



**Open Report on behalf of Martin Samuels,
Executive Director – Adult Care and Community Wellbeing**

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 March 2024
Subject:	Introduction of the Serious Violence Duty in Lincolnshire

Summary:

This report serves as an introduction to the application of the Serious Violence Duty (2022) in Lincolnshire. Serious Violence falls under the governance of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP), and the Serious Violence Core Priority Group (SV CPG) is responsible for delivering activity. This report summarises the work delivered to date and future intentions.

Actions Required:

The Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

1. review and comment on the detail in the report.
2. endorse the report and commit its support by raising awareness of the work of the SLP Serious Violence Core Priority Group as it establishes its priorities in Lincolnshire to positively impact on our communities.
3. request that a follow-up report be submitted in 12 months time.

1. Background

To provide some historical context, Violence Reduction Units (VRU's) were set up to respond specifically to 'Gang Violence', the first being recorded in Scotland in 2005 by Strathclyde Police Force. The viewpoint was/is that violence is preventable, and that a measured response can be taken for tackling Serious Violence using a public health approach. The public health model works at three levels:

- Primary intervention: tackling the conditions which allow violence to develop.
- Secondary intervention: early intervention to stop things getting worse.
- Tertiary intervention: responding to violence once it has happened, treating the effects and rehabilitating the people/areas affected.

Following the results achieved by the model in Strathclyde, the government launched a national initiative to deliver its objectives through VRU's. VRU's were set up by the Government in a select number of locations across the UK, based on evidence that suggested the severity of serious violence warranted the support a VRU could offer. Lower levels of serious violence in Lincolnshire meant the county did not warrant a VRU. However, new legislation introduced in 2022 ([Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act \(2022\)](#)) brought with it a new legal duty that requires every authority in the UK to take a partnership approach to actively implementing the duty, with or without a VRU.

To support the introduction of the new duty, the Home Office instructed CREST Advisory to work with partnerships across the country to ensure they were prepared for the new duty and its subsequent delivery. Lincolnshire has been working closely with CREST Advisory since November 2022, and CREST has recently indicated that Lincolnshire is well ahead of the curve compared to similar areas which do not have a VRU in place. They were particularly impressed by, and referred to, Lincolnshire's progress to date, having completed a Violence Reduction Needs Assessment and drawn up a comprehensive strategy. Additionally, they were reassured by the fact that the correct partners are actively engaged in the partnership arrangements.

2. What is the Serious Violence Duty 2022?

For the purpose of the Serious Violence Duty ([Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance](#)), 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 the following factors:

- a) the maximum penalty which could be imposed for any offence involved in the violence;
- 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 for a localised response; one that takes account of new and emerging forms of serious violence as they develop/are identified and recognises the geographical difference in the prevalence of different types of serious violent crimes. For the purpose of delivering the Serious Violence Duty in Lincolnshire, the local working definition will focus on the data collection of '*crimes/hospital attendances that involve physical violence which result in injury*', which will be used in conjunction with the national key measures to be reported to the Home Office (key measures listed in Section 6).

3. A partnership approach to Serious Violence

The Serious Violence Duty calls on specified authorities (Chief Officers of Police, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Integrated Care Boards, Local Health Board, Local Authorities, Youth Offending Teams and Probation Services) within specified geographic boundaries to work collaboratively to "*prevent people from becoming involved in serious violence, both as*

victims and perpetrators, and reduce instances of serious violence in the area”, Home Office (2022).

The Serious Violence Duty encourages the use of existing partnerships for collaboration and coordinated action across the local area, with all parties accountable for activity and cooperation. In Lincolnshire, partners capitalised on the existence of the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) as a governance structure, and the Serious Violence Core Priority Group (SV CPG) was created. This arrangement is supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Appendix A sets out the SLP structure chart.

The SV CPG is co-chaired by the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Leader of Lincolnshire County Council. All relevant agencies have provided appropriate and consistent representation to the SV CPG to date; demonstrating the high levels of commitment to addressing serious violence and reducing the very damaging effects that it can have on individuals, families and communities.

4. Lincolnshire’s response to the Serious Violence Duty

Statutory guidance specifies that local areas should define serious violence based on the outcomes of a strategic needs assessment, focusing on the kinds of violence that are most prevalent and impactful in the local area. Lincolnshire’s Violence Reduction Needs Assessment (VRNA) was completed in April 2022, with funding provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner, in anticipation of the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty. At that time, the violent crime rate in Lincolnshire was 38.3 crimes reported by 1,000 people per annum. To understand how this compared nationally, Lincolnshire was ranked 25th in the country with regards to Violence Against the Person (VATP) out of 54 counties in England and Wales. To put that into context, Lincolnshire residents had a 3% chance of being a victim of violent crime. Lincolnshire is significantly or very significantly, statistically speaking, lower than the England average for most serious violent crime types.

The VRNA used data analysis, a review of evidence of best practice, and stakeholder interviews to identify three main priorities:

1. Take a multi-agency, place-based, whole system public health approach to violence prevention.
2. Ensure interventions are designed, commissioned, and delivered to be effective, giving value for money through consistent and systematic use of robust data and evaluation.
3. Invest in a monitoring, evaluation, and learning infrastructure.

The landscape of Lincolnshire based on key findings from the needs assessment show that Lincolnshire is an incredibly safe county, but with very specific pockets of violence.

- There are nearly five times more domestic offences in Lincolnshire than other serious violent offences. Violent offending is often underpinned by social inequalities such as low income, level of education, access to health care and treatment services and unemployment.

- There were 2,209 serious violence offences in Lincolnshire in 2021. This is up 13% over the prior 12 months (January to December 2020). Lincolnshire is ranked 25th in the country in terms of the lowest number of violence against the person (VATP) offences per 1,000 residents. Lincolnshire residents have a 3% chance of being a victim of violent crime.
- Lincolnshire is not significantly different from the England average for homicide but is significantly worse against the regional average.
- Skegness, Gainsborough and Lincoln Built Up Areas (BUAs) have the highest levels of violence, the highest rates of resident victims, and the highest rates of resident perpetrators. These towns are the most disproportionately highly impacted by violence, and they are also the most deprived areas of the county.

This needs assessment provided the foundation for the development of Lincolnshire's Serious Violence Prevention Strategy, which describes the nature of serious violence in the county, as well as the activity and structures working to address it. The Serious Violence Strategy was submitted to the Home Office on 31 January 2024 – a national deadline. However, as this document is a living document, the partnership has the ability to review and revise if data drives us to do so, to ensure local needs are being met. The Lincolnshire Serious Violence Prevention Strategy can be found here: <https://lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk/transparency/what-our-priorities-are-and-how-we-are-doing/>.

The strategic principles underpinning the strategy are: a focus on a public health approach to prevention and early intervention across the life course; investing in evidenced-based programmes that mitigate risk factors and bolster protective factors; using a system-wide, partnership and place-based foundation; and informed by community insights.

The Lincolnshire Serious Violence Prevention Strategy details the five priority areas of focused activity as identified by the Needs Assessment. It is important to understand these priority areas in context of the relatively low crime rate already discussed. Lincolnshire is a safe place to live, work and travel.

1. Public place serious violence, with or without a weapon, particularly in the night-time economy and related to the illicit drug trade.
2. Male on male violence, particularly in the under 25's.
3. Sexual offences, particularly against the 0-19's.
4. Geographic pockets of violence that are in the most prevalent areas in Lincolnshire (this will be monitored and addressed through regular analytical reviews and a place based, whole system approach).
5. Homicide (Domestic/Non-Domestic).

Some of these identified priorities are already being addressed by existing groups, strategies, and action plans. These include, but are not limited to:

- Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (LDAP).
- Lincolnshire Safeguarding Boards.
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.
- Stay Safe Partnership.

- Wider SLP Core Priority Groups: Drug and Alcohol, Reducing Reoffending (including the Lincolnshire Women and Girl's Strategy).

In August of this year, the Home Office allocated grant funding to Lincolnshire totalling £690,000 (to be received over a three-year period: 2022 to 2025), to assist partners in delivering the Serious Violence Duty. Additionally, there has been a £2,310,000 pledge over the same three-year period from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Violence and Vulnerability Reserve.

In March 2023, a high-level delivery plan was submitted to the Home Office that provided an outline of how any allocated funding would be spent. At the end of September 2023, a more detailed delivery plan was submitted outlining costs and expenses for activities and resources to deliver the duty. The most recent iteration of the delivery plan was submitted on 31 January 2023 along with the Strategy.

5. Serious Violence Core Priority Group - Current Activity

Serious Violence Public Survey:

Habit 5 were commissioned to undertake a Serious Violence Public Survey, to gather views as to how safe people feel in their homes and communities, and to what level (where exposed) they were satisfied with access and responsiveness of the judicial system in meeting their needs as users. This survey exceeded expectations, with 2,917 responses. Our Senior Analyst has created a 'Dashboard', which is a mechanism that enables the user to sort and review the information that has come back from the survey. The written data from the Habit 5 report is transformed into 'data sets' to help us to establish more readily some of the patterns in the results from the public. A small task and finish group is currently looking at the responses in detail, to ensure the public's voice is captured and included in the work that is/will be delivered by SV CPG funded projects.

Mapping:

A mapping exercise is being completed by the SV CPG. This exercise aims to identify what services and activities related to preventing and responding to serious violence already exist. This seeks to ensure there is no duplication and to assist partners in working together where cross cutting workstreams are identified. It will also serve to identify any gaps in the system or services, where additional intervention may be of benefit.

Project Planning & Delivery of Projects:

The SV CPG is responsible for agreeing and overseeing project delivery. Examples of project delivery to date include:

- Summertime policing St John Ambulance Safe Haven: this pilot project was situated in Skegness and provided several services, including preventative engagement, medical intervention (following assault or injury) or a safe place for those who are vulnerable. This pilot utilised St John Ambulance and health care staff to service this project over the August Bank Holiday evening. This pilot project took place in conjunction with Lincolnshire Police's Summertime Policing Plan. The evaluation of this project will conclude in Quarter 3 this year and presented to the SV CPG in April.

- Operation Raptor: aimed at those who opt to carry a weapon, this project saw the purchasing of 'wands' that target metal objects on a person and a portable metal detector that the public are asked to walk through ahead of entering certain facilities (bars/clubs).
- The Happening Project (formerly the Think Sharp Project): now operational, this is a new Knife Crime initiative hosted at Sleaford Police Station. The first of its kind in the UK, the aim of this project is to prevent and divert young people (aged 10-19) away from carrying a knife, using a multi-agency approach.
- Operation Plotting takes a holistic approach to address anti-social behaviour and street-based violence in Boston. The police and the local district councils are working in unison to keep public spaces safe, with additional CCTV cameras being deployed, and the recruitment of two new community wardens. The University of Lincoln will review and evaluate current engagement and communication methods to assist with work taking place with the community. An environmental board has been set up which tries to tackle the hotspot locations whilst considering how the physical environment affects crime.
- An audio and social media campaign ran from 15.12.23 – 31.12.23 and from 01.02.24 – 07.02.24 to promote StreetSafe and the 'You're Right, That's Wrong' Campaign on local radio, Facebook and Instagram. StreetSafe is an app and also an online form where people can drop a pin in a map to tell the Police where they do not feel safe and why. The Police can use this information to better target resources, share information with partners and understand where and what the issues are. 'You're Right, That's Wrong' is a behavioural change campaign targeted to men, encouraging them to challenge the behaviour of their peers when they cross a line. The audio audience is estimated to be over 300K and the social media element of the campaign is estimated to have been seen by 28K Facebook and Instagram users, 1K of whom clicked on the link for more information.

Each of these projects are being monitored and will be evaluated against key performance indicators to understand impact and outcomes achieved, with progress reported to the Home Office on a quarterly basis. The quarterly reporting on project progress and expenditure is collated and submitted via The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

Serious Violence Public Launch:

In the aftermath of the strategy submission to the Home Office on 31 January 2024, the Serious Violence Coordinator pulled together a Press Release coordinated between the OPCC Communications Office and Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Communications Office. A joint statement from Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE and Police and Crime Commissioner Marc Jones was released on Friday 16 February 2024 regarding the official launch of the Serious Violence Duty in Lincolnshire. The digital launch also included partner statements from Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and from Lincolnshire Police in recognition of the work that partners have been delivering within the Serious Violence Core Priority Group.

6. Measures of success

There are three national key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence that will need to align with local priority areas and aims. These are:

- 1) a reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object;
- 2) a reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police; and
- 3) homicides recorded by the police.

With support from LCC's Community Safety Analytical Team and CREST, local key performance indicators reflective of the context of Lincolnshire are in the process of being developed. These indicators will be particularly valuable when we get to the evaluation phase of each project.

7. Conclusion

This report conveys the broad range of activities that are taking place across the county to address issues of serious violence, as they are experienced by our communities in Lincolnshire. Learning from the comprehensive needs assessment has enabled the partnership to target interventions for maximum impact. Regular monitoring and evaluation of these interventions in due course will enable the partnership to report on the outcomes achieved. Should the Committee wish to receive an update, a report can be submitted in 12 months' time.

8. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

9. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Safer Lincolnshire Partnership Structure Chart

10. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Angela Nauth, who can be contacted on 07771 378275 or angela.nauth@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Appendix A - Safer Lincolnshire Partnership Structure Chart

