organisations subject to the duty.
 - b. Preparation and implementation of a strategy: In order to prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area, the partnership must collectively develop a strategy which should outline the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to address the drivers identified in the strategic needs assessment and work to prevent and reduce serious violence in the specified local area. The strategy should set out how the proposed actions will enhance and complement existing local arrangements responding to serious violence. Part

¹² [“relevant area”, in relation to a specified authority, educational authority, prison authority or youth custody authority means an area made up of: (a) all or part of a local government area for which it is a specified authority, educational authority, prison authority or youth custody authority, and (b) all or part of one or more other local government areas (regardless of whether, in the case of a specified authority or educational authority, it is also a specified authority or educational authority for the other area or areas).]

of this work may include consideration of joint funding or investment to support local early interventions and responses. Partnerships will also need to consult with any and all educational institutions, prisons and secure settings situated in the local area as part of this process. [Regulations made by the Secretary of State may make provision for or in connection with the publication and dissemination of such strategies.]

- c. Review: The duty requires that once a strategy has been prepared it must be kept under review. The partnership should review the strategy on an annual basis. A review should specifically consider how the interventions and solutions have impacted on serious violence within their area – considering for example crime statistics and accident and emergency data. The review may highlight the need for a refreshed strategic needs assessment and strategy, for example where new and emerging crime types are identified.

31. These core elements are explored in further detail throughout this guidance. All responsible authorities will be accountable for their activity and co-operation in implementing the strategy. Any and all actions set out in a strategy should be pre-agreed by all specified authorities and any relevant agencies which they may impact. Responsible authorities may wish to identify a senior officer in their agency to have responsibility and authority for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the duty.

Chapter Two: Planning and Collaboration

Collaboration

32. Every local area will have a range of existing multi-agency arrangements in place. These existing partnerships may include Community Safety Partnerships, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Serious Organised Crime Partnerships as well as Troubled Families Programme Structures, Criminal Justice Boards, Violence Reduction Units (non-statutory), Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements.
33. As previously set out, the [PCSC Act] does not specify the partnership model through which specified authorities must fulfil their obligations to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. Representatives from the specified statutory organisations should collectively decide on the appropriate partnership in which they will work together to undertake the requirements of the duty. An example of a multi-agency partnership model is included as a case study below.
34. This flexibility is designed to allow specified authorities to build on existing infrastructure, strengths and capabilities as they consider most appropriate. In order to comply with the duty it is not necessary to create a new partnership, and the specified authorities should use existing partnerships where possible and with appropriate modifications. Public Health England have also produced a useful resource for local system leaders on multi-agency partnership working for the purposes of serious violence prevention.¹³
35. The specified authorities within the partnership area should come together, provide information and data, and collaborate in the formulation and agreement of the strategic needs assessment. However, it will be for the local partnership to decide how best to work together to deliver the actions identified in the strategy as a result of the initial assessment.
36. There is no “one size fits all” approach, as some specified authorities will need to collaborate with other authorities across a wide geographical extent on some issues (for example, knife crime across London or county lines activity), whereas other bodies may be able to collaborate in smaller areas on other issues (for example, a rise in school exclusions in part of a local authority area leading to an increased risk of serious violence). Similarly, some identified actions may require all specified authorities to work together, whereas other actions may only require the specific attention of one or two of the authorities.

¹³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf

Case Study: Multi-agency Partnership Model

Relevant case study to be included here

Strategic Needs Assessments

37. A strategic needs assessment will enable a local area to identify current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and the cohorts most vulnerable to involvement in their partnership area. This will provide a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues. An example outlining the overall aims and framework of an existing strategic needs assessment is included as a case study below.
38. The strategic needs assessment should be formulated following an evidence-based analysis of information relating to the violent crime types, the drivers of crime within the partnership area and the cohorts most vulnerable. This will require the gathering and analysis of data from all partners, so far as is possible, including (but not restricted to) crime data (e.g. number and location data), hospital data on serious violence injuries, education data (e.g. truancy and exclusion), anonymised prison data (e.g. types of offences) and local data (e.g. census information) alongside the input of organisational intelligence and experience (and where appropriate knowledge and intelligence from voluntary sector organisations and young people). Local areas may wish to seek additional analytical support and expertise in formulating their strategic needs assessment. Public Health England have also published a useful resource for local areas on the development of local strategic needs assessments.¹⁴
39. The strategic needs assessment may also identify data or intelligence gaps, where the partnership is lacking information or knowledge and requires further information. Involving a range of staff and partners in the development of the strategic needs assessment will improve the analysis and lead to a clearer picture of the local areas' problems. Partnerships may also find it useful to gather qualitative data as part of this process.
40. The results of the strategic needs assessment should be used by the partnership to define their serious violence issues and formulate and prioritise bespoke actions to prevent and reduce serious violence that the partnership will take forward (the strategy).

¹⁴ [Serious Violence Reduction: A guide to undertaking a local strategic needs assessment, Public Health England]

Case Study: Overview of a Strategic Needs Assessment Framework

Relevant case study to be included here

The Strategy

41. The strategy should be prepared by the specified authorities following the comprehensive strategic needs assessment. It should comprise a range of new and existing actions that the partnership will take forward to prevent and reduce the serious violence issues and drivers that have been identified.
42. The [PCSC Act] requires that the strategy is kept under review and revised from time to time. The strategy should be reviewed at a minimum on an annual basis and specified authorities should collectively decide if any new action is required or if a revised strategy is needed. There is nothing to prevent specified authorities from reviewing and revising their strategic needs assessment and strategy (or part thereof) on a more frequent basis if required.
43. The strategy could usefully include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. A high level (non-sensitive) summary of the strategic needs assessment
 - b. How the chosen partnership will work to discharge its duties under the legislation to prevent and reduce serious violence
 - c. Actions (including early intervention preventative action) to be undertaken by the whole partnership area to prevent and reduce serious violence and support victims
 - d. Actions or bespoke plans by sector/partner
 - e. Wider actions (where appropriate cross boundaries or nationally)
 - f. Ongoing engagement with the voluntary and community sectors, young people and local business
 - g. How the identified action enhances or complements existing action/or arrangements within the local area
 - h. Identified funding streams or resources that can be used by the partnership for prevention and reduction activities
 - i. Date for review/annual review mechanism
 - j. Where applicable the annual assessment of the partnership's performance against the previous years' strategy.

44. Specified authorities may also want to be mindful of timing the development of their strategies and actions to coincide with budgetary or spending decisions within their local area – this will enable an evidence-based assessment of where funds are best diverted to. Any actions falling on educational institutions, prisons or secure settings should be subject to an agreed cost assessment to ensure affordability alongside current spending obligations. Where funding is not available through local budgets, partnerships may want to consider pooling and/or directing resources to where they are needed most.
45. Prior to finalising the strategy, gathering the views and ideas of the voluntary and community sector, children and young people, service users and business operating in the area is strongly encouraged. Specified authorities may also wish to refer to strategies published by neighbouring areas to check for consistency of approach if there is a need to work across local authority boundaries on common issues.
46. The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations, between persons with different protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. When developing their local strategies, which will include actions and interventions for their local areas, specified authorities must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Specified authorities should also monitor the impact of their local strategies on those with protected characteristics.
47. The Secretary of State may make regulations for or in connection with the publication and dissemination of the strategy. Any assessment/strategy can be incorporated into existing products (for example, CSP strategies) if it is clearly identified or, a bespoke individual strategy in response to the duty if that is what the partnership decides. An example of a strategy and associated actions is included as a case study below. Public Health England have also produced a useful resource for local system leaders on partnership working for the purposes of serious violence prevention.¹⁵

Case Study: Overview of Key Themes in a Local Strategy

Relevant case study to be included here

¹⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/838930/multi-agency_approach_to_serious_violence_prevention.pdf

Data and Information Sharing

48. In order to collaborate effectively partnerships are expected to share data and intelligence. This should primarily consist of sharing aggregated and anonymised data but may also include data pertaining to individuals to inform the strategic, tactical and operational response to serious violence in the local area. For example, hospital data on knife injuries, the number of exclusions and truancies in local schools, police recorded crime, local crime data, anonymised prison data, areas of high social services interventions, and intelligence on threats such as county lines including the activity of serious organised crime gangs and on drugs markets. Data and information sharing between partnerships should be purposeful and the data used for the purposes of meeting the requirements of the duty to prevent and reduce serious violence. Local areas may wish to seek additional analytical support and expertise to support with data analysis.
49. The data and intelligence shared will enable the analysis of trends and the identification of geographical 'hotspot' areas and the cohorts with a higher risk of serious violence, for which a joint strategic, operational or tactical response can be put in place.
50. Personal data can be shared through existing information gateways and mechanisms which are already well-established (e.g. MARAC and MASH arrangements). The new information sharing gateways for the purposes of the duty are not intended to replace these, but to provide powers to enable the sharing of relevant data where existing powers would not be sufficient. There may be instances where information pertaining to individuals (including personal data) needs to be shared, for example if the police wish to discuss within the partnership a local gang matrix that would be difficult to assess in abstract, and where this form of data sharing would support the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally.
51. All responsible authorities should already have arrangements in place, which set out clearly the processes and the principles for sharing information and data internally. In addition, these arrangements may cover sharing information and data within the local partnership and with external bodies, and include the purpose of sharing the data, what is to happen to the data at relevant points and clarity on respective roles. However, new agreements may need to be established where they are not already in place. The [PSCS Act] does not affect those existing data and information sharing gateways, but it provides a power to enable the disclosure of data and information between specified authorities, local policing bodies, and educational, prison and youth custody authorities. This ensures that all such authorities have the power to disclose information for the purposes of exercising the functions conferred under, or in accordance with [Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Act¹⁶].

¹⁶ [Where a disclosure under section 15 of the PCSC Act is also permitted by regulations under section 6(2) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, or by section 115 of that Act (but not if it is also a disclosure under

Therefore, all responsible authorities are enabled to share data and information with each other (including personal data, subject to compliance with data protection legislation and so long as the disclosure is not prohibited by any of Parts 1 to 7 or Chapter 1 of Part 9 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016) where necessary for the purposes of exercising the functions conferred under, or in accordance with, [Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act], i.e. to enable effective collaboration and planning to prevent and reduce serious violence. This may include the following types of data sharing:

- Strategic (national) – matching of big national data systems and sets in order to identify trends
- Strategic (regional) – local/regional sharing of strategic/non-identifiable data in order to develop the local strategic needs assessment which will inform the local strategy and ultimately help target services
- Operational (local) – sharing of case-specific information on individuals, threats and contextual vulnerabilities between local practitioners to support disruption and safeguarding decision-making
- Operational (local) – sharing of location-specific information on places between local practitioners to support disruption and safeguarding decision-making

52. An example of an effective dataset compiled for the purposes of violence prevention is the 'Information Sharing to tackle Violence (ISTV)' dataset, originally published by NHS Digital in 2014.¹⁷ Effective data sharing is also a key focus of the current Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), supported by initial funding from the Home Office, and it is acknowledged that the ISTV approach to data sharing should be adopted as a baseline and continually improved upon where possible. VRUs are currently working to achieve the following three levels of data usage in order to support their work to prevent and reduce serious violence:

- Level 1 – Data used to inform the strategic needs assessment in order to understand local issues
- Level 2 – Data used to better identify hotspot locations and support a targeted approach

section 17A of that Act), and a condition or limitation applies to that disclosure under those regulations or that section by virtue of such regulations. That condition or limitation does not apply if the disclosure is made under section 15 of the PCSC Act. Noting there is no equivalent provision in respect of information requested by a local policing body under section 16 of the PCSC Act.]

¹⁷ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/isb1594-information-sharing-to-tackle-violence-minimum-dataset>

- Level 3 – Data used to better identify individuals at risk for high-intensity support programmes

What are the advantages of data sharing?

53. Effective data sharing will provide partnerships with a shared evidence-base on which key decisions can be made and a response strategy developed. Each responsible authority may routinely collect data on a particular aspect of a local area's strategic needs assessment therefore such data should be shared with the partnership in order for all aspects to be adequately considered. Information sharing can also help to support a partnership's aims by:

- Providing a shared understanding of the problem – information brought together from a range of organisations/agencies can be used to identify patterns and trends, geographical hotspots and vulnerable cohorts. Such data can also be reverted to for evaluation purposes.
- Fostering a multi-agency response – including a range of data sources in the initial strategic needs assessment will help to engender a natural multi-agency response as each organisation/agency will have a clear role to play in addressing local issues.
- Supporting partnership working – regular sharing of information may help to build and/or improve inter-agency relationships as partners will be working together on shared issues with a common goal.

Data protection

54. Disclosures of personal data are only permitted if they are in compliance with the data protection legislation as defined in section 3 of the Data Protection Act 2018 as the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, regulations made under the Data Protection Act 2018, and regulations made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 which relate to the EU GDPR or the Law Enforcement Directive. Specified authorities should design privacy into their partnerships from the beginning of the process and before exercising the relevant functions under [the PCSC Act], including for example, having all appropriate agreements and notices in place and being able to exhibit good evidence of compliance with the data protection legislation. To share personal data, all responsible authorities should:

- Comply with the processing conditions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR
- Be aware of the exemptions from certain UK GDPR provisions contained in Schedule 2 to the Data Protection Act 2018, to the extent that the application of those UK GDPR provisions would be likely to prejudice the prevention or

detection of crime. Where those purposes would not be likely to be prejudiced any processing must comply with the UK GDPR as normal.

Case study: Example of effective data-sharing model

Relevant case study to be included here

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Chapter Three: Engagement

Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London

55. Local policing bodies, being Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Common Council of the City of London, have an important part to play in convening partner agencies and are responsible for the totality of policing in their area, as well as services for victims of crime.
56. Local policing bodies may choose to assist specified authorities in the exercise of their functions to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence and may monitor specified authorities' exercise of those functions.
57. This also applies to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
58. Specified authorities must co-operate with a local policing body when required to do so by virtue of [section 13 of the PCSC Act], however the local policing body should consider the proportionality of additional requests and anticipated costs to specified authorities before making any such requests. This includes requests for information made under [section 16 of the PCSC Act] in order to fulfil their role of enabling and monitoring the effectiveness of local strategies.¹⁸ Such requests must only relate to the organisation that has generated it, except where functions are contracted out. There must also be sufficient safeguards in place to ensure that information is disclosed in line with relevant data protection legislation.
59. Local policing bodies may assist the local partnership with the development and implementation of the local strategy, for example, by convening and chairing meetings, jointly commissioning services where required and/or monitoring the impact of local interventions within their force area.

¹⁸ As set out in [section 13 of the PCSC Act].

Violence Reduction Units

60. Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) are non-statutory partnerships established in the 18 areas (as identified in April 2019) most affected by serious violence¹⁹, supported with initial funding from the Home Office.
61. VRUs bring together, at a minimum, the Chief Constable for the area, the Police and Crime Commissioner, local authorities with responsibility for the geographical areas principally targeted by the activities of the VRU, the clinical commissioning groups, Public Health England/Wales and the Youth Offending Team. They also engage community groups and young people and ensure appropriate representation of relevant local educational institutions.
62. The core functions of a VRU are to offer leadership and, working with all relevant agencies operating locally, strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence. VRU activity has enabled a multi-agency, 'public health' approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. There is an expectation that much of 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.
63. VRUs are able to set their own definition of serious violence. They are required to undertake a strategic needs assessment and develop a response strategy for their area, as well as commit funding to programmes, projects and interventions to prevent and respond to violence in their area.
64. Local partnerships and CSPs will wish to work closely with VRUs (if there is one present in their area) in the development of the strategic needs assessment and response strategy. Specified authorities may wish to incorporate or refer to the VRU strategic needs assessment and strategy in their strategy, however the geographical areas covered by VRUs are at police force or regional level and as such may be too broad to act in place of a local needs assessment/strategy on behalf of CSPs/local partnerships.
65. As commissioners of local services, VRUs will hold significant information about the current provision in the region. VRUs are required to operate 'with and for the community' and so should also hold intelligence about the impact of violence on local communities and the voice of those affected and/or involved in serious violence.

¹⁹ The 18 areas in receipt of a VRU funding allocation from the Home Office (as identified in April 2019) are as follows: Metropolitan Police, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Northumbria, Thames Valley, Lancashire, Essex, Avon and Somerset, Kent, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Hampshire and South Wales.

Voluntary and Community Sector

66. Throughout England and Wales, there are many voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations working to tackle serious violence or serious violence related issues and ultimately improve outcomes for young people
67. These organisations are often highly skilled and knowledgeable on specific local issues and communities. Locally based organisations are often very trusted in communities, and as such can engage with people within the community, in a way public bodies may not be able to. This may also be further enhanced through the recruitment of individuals with lived experience. By engaging with the voluntary and community sector, specified authorities may therefore gain a richer understanding of the serious violence issues within their local areas.
68. The VCS comprises a range of organisations, including but not limited to; community groups, voluntary organisations, faith and equalities groups, charities, social enterprises and housing associations. All of which may be relevant to engage with as part of the initial identification of the local strategic needs assessment, the development of the response strategy, its subsequent implementation and review.

What to consider when engaging with the VCS

69. Collaborative working with the VCS is key to deliver policies that tackle the issues that matter to communities and to strengthen the resilience of this sector in addressing these issues. In order to achieve better outcomes, statutory partnerships and VCS organisations should work together to build effective working relationships. However, it is important that VCS organisations maintain their independence in order to uphold their role as advocates for their beneficiaries and the community and preserve the trust of their service users.
70. Early engagement ensures that the key stages of policy development can reflect the expertise of this sector and can provide valuable insight into how policies are likely to impact communities. Expectations should also be set in line with the capacity of the organisation in question.
71. It is also important to give proper notice of funding opportunities or decisions and ensure that funding terms are fair and enable local organisations to participate.
72. The Compact is a voluntary agreement which may be used as a vehicle to foster strong, effective partnerships between statutory partnerships and VCS organisations. Its principles apply to all relationships between VCS organisations and public bodies that are distributing funds on behalf of the government. Many local areas in England also have a local Compact or other arrangement to promote effective partnership working.

Children and Young People

73. Engaging young people is important to make sure they have a say on the issues which affect them and that they care about. This is especially important for those who are in receipt of services that the agencies and bodies involved in the partnership provide and who also may be particularly vulnerable, for example, young offenders, those involved in the criminal justice system, out of mainstream schooling, and/or looked after children.
74. The Government has carried out comprehensive research into the drivers of violent crime and the characteristics of perpetrators and victims.²⁰ We know that there are overlapping risk factors of becoming a victim and/or perpetrator of serious violence and these risk factors apply at an individual, family and community level. Partnerships should be mindful of this overlap when engaging with young people and developing interventions which are targeted at or may affect them.
75. It is also important to consider how safe young people feel when going about their daytime and evening activities, to address their concerns and ensure that they are aware of the work being undertaken in their local area to prevent and reduce serious violence and improve community safety. Most local authorities or areas have a local youth council which provides opportunities for young people to work with decision-makers on a range of issues, such as the prevention of knife crime. Some areas also have young mayors, youth police and crime commissioners and youth forums within VCS youth organisations which could all be engaged.
76. The quality of engagement is extremely important to support young people when they are volunteering their time to improve their communities. Young people are diverse, and this should be reflected in efforts to seek views on evidence and issues for the partnership. Some young people may need their support workers (youth workers, mental health worker, looked after key worker etc.) to be involved to effectively engage in consultations and community planning. Specified authorities may also want to consider allocating an appropriate budget for out of pocket expenses prior to engagement.

Case study: Example of effective engagement and collaboration with communities

Relevant case study to be included here

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

Chapter Four: Sector Specific Guidance

Police

77. The police have a critical role to play in enforcing the law to protect the public. However, the requirements relating to the duty make clear that a partnership response to serious violence, involving a range of lead agencies, is required. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence which are crucial in reversing the increase in harm largely caused by and against young people. Existing work to investigate, disrupt, deter and enforce using the full range of policing powers and tools available (for example, stop and search) should still continue as well as work undertaken within statutory safeguarding arrangements to support vulnerable children and young people, referring to support and healthcare services where appropriate.
78. The Duty applies to the Chief Officer of police for all police force areas in England and Wales. The Chief Officer should ensure that there is appropriate representation to all partnerships operating within their force area. This representative should be able to:
- Engage fully with local partnerships, including by establishing and maintaining the use of anonymised information from NHS emergency departments regarding the locations in which people are injured in violence and weapons used
 - Share relevant police data and information to inform the strategic needs assessment for the local area (for example; data on numbers and trends in violence against the person including knife crime, gun crime, homicides and drugs, information on local serious violence hotspots including people and places, information on county lines networks etc.)
 - Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified
 - Facilitate the use of a relevant risk assessment tool
 - Support work to deliver prevention and early intervention and explain to partners how their data can help inform this work
 - Explain to partners how civil injunctions can be effective to reduce serious violence
79. The Duty does not apply to ports policing, nuclear policing, the Ministry of Defence Police or British Transport Police, however where such forces operate within a local area, the Chief Officer could usefully consider how to engage such forces where necessary.

Justice

Prisons

80. Prisons help to protect the public and play an important role in the rehabilitation of people who have committed violent offences. Prison populations include offenders that can contribute to violence both in the prison, and in the wider community, through demand for drugs and contraband and participation in organised crime. The prison population also includes prisoners who are at risk of being a victim of violence.
81. There are a number of different categories and types of prison, containing different cohorts of prisoners and therefore not all will have relevance for the local partnerships. Many may also house a population that has very little connection with the local authority area in which they are located. For this reason, specified authorities must consult prison authorities in the preparation of the local strategy, but prison authorities may also choose to collaborate with a specified authority or another prison authority, a youth custody authority or an educational authority in that area of their own volition, or any of those other bodies may require them to collaborate. Where prisons choose, or are requested, to actively collaborate with the partnership, they should be asked to input into the development of the strategic needs assessment and consent to any actions in the strategy which may apply to them.
82. Where and when requested, a prison must comply with actions in a local strategy, so long as they:
- are compatible with any other statutory duties;
 - would not have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions;
 - are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally; and
 - would not mean that the prison authority incurred unreasonable costs.
83. Local partnerships should engage prisons in their area early and regularly throughout the development of the strategy, to ensure that:
- There is a shared understanding about the relationship between the prison and serious violence in the local area.
 - There is an informed view about how partners can support in-prison efforts to reduce violence and rehabilitate prisoners.
84. When considering the evidence that a prison can contribute, local partnerships should try to look beyond the headline violence data. This may be supported by involving prison staff in the consultation process.

85. Prisons co-operate closely with wider law enforcement in investigating criminality, pursuing suspects, and ensuring the security of prisons and the protection of the public. Insight from these institutions can inform the work of the local partnership, although the ongoing co-operation through existing structures should continue in any case.
86. The governor or director of the prison is responsible for complying with the duty. They may wish to identify a suitable representative, such as a Prison Group Director, who should be able to:
- Engage with the relevant partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence.
 - Share and contextualise anonymised aggregate prison data that is published or collated for business as usual purposes by the prison or HMPPS nationally.
 - Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified.
 - Communicate the role of prisons in cutting crime and the rehabilitation of prisoners, and work with community partners to develop work in this area.
87. Prisons already work alongside police and probation through existing multi-agency partnerships, such as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Schemes, to assess and manage eligible violent offenders at a strategic level. Some prisons also participate in local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). However, many prisons are not routinely involved in the partnerships that may be chosen to deliver this duty. Partnerships should consider this in how they support prisons' involvement and take a pragmatic approach to how prisons are involved in partnership arrangements.

Children and Young People Secure Settings

88. Children and Young People secure settings protect the public and have a critical role to play in the care and rehabilitation of children and young people who have committed or may be at risk of becoming involved in serious violence. Working with other agencies and organisations they can plan and deliver evidence-led approaches which can help to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes violence reduction within secure settings themselves, and also in the wider community.
89. The Duty will apply to secure settings in the same manner as prisons (detailed above).

90. Governors of Young Offender Institutions, Governors or Directors of Secure Training Centres, Registered Managers of Secure Children's Homes and heads of Secure Schools are responsible for complying with the duty. Governors of Young Offender Institutions and Governors of Secure Training Centres may wish to identify a representative, this may be through the representation arranged by the regional Prison Group Director. The representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with the local partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence both in the community and within secure settings
- Support the development of the evidence-based strategic needs assessment and publication and implementation of the strategy to address the drivers of serious violence within establishments and within the local partnership area
- Identify opportunities for agencies to work across local authority boundaries to tackle specific serious violence issues
- Share relevant aggregated and anonymised data, operational knowledge and experience transparently (for example; data and trends in drug dealing, resettlement needs, security issues, violence against staff and contraband, knowledge and experience on background profiles of children and young people who have offended, intelligence which may support crime prevention, and, where appropriate, knowledge and information from resident children and young people themselves)
- Review and build upon existing partnerships wherever possible (e.g. Youth Offending Teams, Children's Social Care, Secure Children's Homes²¹, NHS and Education providers)
- Identify impacts of serious violence within the local community e.g. violence against staff and young people within establishments

Youth Offending Teams

91. Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are multi-agency teams responsible for helping to cut crime and for the supervision of children subject to pre-court interventions and statutory court disposals.

92. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, YOTs have a duty to co-operate as a multi-agency entity to secure youth justice services appropriate to their area and drive a strategic effort to prevent offending by children and young people. They play a critical role as they are well placed to identify children and young people known to relevant organisations and agencies who are likely to be involved in perpetrating

²¹ For the purposes of the duty, all types of residential care for looked-after children, including secure children's homes, will be the responsibility of the local authority in which they are located. The onus will therefore be on the local authority to ensure engagement between the partnership and such institutions where necessary.

serious violence. Through existing partnerships, they collaborate with partners to aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence.

93. The YOT must comply with the duty, and should nominate a representative from the team who should be able to:

- Engage fully with the relevant local partnership to prevent and tackle serious violence, and where applicable, as a core member of the local Violence Reduction Unit
- Share relevant aggregated and anonymised data, where practicable, to support the development of the evidence-based problem profile/strategic assessment (for example; information on local serious violence hotspots, information on county lines drug dealing networks and wider child criminal exploitation etc.)
- Support publication and implementation of the strategy to address the risks identified, ensuring that children and their interests are fairly represented in such discussions
- Identify and act to ensure children's best interests, including safeguarding requirements and reducing vulnerability to criminal exploitation, are kept at the forefront of any strategic planning
- Advise on appropriate responses to increase levels of safety within the local partnership area, and enable children to be able to move beyond their offending
- Assist in the delivery of prevention and early intervention initiatives where possible, and explain to partners how their input can help enhance this work
- Work across local authority areas and organisational boundaries where children are not located in the partnership area (for example, when leaving custody or in county lines cases where children may be far from their home area)

Probation

94. Probation helps to protect the public and cut crime. At a local level, the National Probation Service (NPS) are responsible for assessing violent offenders in prison to prepare them for release on licence to the community, supervising them when they are released and initiating recall where necessary for public protection and helping ensure violent offenders who are serving community sentences meet the requirements ordered by the courts. They have a distinct role to play in reducing and preventing re-offending amongst violent offenders as well as communicating with and prioritising the wellbeing of victims of violent offences, when the offender has received a prison sentence of 12 months or more, or is detained as a mental health patient.

95. Probation services also work alongside police and prisons through existing multi-agency partnerships, such as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements

(MAPPA), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Schemes, to assess and manage eligible violent offenders at a strategic level.

96. The Duty applies to a provider of probation services under section 3(6) of the Offender Management Act 2007. Local Delivery Unit (LDU) heads who represent the NPS at Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) should be responsible for ensuring that there is appropriate representation to the partnership. The representative should be able to:

- Engage fully with the local partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence
- Share currently collated and/or published data and information to inform the strategic assessment for the local area (for example; Offender management quarterly statistics – key statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision and/or Criminal court statistics – National Statistics on cases in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court)
- Use relevant risk assessment tools to inform the strategic needs assessment of individual offenders
- Support the development and implementation of the local strategy to address the risks identified
- Collaborate with local partners to help reduce instances of re-offending amongst violent offenders and protect vulnerable groups (for example, victims of domestic abuse)

Health

97. Violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing and is strongly related to inequalities. Data has shown that the poorest fifth of people in England have hospital admission rates for violence five times higher than those of the most affluent fifth.²² It affects individuals and communities and is a drain on health services, the criminal justice system and the wider economy.

98. Interventions to prevent violence and address its root causes, especially those in early childhood, prevent people developing a propensity for violence. They also improve educational outcomes, employment prospects and long-term health outcomes.

²²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216977/Violence-prevention.pdf

99. Within the health sector in England, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are specified authorities for the purposes of the duty as they are best placed to lead and assure local input to and delivery of serious violence prevention strategies.

100. The accountable officer of a CCG should ensure that there is appropriate representation to the partnership. As part of the partnership, this representative will be expected to:

- Facilitate the sharing of relevant health data and information to inform the problem profile/strategic needs assessment for the area (for example, number of knife crime injuries treated within NHS urgent care settings), including through pre-existing arrangements and powers for sharing health data and information.
- Support the development and implementation of a strategy to address the risks identified and agree an approach to preventing serious violence, managing related health problems, and improving wellbeing/resilience of the community
- Facilitate appropriate commissioning (and co-commissioning) within the local health system to prevent, treat and manage serious violence as set out in the strategy (for example, mental healthcare services, commitments on maternity and neonatal care, and children's and young people's mental health, in the NHS Long Term Plan)
- Where relevant, (co-)commission support services for those at risk of or involved in serious violence (including from the voluntary and community sector)

101. Depending on the geographic boundaries of the partnership(s) in their commissioning area, CCGs may need to:

- Engage directly with all serious violence partnerships in their area, or
- In some areas, there will be more than one CCG per partnership area. Although each CCG must comply with the duty, they may consider it appropriate to nominate a 'lead' or consider a 'hosting' arrangement for input into the serious violence partnership on behalf of a Sustainability and Transformation Partnership, Integrated Care System or group of CCGs. In this case, the serious violence lead should ensure the input of all CCGs in the geographical footprint.

102. Although not subject to the duty, NHS England and NHS Improvement will have a role in holding CCGs to account for their input into local serious violence partnerships, including through the Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance

Framework²³ and Safeguarding Commissioning Assurance Toolkit. CCGs should contact their NHS England and NHS Improvement Regional Safeguarding Lead with any queries.

Local Authority

103. Local authorities are responsible for the delivery of a range of vital services for people and businesses in a local area, including but not limited to, children's and adult's social care, schools, housing and planning, youth services, business support, alcohol licensing, leisure, substance misuse, community safety as well as public health commissioning, so will have an essential role to play in partnership arrangements.
104. Local authority Chief Executives should ensure that there is appropriate representation to the partnership to fulfil the local authority's duties. This representation may be delegated to an appropriate senior officer.
105. Within the local government landscape, specified authorities are:
- A district council
 - A county council in England
 - A London borough council
 - The Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority
 - The Council of the Isles of Scilly
 - A county council in Wales
 - A county borough council in Wales
106. Local authorities are well placed to complement the work of other agencies and contribute to the prevention and reduction of serious violence by:
- Sharing a range of relevant aggregated data sets for the development of the strategic needs assessment (for example data already collected from local schools and social care services),
 - Conducting wider preventative work addressing general factors that contribute to risk and vulnerability (e.g. poverty, housing, environment),
 - Leading on wider public health commissioning to support prevention and address risk factors or impacts of trauma (e.g. substance misuse services including alcohol treatment services),
 - Providing information on availability/pressures on local resources including housing, community support, etc., and

²³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/safeguarding-children-young-people-adults-at-risk-saaf-1.pdf>

- Supporting early intervention initiatives which could be required in response to issues concerning child criminal exploitation.

107. Local authorities should also be mindful of all institutions falling within their jurisdiction which may have a specific issue relating to serious violence, particularly when carrying out the initial local strategic needs assessment. This may include residential care facilities for looked-after children, including secure children's homes and supported accommodation. Other public spaces such as parks, for which local authorities are responsible, should also be considered as these may be areas where specific forms of serious violence are prevalent.

108. Mayoral Combined Authorities are able to participate in partnership arrangements to support the prevention and reduction of serious violence, however there is no legal obligation for them to do so.²⁴ This is due to the different functions a combined authority might perform, not all of which are likely to be relevant to tackling serious violence. Constituent authorities may choose to collaborate through the overarching structure of a combined authority however they remain individually accountable for their participation.

109. For the purposes of the duty, local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are a separate specified authority, and so are treated as independent to the local authority. YOTs will therefore be responsible for engaging with the partnership in their own right.

Education

110. Engagement in education is a strong protective factor against children and young people's risk of involvement in serious violence. Through engaging in good quality education, children and young people feel a sense of belonging, achievement and are equipped with skills and resilience they need to be safe and to succeed in life. Education providers have a vital role in preventing and reducing serious violence by facilitating early intervention and prevention.

111. Effective collaboration between the local partnership and educational institutions in the local area has the potential to improve police and school partnerships and provide support for any existing or planned institution-level interventions. This close collaboration may also add to children's sense of safety in school and their local community as they will be more alert to the work taking place in their local area to prevent and reduce serious violence.

²⁴ An exception to this is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority which is subject to the duty, but only in respect of its role as a fire and rescue authority and only in the exercise of those functions. This applies to any future Mayoral combined authorities formed which perform those same functions.

112. In recognition of the vital role schools play in safeguarding children and young people, specified authorities must consult educational authorities²⁵ located within the partnership area, including; local authority maintained schools, academies, independent schools, free schools, alternative education providers and further education, in the preparation of the local strategy. Educational authorities may also choose to collaborate with a specified authority, a prison or youth custody authority or another educational authority in that area of their own volition, or any of those bodies may require them to collaborate. Where an educational authority chooses, or is requested, to actively collaborate with the partnership, they should be asked to input into the development of the strategic needs assessment and consent to any actions in the strategy which may apply to them.

113. Where and when requested, an educational institution must comply with actions in a local strategy, so long as they:

- are compatible with any other statutory duties;
- would not have an adverse effect on the exercise of the authority's functions;
- are not disproportionate to the need to prevent and reduce serious violence locally; and
- would not mean that the authority incurred unreasonable costs.

114. Educational authorities as defined in [Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act] are:

- Governing bodies of maintained schools, further education colleges and sixth-form colleges
- Proprietors of academy schools, free schools, alternative provision academies and non-maintained special schools²⁶
- Proprietors of independent schools
- Management committees of pupil referral units

115. A strategic education representative for the local area should be nominated by the partnership to provide a link between the specified authorities and individual institutions. This role may include:

- Representing the voice of education providers in discussions on serious violence
- Assisting the partnership to better understand the risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by young people

116. The partnership and the strategic education representative should:

²⁵ [As defined in Schedule 2 to the PCSC Act].

²⁶ In the case of academies and free school trusts, the proprietor will be the trust itself. Multi-academy trusts spanning more than one local area will need to consider whether it is necessary to engage with one or multiple local partnerships.

- Use existing safeguarding structures or other approaches, to consult with the wider group of schools and education providers to gain qualitative insight into the impact of serious violence on the education sector
- Collectively agree the ways in which the education sector can support the implementation of the strategy to address the local factors that put a child at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of serious violence

117. Individual education providers must be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the local strategy, and as responsible authorities, should:

- Provide data, as required by existing statutory duties, to Local Authorities. This data will feed into the evidence-based analysis of the risk profile of young people and the causes of serious youth violence for the local serious violence strategy. Examples of this data include data on school provision, exclusions and persistent absence
- Engage with the partnership via the strategic education representative to provide qualitative insight into the impact of serious violence on the education sector
Engage with the partnership via the strategic education representative to provide insight into the risk factors and vulnerabilities experienced by children and young people in the local area
- Support the development and implementation of the strategy to address the local factors that put a child at risk of being a victim or perpetrator of serious violence
- Where required deliver any solutions that come from the local serious violence strategy, at an individual institution level

118. Serious violence may also occur in higher education residential accommodation or licensed premises, such as student union facilities. If a local higher education institution considers serious violence to be an issue that is pertinent to them then they are encouraged to feed into the partnership where appropriate.

Fire and Rescue

119. Fire and Rescue Authorities are responsible for the oversight and delivery of Fire and Rescue Services in their area. As of April 2021, there are currently 44 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, and three in Wales.

120. The Duty applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas, including Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners, metropolitan Mayors and the London Fire Commissioner solely in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions. The Fire and Rescue Authority may wish to

identify a representative, which may be the operational Fire and Rescue Service for the area, as this may be the body that will have the greatest local knowledge, however the Authority as the duty holder will remain responsible for compliance with the requirements of the duty. The Authority should, therefore, ensure that any suitable representative has responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the partnership arrangements.

121. Emergency Services are already subject to a statutory duty to collaborate with one another and Fire and Rescue Services have a key role in these partnerships, often occupying a very trusted position by some community groups.
122. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence which are both crucial in reversing the increase in harm which may be caused by and against young people in the local community.

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Chapter Five: Monitoring and Compliance

Successful partnerships

123. Three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence are homicide rates, hospital admissions for knife/sharp object assault, and police-recorded knife crime. Outcomes may also be based on: data on police recorded violence offences included in the local areas' strategic needs assessment, this could include (but is not limited to) offences involving firearms, robbery and possession of weapons offences. Data on causal factors of violence may also be of interest.
124. Police data on charge rates for serious violence offences, like robbery; and Ministry of Justice statistics for offenders cautioned/convicted for knife and weapons related offences are also useful sources of information for measuring the success of a partnership.
125. The success measures specified above do not prevent local areas from adopting additional success measures to help track progress in dealing with local serious violence issues. In any event, partnerships will want to tailor the success measures to suit the local strategic needs assessment.

How will partnerships be monitored?

126. As set out previously, partners are required to work together to establish the local problem profile/strategic needs assessment and prepare and implement a strategy, which should be reviewed on an annual basis.²⁷ In doing so, partnerships are expected to be able to self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the local strategy. Partnerships may wish to seek additional support from an external evaluator, such as a university research group, to support them with this process. Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Common Council of the City of London, will also have a discretionary power to monitor the performance of the local partnership against its shared objectives. Government departments may also monitor progress in relation to the duty requirements and provide advice/support to local areas where required.
127. CSPs have a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to keep the implementation of their strategies under review for the purposes of

²⁷ By the provisions in [Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the PCSC Act].

monitoring effectiveness and make any changes to such strategies where necessary or expedient and to publish the outcomes of each review.

128. Routine inspection programmes undertaken by individual inspectorates may also consider the organisational response to local serious violence issues.

Secretary of State powers

129. Where the Secretary of State is satisfied that a responsible authority has failed to discharge certain duties imposed under the [PCSC Act²⁸], for example following an inspection as set out above, [section 17 of the PCSC Act] provides that the Secretary of State may issue directions to responsible authorities for the purpose of securing compliance with that duty. This power does not apply to probation services provided by the Secretary of State or to governors of prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres or the principal of a directly managed secure college. For such institutions, the Secretary of State for Justice may use existing mechanisms to secure compliance with statutory duties, if required.
130. Any direction given by the Secretary of State would be to secure compliance with the duty and any direction given by the Secretary of State can be enforced by way of a mandatory order, an order of the court requiring the authority to undertake the specified action.

²⁸ [In relation to a specified authority a duty imposed by section 7, 13(6), 14(3) or 16(4) of the PCSC Act, and in relation to an educational, prison or youth custody authority a duty imposed by section 14(3), (4) or (5)(b) or 16(4) of that Act.]

Chapter Six: Community Safety Partnerships – Serious Violence Strategies

Introduction

131. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), formerly known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to help tackle crime and reduce reoffending. There are around 300 CSPs in England and 22 in Wales.²⁹
132. CSPs are made up of ‘responsible authorities’ which are: police, probation service, local authorities, health, fire and rescue authorities who are responsible for developing strategies for reducing crime and disorder, combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances, and reducing re-offending in their areas.³⁰ There has also been a mutual duty on PCCs and CSPs to cooperate on reducing crime and offending since the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.³¹
133. The responsible authorities have a statutory duty to work together to: reduce re-offending; tackle crime and disorder; tackle anti-social behaviour; tackle alcohol and substance misuse; and tackle any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local environment.³² CSPs may also work with any other local partners they wish to, including business representatives and the voluntary and community sector.
134. In carrying out their statutory duties, CSPs also have further obligations including: setting up a strategic group to direct the work of the partnership; to regularly engage and consult with the community about their priorities and progress achieving them; to set up protocols and arrangements for sharing information; analyse a wide range of data, including recorded crime levels and patterns, in order to identify priorities in an annual strategic assessment; set out a partnership plan and monitor progress; produce a strategy to reduce reoffending; and commission domestic violence homicide reviews.

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-crime-prevention/2010-to2015-government-policy-crime-prevention>

³⁰ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/part/II/chapter/II/crossheading/crime-and-disorder-strategies>

³¹ As set out in section 10 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

³² As set out in section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Preventing and Reducing Serious Violence

135. Alongside the duty, the [PCSC Act] also amends the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to include a requirement for CSPs to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent people from becoming involved in serious violence, both as victims and perpetrators, and reduce instances of serious violence in the area.
136. Should specified authorities consider the CSP to be the most appropriate local multi-agency structure through which they intend to fulfil the requirements of the duty, then the strategic needs assessment and strategy produced by the CSP may account for both the Serious Violence Duty and Crime and Disorder Act requirements. The [PCSC Act] allows for wider co-operation between CSP members and responsible authorities subject to the Serious Violence Duty, including the sharing of data and information, for that purpose.
137. In recognition of a CSPs wider remit in relation to community safety, and that many issues concerning violent crime can be interrelated, a CSP may choose to incorporate their strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence into a wider plan which also encompasses their other priorities. This will also help to ensure that individual strategies are aligned without being duplicative.

Case study: Example of a VRU working in collaboration with a CSP

Relevant case study to be included here

Interaction with existing duties

Statutory duties

138. Responsible authorities will want to be aware of the following statutory duties in exercising their functions under this duty:

- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, The Police Act 1996, the Police Reform Act 2002 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017 underpin the core operational duties of police officers which include; maintaining law and order, protecting the public, prevention and detection of crime, protection of property and the maintenance of civil order. Each police force is overseen by the Secretary of State, and the Chief Police Officer (Chief Constables, Commissioner of the City of London Police and Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police) is held to account by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, in relation to the Metropolitan Police and the Common Council of the City of London as police authority in relation to the City of London.
- Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) were established by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') to be directly accountable for individual policing. Their constitution, powers and duties are set out in Part 1 of the 2011 Act.
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are clinically-led statutory NHS bodies in England, responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area, including mental health services, urgent and emergency care, elective hospital services, and community care. Their statutory functions are set out in the National Health Service Act 2006 and Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- The duties and functions of local authorities are set out in numerous Acts of Parliament. Particularly relevant functions include:
 - The Local Government Act 1972 ('the 1972 Act'), Part IX which prescribes the functions of local authorities, including public health functions and social services functions. The 1972 Act also provides the framework for local government in Wales (as amended, including by the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994)
 - Functions and duties are further prescribed in section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the NHS Act 2006 and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990

- Core social services, duties and functions are set out in the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. Additional duties and functions are set out in the Children Act 1989 (in respect of children) (safeguarding duties at sections 27 and 47), Children Act 2004 (safeguarding duty at section 11), the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Care Standards Act 2000, the Childcare Act 2006 and the Mental Health Act 1983. Much of the Children Act 1989 applies to both England and Wales. Part 3 of the Act (which refers to support for children and families provided by local authorities) has been replaced by Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
 - Community Safety duties and functions are set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ('the 1998 Act') and Police and Justice Act 2006. Under section 17 of the 1998 Act, local authorities are under a duty to consider the crime and disorder implications of all their day-to-day activities. Youth Justice Offending service duties are also set out in the 1998 Act. Criminal Justice duties are set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.
 - Education duties and functions are set out in the Education Reform Act 1988, the Education Act 1996, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the Children Act 1989, Education Act 2002 and Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Child Poverty Act 2010. The proprietors of schools have various duties in relation to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, including co-operation with other schools and with other relevant bodies. Guidance on these various functions is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
 - Core housing duties are set out under the Housing Act 1996.
 - Fire duties and functions, predominantly relating to fire safety, are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004
- The core functions and legal duties for adult prisons are set out in the Prison Act 1952 and the Prison Rules 1999.
 - The core functions and legal duties for under 18 Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) are set out in the Prison Act 1952 and in the Young Offender Institution Rules 2000 and the Secure Training Centre Rules 1998.
 - The National Probation Service supervises high-risk offenders released into the community. Its functions, on behalf of the Secretary of State are to ensure sufficient probation provision is provided including the supervision and rehabilitation of persons remanded to bail, given conditional cautions or charged with or convicted of an offence and giving assistance to courts in determining the appropriate

sentences to pass. This is set out in Section 1 of the Offender Management Act 2007.

- Youth Offending Teams are established by local authorities under section 39(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Their statutory duty is to co-ordinate the delivery of youth justice services in the authority's area, and to carry out functions assigned in the youth justice plan formulated by the local authority.
- Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) core functions are set out in The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ('FRSA 2004') and include extinguishing fires in their area, protecting life and property in the event of fires in their area, rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision and rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies. FRAs must also comply with the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework.
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 made the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child part of its domestic law. This ensures that children's rights are included in all policy making in Wales.

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Useful guidance and resources

139. Responsible authorities may also wish to refer to the following guidance documents and resources:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, HM Government](#)
- [Violence Reduction Unit interim guidance 2020, Home Office](#)
- [Preventing serious violence: a multi-agency approach 2019, Public Health England](#)
- [Preventing offending and re-offending by children 2019, Public Health England](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2020, Department for Education](#)
- [Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and guidance on using special measures 2011, Ministry of Justice](#)
- [Advice to parents and carers on gangs 2014, Home Office](#)
- [Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence 2013, Home Office](#)
- [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines 2018, Home Office](#)
- [National protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked-after children 2018, Department for Education](#)
- [Multi-agency public protection arrangements \(MAPPA\) 2012, Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, and HM Prison Service](#)
- [NHS England Safeguarding Policy 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement](#)
- [Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in the NHS: Safeguarding Accountability and Assurance Framework 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement](#)
- [Serious and Organised Crime Toolkit: An Interactive Toolkit for practitioners working with young people 2021, Home Office](#)
- [Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2018, HM Government](#)
- [Information sharing for community safety: Guidance and practice advice 2010, Home Office](#)
- [The Children and Young People Secure Estate National Partnership Agreement 2018-2021, HM Government and NHS England](#)

- [Troubled Families: early help system guide 2020, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#)
- [Youth Endowment Fund Evidence and Reports, Impetus and Home Office](#)
- [Resources for School-based Violence Prevention, World Health Organisation](#)
- [The Early Intervention Foundation](#)
- [The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction](#)

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Serious Violence	As defined in the Serious Violence Strategy ³³ 2018, HM Government. The scope of the strategy is concerned with specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.
Serious Violence Duty	A duty placed on local organisations to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. As set out in the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2021].
Local Area	The primary area within which specified authorities will collaborate in discharging the duty. This should be, as a minimum, a local authority area and, at a maximum, a police force area.
Partnership	An arrangement through which specified authorities will work together to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty.
Strategic Needs Assessment	An analysis of current and long-term issues relating to serious violence and the cohorts most vulnerable to involvement in a local area undertaken to provide a greater understanding of established and emerging serious violence trends, priority locations or other high-risk issues.
Strategy	A high-level plan outlining the multi-agency response that the partnership will take to prevent and reduce serious violence in the specified local area.
Specified Authorities	All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies, as defined in [Schedule 1 to the PCSC Act].
Responsible Authorities	All authorities to whom the Serious Violence Duty applies and/or organisations and institutions with a duty to co-operate with specified authorities when requested to do so. As defined in [Schedule 1 and 2 to the PCSC Act].

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

Local Policing Bodies	Police and Crime Commissioners, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a police authority and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners in their capacity as local policing bodies and in the exercise of those functions.
Violence Reduction Unit	Non-statutory partnerships which offer leadership and strategic coordination of the local response to serious violence by bringing together police, local government, health and education professionals, community leaders and other key partners to identify the drivers of serious violence and agree a multi-agency response to them.

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