



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Public Service Reform Board

Date	26 September 2019
Report title	The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit
Portfolio Leads	West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner - David Jamieson (accountable body) Public Service Reform & Social Economy - Councillor Yvonne Davies Wellbeing - Councillor Izzi Seccombe
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Public Service Reform Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the progress to date on the establishment of a regional approach to violence, vulnerability and exploitation, and the launch of a regional Violence Reduction Unit on 2 October 2019 at Grand Central, Wolverhampton.
- (2) Commit to support the Violence Reduction Unit's 'public health' and prevention programme-led approach – including through the Board's feedback on this paper, and within relevant local forums.
- (3) To agree to regular updates from the Violence Reduction Unit, including specifically on areas where the Public Service Reform Board can better support and help embed its work within constituent areas of the WMCA.



VRU Update Report to WMCA Public Service Reform Board

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 This paper sets out the basis for a collaborative blueprint for place based violence, vulnerability and exploitation prevention and reduction in the West Midlands. It is written as stimulus for discussion – setting out principles, context, opportunities and next steps as a means to more substantial work in the run up to the establishment and launch of the Violence Reduction Unit and thereafter.

2. Background:

- 2.1 On 11 January the WMCA programme board agreed to develop a regional approach to violence and vulnerability and LA Chief Executives agreed in principle, on the recommendation of Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People (PVVP) chair to include the work of the PVVP in these arrangements.
- 2.2 On 13 March 2019 the government announced in their Spring statement £100 million to tackle serious youth violence and the establishment of Violence Reduction Units.
- 2.3 On 4 June the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) agreed in broad terms to support the proposed new approach to violence, vulnerability and exploitation prevention and reduction.
- 2.4 On 17 June the Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People (PVVP) Board agreed to map the current activities and deliverables of the PVVP with a view to transitioning the PVVP activity into the new regional Violence Reduction Unit in the Autumn 2019.
- 2.5 On 8 July the regional partnership developed a bid, coordinated and submitted by the West Midland Police and Crime Commissioner to the Home Office to establish a new Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in the West Midlands.
- 2.6 On 12 August 2019 the OPCC received confirmation that the West Midlands would receive £3.37 million to establish a VRU. We are awaiting the conditions of grant.

3. Progress

- 3.1 A cross sector working group has worked with stakeholders to build upon the recommendations from PVVP, along with the learning from the VPA, the OPCC's Birmingham focused Gangs and Violence Commission and the national strategy to develop a draft set of principles, vision, mission statement and strategy for a regional strategic approach to violence, vulnerability and exploitation which is rooted in our existing governance structures. The delivery mechanism for this approach will be the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (WM-VRU).

- 3.2 The WM-VRU will be a distinct and new vehicle which brings together existing structures and a new model of operation to maximise and enable cross-agency and place-based working. A Board, developed from that already in place for our Violence Prevention Alliance, will oversee the activity of the VRU. It is officer led, drawing on senior expertise from across the public, voluntary, private and academic sectors. This Board will be accountable to the Police and Crime Commissioner, and will report regularly to the PCC's Strategic Policing and Crime Board, as well as to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board and WMCA Wellbeing Board (which in turn brings together health partners and Wellbeing Board chairs) on the progress, metrics and outcomes for the VRU. Our governance structures will reach across partnerships to secure buy in to and from our existing governance and delivery structures. This Board will build upon our existing blueprint of collaboration around violence, vulnerability and exploitation currently delivered through our Violence Prevention Alliance and Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People (PVVP).
- 3.3 In our first year (to March 2020) the Board will both manage a programme of immediate delivery of interventions as well as undertaking key steps to develop a strong foundation through completing our problem profile and mapping and gapping provision and activity against our strategy. This will allow us to develop a long term systemic public health approach to violence, vulnerability and exploitation reduction through insight and intelligence and evaluating our existing and new programmes. Our ambition is to develop a Board structure and a strategy which builds on best practice, learns as it grows and secures long term sustainable reductions in violence and vulnerability in the West Midlands. Much of the activity in the first year will lay the foundations for a clear whole system approach in the future.
- 3.4 We are using the WHO definition of violence:
- “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”***
- 3.5 This definition encompasses all forms of serious violence and exploitation, and also concerns itself with groups that are vulnerable to violence, that is, our children and young people, and vulnerable adults.
- 3.6 The regional strategy for violence, vulnerability and exploitation will be developed over the forthcoming months in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. The developing Vision, Mission Statement and critical success factors are detailed below and we are keen for feedback and input from the Youth Offending Service Heads of Service.

Vision:

Diverse & inclusive communities living safe and fulfilling lives

Mission Statement:

Together, with our partners and communities, we will:

- ***Stop violence before it starts***
- ***Tackle the cause and impact of violence***
- ***Focus on enabling safe futures for our children***
- ***Reduce violence in the West Midlands***
- ***Recognise the diversity of the challenge we face across the region.***

3.7 Our six critical success factors are:

1. We need 'strong foundations' – local and regional partnerships focussed on prevention, working with and for the groups and communities with the most to gain, and using the best collective intelligence we have about the problems and how to tackle them, and identifying what each sector can do to help
2. We need to stop violence before it starts, by tackling the 'causes of the causes' of violence for individuals, groups and communities (primary prevention)
3. We need to stop the progression of violence, by detecting the warning signs early and dealing with the risk factors (secondary prevention)
4. We need to help victims and perpetrators avoid further involvement in violence (tertiary prevention)
5. We need to prevent further violence for those in the criminal justice system
6. We need to change attitudes and social norms – we want the West Midlands to be known as a place of diverse communities living safe and fulfilling lives

3.8 For each of these factors, we will use intelligence to understand the problems for particular populations and communities, and understand the assets and gaps that we need to address. We will review and establish intelligence led, evidence based programmes, initiatives and interventions and assess the level that they should be offered (universal, targeted and specialist). And we will 'learn and improve' as we go, prioritising interventions that address the immediate challenges, as well as build the foundations for a sustained and effective long term plan. We will upscale and enhance our existing programmes.

3.9 An example of how we will do this is in developing a set of sector specific blueprints for violence, vulnerability and exploitation prevention and reduction. Within educational or primary care settings, for example, these will detail the role of key professionals in understanding what primary, secondary and tertiary prevention means for them in their specific roles and sectors, and what evidence based actions or initiatives they deliver to increase resilience, reduce vulnerabilities, address risk factors or tackle concerns. This will cover the range of vulnerabilities depending on the target sector; for example, 'early years' may focus on building positive attachments, whereas colleges may focus on identifying youth criminal exploitation. They will support partners to respond appropriately and effectively to the proposed new duty to collaborate to reduce violence.

3.10 The VRU will be the delivery mechanism for the regional approach and will act as an enabling unit.

3.11 The WM-VRU will:

- Develop and maintain the regional strategic plan and metrics for violence and vulnerability prevention.
- Develop population-level multiagency intelligence and tools for local and regional use.
- Have within it multiagency expertise and provide a focus and leadership for violence prevention in the region.
- Work collaboratively with, and to enable, partnership approaches in local places.
- Commission value-added, evidence-informed interventions with potential for scale up and impact.
- Work as part of national and international (WHO) networks to learn from others, to develop the evidence base for violence prevention and 'translate' it for use in the West Midlands.
- Influence and shape government policy.
- Work in support of local partnerships to enable their delivery; it will hold key relationships with partners in each local area.
- Be led by a Director with a small core team drawn from across the West Midlands and possibly beyond.
- Be driven by a multiagency Advisory Board, and by a multiagency Executive Group.
- Encourage secondments from partner agencies to build capacity and capability and to deliver at pace.
- Make reports to the Police and Crime Commissioner so that he can account to the Home Office for the VRU's work.
- Make reports to the West Midlands Combined Authority Wellbeing Board to support the collective wellbeing ambitions of both the Mayor and LA and NHS leaders.
- Also make reports to the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership, as well as to the West Midlands ADsPH and the WM Metropolitan Chief Executives' group. Through these arrangements the partners will be mutually accountable for progress, and subject to peer challenge.

3.12 The WM-VRU will be responsible for:

- Enabling a violence, vulnerability and exploitation prevention and reduction strategy.
- Delivery of a programme of activity.
- Overseeing a budget.
- Commissioning and oversight of service delivery.
- Fostering local and regional multiagency collaboration.
- Analysing, interpreting and disseminating multiagency intelligence to help understand the problem of violence and the risk factors for it.
- Supporting local innovation and delivery - helping other local commissioners, providers deliver effectively.

- Innovate, evaluate and encourage sustainable scale up of the most promising preventive interventions based on evidence of programmes proven to demonstrate better outcomes.
- Delivery for communication, community engagement and attitudinal change.

3.13 This new regional approach to violence, vulnerability and exploitation prevention and reduction is being led by the WM-VRU executive group who are meeting weekly initially to establish the new unit.

3.14 WM-VRU executive group membership is:

- Interim Chief Executive of Birmingham Council (representing local authorities), Clive Heaphy – Chair of the executive group
- Director of Violence Reduction Unit (upon appointment)
- Director of PHE West Midlands Centre, Dr Sue Ibbotson
- Assistant Chief Constable, West Midlands Police, Sarah Boycott
- Chief Executive of the West Midlands OPCC, Jonathan Jardine
- Director of Public Service Reform, West Midlands Combined Authority, Dr Henry Kippin
- Chief Officer, Birmingham and Solihull CCG (representing CCGs and the Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships) Paul Jennings

3.15 The VRU sought secondments from partners to establish the temporary unit subject to scoping the requirements of permanent posts and appointments. The VRU has appointed a Head of Implementation (Claire Dhami), a communications lead officer (Tom Turrell) and a Programme Manager (Carl Binns). Recruitment processes are ongoing for data analysis and public health specialist positions as well as specific project management.

4. Next Steps

4.1 We are awaiting sign off of the Grant Agreement for the WM-VRU and formal establishment of the unit.

4.2 The multi-agency launch event is planned for 2 October at Grand Central in Wolverhampton. The launch is intended to signify a step change in the partnership movement to enable both an improved response and long term systemic public health approach to preventing violence, vulnerability and exploitation.

4.3 Two priority data intelligence products will be developed, a problem profile which identifies populations, communities and areas which are at risk of or have experience of violence, vulnerability and exploitation and a mapping a gapping exercise which will help each sector and place to understand what activity and provision there in against each aspect of the six critical success factors. These two products will then inform our collective commissioning approach in the future.

5. Considerations for the WMCA Public Service Reform Board

- (1) Could the problem profile be useful to update and publish in terms of a violence, vulnerability and exploitation dashboard? (and if so who might be willing to help the VRU think through what this is?)
- (2) How could you support the WM-VRU launch on 2 October?
- (3) Could the PSR Board offer support and a commitment to collaborate from each organisation to the collective ambition?
- (4) To identify any key strands of work or ambitions which the VRU could explore.
- (5) To consider any additional advice or recommendations to offer to the VRU Executive Group or VRU Board