

Violence Reduction Network for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Annual Report 2024 to 2025.

Contents

Foreword	Page 2
Key Achievements for 2024 to 2025	Page 3
Our Impact 2024 to 2025	Page 4
Priority 1: Providing collaborative and courageous leadership	Page 5
Priority 2: Using data, evidence and evaluation to improve our response	Page 10
Priority 3: Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments	Page 13
Priority 4: Building protective and cohesive communities	Page 14
Priority 5: Providing safe, inclusive and high-quality education settings	Page 17
Priority 6: Connecting young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults ..	Page 19
Priority 7: Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery	Page 24
Next Steps	Page 26

Foreword

Welcome to the VRN's annual report! This year, we marked our 5th anniversary - an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of our partnership in our collective efforts to prevention and reduce violence in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We remain committed to delivering an ambitious programme but recognise that it is also important to look back now and again to review the progress made. Producing and sharing this annual report is one way of highlighting some of the activity which has been successfully delivered.

This report is organised along the lines of the seven priorities outlined in our Serious Violence Prevention Strategy and provides examples of how we have delivered against our strategy and the requirements of our Home Office grant.

Throughout the last year, we have continued to extend the breadth and depth of our Network, sustaining existing relationships whilst discovering new partners who share our ambition. The VRN team have supported the Network in a variety of ways, including continued work to assist partners to meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty, equipping people with the knowledge and skills to play their role in preventing violence and leading a range of projects and interventions for those children, young people and communities most affected. A summary of our key achievements are outlined on page 3.

It is encouraging that the VRN partnership's hard work is reflected in a downward trend in serious violence in our area and many of our delivery partners are clearly supporting children and young people to achieve a range of positive outcomes which is, in turn, is leading to this overall reduction. However, we all know that there is still more to do, and we remain committed to continuously striving to make our area a safer place for all children, young people and communities.

Priority 1: Providing collaborative and courageous leadership.

Priority 2: Using data, evidence and evaluation to improve our response.

Priority 3: Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments.

Priority 4: Building protective and cohesive communities.

Priority 5: Creating safe and inclusive education settings.

Priority 6: Connecting young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults.

Priority 7: Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery.

Key Achievements for 2024 to 2025

- Marked 5 years of the VRN.
- 150 partners partnership attended our annual Community Partnership Event focusing on 'with and for' young people.
- Provided 11 online and 6 face to face learning sessions for our communities.
- 16 community leaders completed our 4th Community Leadership Programme.
- Launched our Provider Network to build connections between our delivery partners.
- Agreed a new community response process for critical incidents.
- Supported over 500 young people through our targeted interventions.
- Co-hosted a regional Hope Hack with 25 local young people representing our area.
- Held our first Live Safe workshop on knife crime for parents and carers.
- Co-created a new anti-violence community campaign – 'Voices Against Violence'.

Our Impact 2024 to 2025

Consistent with our last annual report, we continue to see a reduction in serious violence, including in relation to our priority focus of public place violence affecting under 25-year-olds.

When focusing on the Home Office's prescribed 'success measures', there have been reductions across all three measures since the VRN was established in 2019. This has been seen in relation to all ages as well as under 25s.

Imagery: Chart showing an overview of the percentage changes in serious violence comparing 2024/25 to 2023/24. The breakdown is as follows:

- 13% reduction in all serious violence
- 15% reduction in all serious violence involving under 25s
- 9% reduction in public place violence
- 16% reduction in public place violence involving under 25s.

Imagery: Chart showing the rate of serious violence across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland between April 2022 to March 2025. The chart highlights a monthly, fluctuating trend over time, with the last 18 months showing a sustained downward trend in serious violence for all ages and under 25s.

Imagery: The visuals provide an overview of the percentage changes in the VRN's Home Office Success Measures comparing 2024/25 to 2019/20. The breakdown is as follows:

Knife-enabled serious violence: all ages = 6% reduction, offences where the victim is aged under 25 = 13% reduction.

Homicides: all ages = 50% reduction, offences where the victim is aged under 25 = 50% reduction.

Hospital admissions for a knife or sharp object - all ages = 39% reduction, injuries where the victim is aged under 25 = 37% reduction.

Priority 1

Providing collaborative and courageous leadership

This priority focuses on ensuring the VRN partnership takes a whole system approach, continuously championing our public health principles and building an inclusive, collaborative and courageous network capable of tackling violence and its causes.

This year we have continued to extend our Network, bringing in partners that have a wealth of experience and knowledge to strengthen our approach to prevention. We have also continued to invest in knowledge and skills and ensure we promote positive messaging and healthy social norms which support violence prevention.

Collaboration:

- Co-created the community partnership response model with support from Victim First, Victim Support, local statutory organisations and community partners.
- Partnered with the Hope Collective, to invest in a Youth Development Officer to extend our youth voice and involvement work.
- Worked with the Lucy Faithfull Foundation who have informed the Sexual Violence prevention educational packages and delivered a webinar to support professionals to create safer environments for children.
- Continued to collaborate with StreetGames and Active Together to invest in this sector's capacity to play a role in preventing violence.
- Provided support across the partnership around adolescence safety communications and campaigns including a shared communications calendar to co-ordinate and amplify messaging around violence prevention.

Serious Violence Duty:

The VRN team has continued to collaborate with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to in relation to their responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty. This included providing support on areas for development identified in last year's self-assessments, examples include:

- Delivering a webinar on applying a public health approach to violence prevention.
- Providing analytical products and support to strengthen local understanding of serious violence.
- Developing sports provision in localities through our partnership with Street Games and Active Together.
- Co-creating a community anti-violence campaign to roll-out in CSP areas.
- Supporting CSPs to adopt the VRN's Community Partnership Framework.

Imagery: A graphic describing the Community Partnership Framework. The graphic outlines the following:

- *Our mission: Build an inclusive, collaborative and courageous network to secure the change required to prevent violence. Communities are core partners in our Network.*
- *Inform: Providing communities with the knowledge they need to play their part and keeping them informed about our work, available resources and forthcoming opportunities to get involved.*
- *Consult: Seeking and drawing on the insights, views and expertise of communities to ensure our work is relevant and responsive.*
- *Collaborate: Co-producing with communities through involving them in the design, delivery and evaluation of violence prevention strategies and activities.*
- *Empower: Enabling communities to secure change through investing in knowledge and skills and providing concrete opportunities in relation to decision-making and shaping and delivering services.*
- *Our impact: Improved understanding of violence, increased effectiveness of responses, increased reach of young people, increased feelings of safety and reductions in violence.*

Spotlight:

The Serious Violence Duty Partnership Officer worked with the Safer Communities Team, Leicester City to develop and deliver a 10-week engagement programme utilising the community safety bus. Local services that provide specialist support such as Mental health, Sexual Violence, Substance Misuse engaged with residents in their community, providing visibility and connection of services which support prevention of violence through addressing key risk factors. The programme delivered from October to December 2024:

- 10 events (9 in the city centre).
- 299 engaged overall (all partners).
- 88 feedback cards completed.

Investing in Knowledge and Skills:

Throughout the last year, we have commissioned and/or directly delivered a wide range of learning and development opportunities across our partnership to ensure everyone has the knowledge, skills and confidence to play a role in violence prevention.

Community Training:

Consistent with our commitment to ensuring community partners have access to high-quality training we provided six face-to-face and 11 on-line opportunities including:

- Setting up as a New Organisation delivered by Voluntary Action LeicesterShire.
- Becoming a Dedicated Safeguarding Lead delivered by LLR Safeguarding Hub.
- What's Porn Got to Do with It? Delivered by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation.
- Cultural Competency Training delivered by Hope Training.
- Online Harms Training delivered by Catch 22.
- Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harms delivered by Safer Now.

Webinar Series:

We ran a series of 11 open-access and free webinars throughout the year.

Topics included:

- Understanding Serious Violence.
- Using a Public Health Approach to Prevent Violence.
- Safeguarding.
- Developing a New Organisation.
- Substance Use.
- Using the Evidence Base to Set Up New Projects.

"I've just attended your training session that was put on through the VRN and I thought it was excellent." Feedback from attendee of Substance Use webinar, February 2025.

Investing Knowledge and Skills:

We continue to ensure the practitioners and managers in our commissioned interventions also have access to learning and development opportunities too. We deliver this through our Provider Network, a community of practice for partners working in the field of violence and exploitation prevention. Examples include:

- Cultural Competency delivered by Hope Training.
- Emotion Coaching delivered by Regul8.
- Online Harms Training delivered by Catch 22.
- Neurodiversity and Exploitation Training delivered by Safer Now.
- Understanding Exploitation and Serious Violence delivered by Reach Every Generation.

"Learned a lot and resonated with a lot, I felt uplifted."

"Open communication, discussion, challenging the known and unknown."

Feedback from attendees from the Cultural Competency session, 2025.

Spotlight:

The Online Harms training, delivered by Catch 22 reflected positive improvements across all learning outcomes but notably around awareness of social media practices. In the pre-survey 46% rated their awareness of good or excellent, in the post survey this increased to 100%.

Understanding of the steps of building resilience- In the pre-survey 54% rated their understanding as good/excellent, in the post survey this increased to 100%. 100% of the attendees enjoyed the training and when asked what they most enjoyed, some of the responses were: "The trainer made the training relaxed and comfortable whilst learning", "Very good delivery, easy to understand", "Insightful, interesting, informative".

Campaigns and Cultural Change:

Research highlights the importance of tackling the social norms which can support violence. We have therefore continued to focus on tackling these through campaigns and initiatives which challenge unhealthy norms and promote positive values and behaviours. At our 2024 Community Partnership Event we agreed to co-create a community-based campaign. Following an interactive session, we worked with a dedicated design group throughout the year who informed and shaped the campaign's design and roll-out plan.

Preventing Sexual Violence:

Through the Safer Streets Round 5 funding, we supported the OPCC in the creation of two specialised sexual violence educational packages aimed at young people aged 10-19. Community organisations were invited to apply through two grant rounds, to receive specialist training and accompanying resources, to deliver the packages to young people. A total of 29 community organisations have been trained and funded to deliver the packages to young people across LLR.

SHUSH Project:

The SHUSH Project (Speaking Honestly 2 Understand Sexual Harm) is designed to give young people the tools and understanding to feel confident in making choices for

themselves. This can be achieved through active participation where young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development and make positive choices in their lives. This also helps them to learn important life skills and practical knowledge. It also gives them the awareness to recognise inappropriate behaviours and feel confident to report these.

Imagery: Images of the SHUSH project documents.

SHARA Project:

The SHARA Project (Sexual Harm Awareness and Recognising Abuse) is designed for ages 16-19. It focuses on more complex issues; it takes a broader societal perspective. It delves into the role of gender stereotypes, societal views, and toxic attitudes that contribute to violence against women and girls. The SHARA Project equips participants with the tools to challenge harmful norms and address sexual violence within a larger context, helping them better understand how societal pressures and discrimination fuel sexual harm and abuse.

Imagery: Images of the SHARA project documents.

Live Safe:

Live Safe continues to develop and maintain its presence and impact within the partnership. Feedback highlights that it is a valuable and accessible resource for parents and carers and young people seeking to find accurate information about topics relevant to them. This year, we co-created pages specifically for professionals. This includes a section for Schools and Colleges, providing information on education packages around key topics affecting the safety of children and young people and a wide range of information, guides and other resources.

Over the last year, Live Safe has achieved over 11 million social media impressions!

LINK: Click here to view the Live Safe Professionals pages.

Preventing and Policing Conference:

In June, we co-hosted the Prevention and Policing conference with Leicestershire Police. Alongside launching their new Prevention Directorate, delegates from the OPCC, Police and the wider partnership heard about the breadth of work being undertaken in relation to prevention, received input on evaluation and participated in a multi-agency problem solving exercise.

Imagery: Photo of the audience at the Preventing and Policing conference.

National Collaboration:

Through the Phoenix Programme, the VRN team and members of the delivery team were filmed for a national Focused Deterrence Implementation Guide, produced by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF). Each film referred to our local experience of setting up a Focused Deterrence programme and they are publicly available.

LINK: Click here to view the Focused Deterrence programme documents.

Later in the year, our Director and Community and Young Person Involvement Manager presented at the national Focussed Deterrence conference, reflecting on the importance of building a collaborative partnership including recognising the value and credibility that communities bring to the programme.

In September, our Programme Manager and Dr Emma Sleath presented their lived experience group, VOICES to the National Police Chiefs' Council VAWG National Stakeholder event, sharing the collaborative work and learning around embedding lived experience and insights to other areas.

We presented to West Yorkshire Reduction Partnership on our Community Leadership Programme and supported them to develop the programme in their area. Both areas then delivered a webinar to the wider network of Violence Reduction Units.

Our Strategic Data and Insights Manager delivered a session on Hot Spots Policing to the national Crime and Justice Analyst Network where we discussed the theory underpinning it, the evidence on what works and explored approaches to hotspot analysis. This session reached over 170 analytical, operational and academic leads and it was a great opportunity to share learning across different areas.

Priority 2

Using data, evidence and evaluation to improve our response

Data, evidence and evaluation are critical enablers to violence prevention and so we have continued to invest in strengthening our capability in this area with the aim of producing high-quality resources which the partnership can use to enhance understanding and ensure resources are used in the most effective way possible.

Data and Insights:

We continue to support data-sharing between partners so we have access to and can use a range of data and insights from different sources. This year we have expanded our work to cover the wider work of the local Strategic Partnership Board and its sub-groups as well as publish a range of different reports.

Strategic Needs Assessment Refresh:

The sixth iteration of the VRN's Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) builds upon our learning from previous years, strengthening our understanding of the extent and nature, distribution and timings of violence and supporting the partnership in identifying the people and groups who are most vulnerable to being or becoming victims or perpetrators. The findings have been shared across numerous partnership boards, networks and communities and has informed the partnership strategy and plan for 2025/26. An executive summary is publicly available and summarises the key findings from this year's report and outlines 12 recommendations for the core membership.

LINK: Click here to view the Strategic Needs Assessment 2024 to 2025.

Locality-based profiles and Support to CSPs:

Through the Serious Violence Duty, the VRN have continued to support CSPs in accessing and using data and evidence to inform local responses to violence prevention. This has included quarterly updates, bespoke analysis and annual-locality based profiles.

A Guide to Violence Prevention:

We have developed a guide to preventing violence affecting young people in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland in partnership with our Community Oversight Group with the aim of sharing the findings of the SNA more widely, thereby enhancing our collective understanding.

Deep Dives:

A series of deep dives were produced this year to further enhanced our understanding of key types of violence and associated harm which our SNA identified as requiring more analysis. This year, this included briefings on robberies, knife-enabled violence, and stalking. These have been shared with relevant Boards and sub-groups to inform responses.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Understanding whether our activity is having the intended impact allows us to continuously learn and improve and target resource where it is most likely to be effective. Over the last year we have progressed this in several areas and as a result, made positive contributions to both the local and national evidence-base.

Outcome Monitoring:

All our interventions have monitoring frameworks in place. This year we have designed and rolled-out a new dashboard to allow us to closely monitor the delivery of the Phoenix Programme. This has advanced our ability to monitor the delivery of the programme against the operating manual, allowing us to identify what is working well and areas for improvement whilst we are awaiting the outcomes of the independent evaluation.

Evaluation of the Violence Intervention Project (VIP):

This year, the VRN commissioned Rocket Science Ltd to conduct the second independent evaluation of VIP in A&E and Custody. The evaluation found:

- The proportion of individuals who fully engage with the VIP is significantly higher for female and younger (11-15) participants.
- A higher proportion of young people were fully engaged if they were known to be in temporary or unstable accommodation, known to have been in care, affected by exploitation, or absent or excluded from school.
- A statistically significant decrease in re-offending was observed in the proportion of young people committing at least one offence.
- The biggest impact reported by young people participating in VIP is an increase in confidence and self-esteem.

Evaluation of Phoenix and Reach:

The VRN continues to successfully run two high-quality evaluations, Randomised Control Trials (RCTs), in two of our YEF-funded interventions: The Reach Programme and The Phoenix Programme. These evaluations are being led by the University of Hull (Phoenix) and Sheffield Hallam University (Reach), and in partnership with the Youth Endowment Fund. Both the Reach and Phoenix teams have continued to support the evaluation through high-quality data reporting and participating in a number of visits, interviews and observations from the evaluation teams.

An early implementation report for the YEF focused deterrence trial was published in October 2024 which highlights some of the early findings. The full evaluation, which will report on impact on reoffending and other outcomes is due in January 2028.

Evaluation for Community Partners:

We understand the importance of community partners also being able to evaluate their work and so this year the team has worked with Rocket Science to co-produce an evaluation toolkit for community partners, including information and resources on how

to develop a theory of change and useful monitoring tools and techniques. The aim of the toolkit is to strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and impact of community-based projects so we enhance our collective understanding of what works well in community delivery. The toolkit will be available from May 2025.

Priority 3

Supporting families to provide nurturing and safe environments

This priority reflects how important the family environment is in influencing a child's emotional, physical and cognitive development and building protective factors which are known to reduce the risk of being involved in violence and associated harm. The VRN partnership delivers a range of well-established services and initiatives which deliver on this priority including Families Affected by Parental Imprisonment (FAPI), preventing and mitigating the impact of childhood trauma, Live Safe and the knife crime workshops.

Families Affected by Parental Imprisonment:

Partners continue to deliver awareness raising training to professionals across the area to ensure parents and carers who have a partner in prison are supported and any negative impact on children is mitigated. The group has also continued to ensure that effective information sharing between criminal justice, education and early help partners is in place so that professionals are also equipped with the information they need to support families.

Preventing and Mitigating the Impact of Childhood Trauma:

The Trauma Informed Partnership went from strength to strength over the last 12 months and transitioned to a more sustainable model. The consortium groups are now organised and run by a cross-sector steering group and membership continues to increase. We co-produced and published two new documents to support the partnership including, "A Guide for Person-Centred Communities", which supports VCISOs in their trauma informed journeys and "A Guide for Implementing Trauma Informed Training" which shares our partnerships learning around what makes "good" training to help those implementing the Organisational Self-Assessment Framework.

Live Safe:

Live Safe continues to be the main vehicle through which the VRN team ensure families have the information they need to keep young people safe. We have continued to invest

in the pages for both young people and parents/carers, ensuring information remains up-to-date and the resources are promoted through our various networks and in-person events.

Knife-Crime Workshop:

Following feedback, this year we designed our first Live Safe workshop for parents and carers with members of our Community Oversight Group, supporting the development of the material. The workshop aims to equip parents and carers with information, tools and resources around the topic including the reasons why young people carry knives, spotting the early signs, having a conversation with their young person and getting help. It also enables parents/carers to understand the reasons why young people may be vulnerable and how we can collectively prevent knife crime. We first delivered the workshop in January 2025, and it will now be offered out more routinely and in response to requests.

Imagery: Photo of the parents and carers workshop poster.

Priority 4

Building protective and cohesive communities

Working ‘with and for’ communities is a core principle of the VRN and we know from research, as well as our own experience over the last five years, that communities can and do play a vital role in violence prevention. Over the last year, we have continued to collaborate with a range of community partners as well as invest in leadership development, extend our network and ensure communities are involved in the development and delivery of solutions.

Community Leadership Programme:

We ran the fourth cohort of the Community Leadership Programme (CLP) this year in collaboration with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Jones Consulting. This provided 16 local community leaders with a fully funded 12-week course that enabled them to develop their leadership style, knowledge and skills and apply this to their work with the purpose of building stronger and safer communities. Pre-and-post survey results show notable improvements across our key measures including 88% of leaders rated their awareness and understanding of the best ways to engage with different groups and communities as either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, whilst 65% of leaders rated their awareness and understanding of the public health approach as either ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.

Community Leadership Programme Showcase:

In July 2024, we held the showcase event to celebrate the fourth cohort completing the programme. Participants delivered a presentation around their leadership journey to an audience consisting of Strategic Partnership Board representatives, their own personal guests and wider VRN partners. The showcase included keynote talks from local senior leaders and provided opportunities to network.

Imagery: Picture of the Community Leadership Programme Cohort 4 members with partners.

Community Leaders Network:

Community Leaders Network (CLN) welcomed cohort 4 into the Network and continued to meet regularly throughout the year with the aim of continuing to develop and collaborate. The Network also benefitted from funded coaching and facilitated sessions from Jones Consulting. Examples of activity include:

- CLN members contributed to two community campaign design sessions.
- Co-hosted the Community Partnership Event.
- Produced a directory on the website now has profiles for 21 community leaders.
- Demonstrated an increased reach across social media and visits to the CLN website.
- Launched their first newsletter.
- Delivered a “Perform for a Cause” (PFAC) event which used the arts to engage young people in violence prevention and community safety.

Community Partnership Event:

Our annual Community Partnership event was held in February 2025 in collaboration with the Community Leaders Network (CLN). Entitled “With and for Young People”, we brought together our community and wider VRN partners to share learning, increase collaboration and a shared commitment to strengthening our work with children and young people.

Over 150 delegates from across the partnership took part in the event and attended a series of three interactive workshops, led by young people, which focused on: Prevention and Diversion, Youth Voice and Participation and Youth Work. Each workshop also included a short co-production activity, and the outputs have been included in Delivery Plan for the year ahead.

“It was an excellent event, really well organised, run and delivered and it properly lived up to its name “with and for” young people. The young people there were

inspirational and brilliant, as were the videos, poets and marshals. Thank you” –
Feedback from an attendee of the Community Partnership Event.

Imagery: Photo taken of the audience at the community partnership event listening to a speaker.

Community Oversight Group:

Alongside having community members on our Strategic Partnership Board, we also continue to invest in the Community Oversight Group (COG) which influences, shapes and scrutinises the VRN’s work. In 2024/25 we recruited our second group of COG members and they have already made positive contributions to our work including:

- Co-designing our trauma-informed guide for person-centred communities.
- Supporting the Phoenix team around the delivery of initial messaging to encourage participation into the programme.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on the first drafts of our social skills resources which will be launched in April 2025.

Imagery: Image of the front cover of the document titled: “A Guide for Person-centred Communities”.

Problem Solving with Young People:

Through a collaboration with the Police, Beaumont Leys was identified as an area that had high level of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in and around the shopping centre.

The team of Police and partners worked together collaboratively with young people through a focused pop-up event held locally at a location and time that was accessible to young people. As a result, the multi-agency team could then understand the ASB issues from the perspective of a young person, ensuring there was a sound understanding of where they felt safe and unsafe and then co-creating the solution. As a result, during February half term, there was a 40% decrease in ASB in the shopping centre area. This project has been recognised locally and recently won Leicestershire Police’s Problem-Solving Awards.

“We’re excited about the potential for this partnership to continue making a real impact and look forward to exploring new ways to develop it further.” Quote from Leah, an E2 Community Partner.

Imagery: Two photos of children taking part in the problem-solving activities.

Priority 5

Providing safe, inclusive and high-quality education settings

Education partners play a vital role in delivering on the VRN's ambitions to prevent violence and it is therefore important that they are supported to do so by all partners. Over the last year, we have continued to strengthen our relationship with schools, produced resources to support the development of skills and knowledge and invested in interventions relevant to violence prevention in education settings.

School Network Meetings:

The remit and membership of SNM's was expanded in the autumn of 2024 to include wider information and representation from the partnership, particularly around exploitation. The aim of the network is to share learning and resources related to harm outside the home such as knife crime, wider violence and exploitation. Education establishments across LLR meet on-line every term. Key inputs delivered this year include:

- Leicestershire Police's Child Centred Policing strategy
- Community sports and violence prevention
- Victim First support offer for schools including restorative justice.

This year, the VRN also published the second edition of the Schools Handbook, a resource outlining key information and resources relating to how education partners can prevent violence.

Imagery: Picture of the front page of the document titled: "A Handbook for Schools Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland".

Live Safe:

This year we launched the professional's pages in Live Safe which includes specific sections for schools, colleges and other education establishments. Alongside a wide array of information relating to young person safety, the pages also include a section specifically in relation to how education partners and police will work together, including:

- The new schools-police charter which outlines how police and education partners will work together.
- Guidance around when schools and colleges should report information to the police.
- Details of the Police's education offer for schools and colleges, including pre-recorded versions.

- Information and a link to the community portal – providing an on-line method for sharing non-urgent information with police.

Mentors in Violence Prevention:

Our Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme continues to run across local primary and secondary schools. A further wave of 19 schools completed their MVP training this year. These newly trained teachers and school staff will then recruit and upskill student mentors ready to start delivery in Autumn term. The new schools will also be involved in an evaluation of the intervention which will then inform decision-making over the potential extension of the programme into other settings.

Comprehensive primary and secondary MVP guides have been developed and launched this year to support existing and new MVP schools.

We have continued to use the MVP Network meetings as a means of sharing updates, discussing emerging themes and good practice developments, such as one school hosting 1:1 drop-in sessions for students to access MVP.

Imagery: Photos of the front covers of the MVP Guide for Primary School and the MVP Guide for Primary Schools.

The Reach Programme:

The Reach Programme, an intervention for 11-16 year olds delivered by the City and County Councils for children at risk of exclusion and violence, is in the final stages of the independent evaluation. This year the programme has extended its offer to include 4 more schools, now operating across 5 County and 9 City Secondary schools.

Our funding partner the Youth Endowment Fund visited the Reach Programme in September where they met with the delivery team, head teachers and children who had completed the programme – all spoke very positively about their experiences of the programme and the impact they had experienced.

“[The Reach Programme has given me an] increased in confidence and has helped with mental health - meeting with the family has helped she is not in trouble now in and out of school. At home she is very happy she is doing amazing. L is more confident than she was, she does not have suicidal thoughts anymore, much happier at home, engaging in conversation, Reach as given her a different perspective on how to deal with issues etc and L has really listened and taken this on board. Just brilliant so thank you.” – Feedback from a parent.

“He has taught me people skills and how to communicate better and more effectively. Offers support when I need and are always happy to answer questions.”- Feedback from a young person.

“If there's any problems, I know I can tell her. We speak about anything that goes wrong in my school days, and we manage to get it sorted.” – Feedback from a young person.

Alongside the external evaluation's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, the VRN also monitor a number of pre- and post- measures completed by the young person. The chart below highlights the improvements made across all measures, with the greatest difference observed in relation to the young person's motivation at school, anger and confidence.

Imagery: A graphic showing an overview of the delivery of The Reach Programme in 2024/25. The Reach Programme engaged with 95 young people with the following demographic breakdown:

- Ages 11-16
- 64% Male, 36% Female
- 71% White, 12% Other, 9% Asian, 7% Mixed and 1% Black

Across the intervention, an average of 49 sessions were offered with an average of 41 (85%) attended. Young people received the intervention for an average of 171 days.

Imagery: The chart highlights improvements across all 6 pre and post measures completed by the young person. The scores were as follows:

- Anger (Pre 2.4, Post 3.1)
- Motivation at school (Pre 2.5, Post 3.3)
- Confidence (Pre 3.5, Post 4.1)
- Feeling bad about myself (Pre 3.7, Post 4.1)
- Friends (Pre 4.0, Post 4.3)
- Relationships at home (Pre 4.1, Post 4.4)

Priority 6

Connecting young people to purposeful activities and trusted adults

This priority is based on the evidence that the risk of involvement in violence can be mitigated through the development of strong and stable connections with trusted adults including family members, teachers, youth workers, community members or coaches. Purposeful activities are also important not only to keep young people in safe spaces but to build the skills and confidence which protect against vulnerability to violence. This year we have continued to invest in several partnerships and initiatives as well as resources for those working with young people.

Specialist Sports Provider:

Leicester City in the Community have continued deliver our specialist sports provision. By providing swift, meaningful opportunities- from taster sessions, gym memberships and support to access local grassroots sport provision, this service has empowered young people to find strength and confidence. An offer around nutrition and gym inductions has extended to include a holistic training plan which can be tailored to individual needs.

"I go with my mates (to the gym) and I'm really enjoying it. It is really helping a lot, staying calm and helping with my health." - Feedback from a participant.

Imagery: A graphic shows an overview of the delivery of the specialist provider for sports and physical activity (delivered by Leicester City in the Community) in 2024/25.

The service supported 80 young people with an average of 10 sports sessions attended and 2 mentoring sessions attended on average. Young people received support for an average of 97 days, with 75% of young people engaging with the gym (other sports offered included football, boxing, swimming, basketball and rock climbing).

Improvements were observed across a range of outcomes including:

- *Increased participation in sport/physical activity*
- *Increased confidence*
- *Sustained engagement with sport/physical activity*
- *Improved emotional wellbeing.*

Imagery: Photo of members of Leicester City in the Community team at Leicester City Football Club.

Sports Partnerships:

Through our collaboration with StreetGames and Active Together, there has been an increase of weekly accessible sports sessions for young people in priority areas this year, delivered by locally trusted organisations. We have also seen an increase within secondary provision, allowing those with vulnerabilities to access suitable sporting opportunities, such as direct referrals from Leicester City children and young people's justice service into 1st Legion mixed martial arts gym, where sessions include mentoring and adapted to the needs of the young people.

We have also observed an increase of collaborative work strengthening secondary provision within hotspot areas. Unity b Boxing and E2 have collaborated to provide a free boxing session for the young people within Beaumont Leys and have increased the number of weekly sessions to reach more young people. There has also been a number

of workforce development opportunities that have been accessed, including mental health first aid, managing challenging behaviour and sports activator courses.

Other activity includes:

- Supported E2 at Beaumont Leys and the Highfield centre who are locally trusted organisations (LTO's) to access funding. Support was provided with bids and processes, utilising the audit to prioritise these specific areas.
- Generated more doorstep sport through youth groups and community groups, working with Zamzam Unlimited CIC to develop offers in the priority Beaumont and City areas.
- Supported the Youth Sports Trust to develop relationships with schools, based in areas of higher violence.

Imagery: Photo of a school partnership meeting in progress with members round a table talking.

Violence Intervention Project:

Delivering from Police custody and a local A & E department, the Violence Intervention Project (VIP) is our largest intervention targeting young people aged 11-25 in reachable spaces through a dedicated team based within these sites. Turning Point are the providers of the navigator service and this year have worked with over 320 young people.

"It has really helped me start using my spare time more positively, it has encouraged me to get into a good routine. I have started to feel better, am more healthy and with feeling better my confidence to do other things has improved." – Feedback from a participant.

Imagery: A graphic providing an overview of the reach of the Violence Intervention Project in A&E in 2024/25. VIP engaged with 108 young people with the following demographic breakdown:

- Ages 11-25
- 78% Male, 22% Female
- 71% White, 22% Asian, 5% Black, 1% Mixed and 1% Other.

Imagery: A graphic providing an overview of the reach of the Violence Intervention Project in Custody in 2024/25. VIP engaged with 215 young people with the following demographics:

- Ages 11-25
- 87% Male, 13% Female
- 66% White, 13% Black, 10% Asian, 10% Mixed and 1% Other.

Violence Intervention Project Case Study:

L.S., a 16-year-old male engaged in custody after being arrested for a violent offence. L.S. disclosed past trauma, autism and ADHD, struggled with his mental health, self-harmed and had a suicide plan. He felt his peers were negative influences and affecting his mental health. Social care and CAMHS were already involved with this young person.

The VIP worker provided mentoring and completed referrals to access specialist employment, training and education services, support to access a gym and facilitated LEGO® Serious Play® to develop his self-esteem.

At closure, L.S. improved on his risk scales and was enrolled onto a mechanics course. His mental health and self-esteem had both seen significant improvements. L.S. reflected that the VIP had helped make his problems more bearable and reported minor difficulties with his social and emotional concerns compared to previously scoring them as major difficulties. L.S. collaborated with VIP on his safety plan and this was sent and utilised by other remaining professionals in his care including his mum, social care, school and youth justice.

Specialist Employment, Training and Education Service:

Leicestershire Cares has continued to be our delivery partner in our Employment, Training and Education (ETE) service.

Referrals have continued to increase with the addition of a dedicated resource for the Phoenix team. The intervention has observed high rates of engagement and has provided a wide range of activities to improve employability.

“I am very grateful for what I learnt whilst being on the project, I am looking forward to using the skills I have learnt to help other young people.” Feedback from a participant.

Imagery: A graphic providing an overview of the delivery of the specialist provider for education training and employment (delivered by Leicestershire Cares) in 2024/25. The service had 80 young people referred with 99% of referrals agreeing to engage with an average of 2.5 sessions attended.

The outcomes of the service include:

- 76% of participants engaged in activity to improve employability
- 25% of participants started a training or education course
- 21% of participants gained employment.

Employment, Training and Education Service Case Study:

During a goal-setting session, T.B. expressed his dream of enrolling in a fashion course or working as a junior stylist to gain more experience. T.B. completed a CV session and personal statement session, with relevant transferrable skills identified. T.B. attended a World of Work tour, CV workshop, mock interviews, and employability events. T.B. actively embraced networking opportunities, such as the Hope Hack event, connecting with organisations which are now supporting T.B. in launching his own fashion project, dedicated to empowering young people who aspire to pursue careers in the arts and fashion.

Social Schools Training Toolkit:

We started a collaboration with Loud Speaker to develop a social skills toolkit for use by our partners working with young people. The YEF toolkit rates social skills as a high impact intervention for violence prevention. The toolkit will be an interactive visual and guiding resource that can be used flexibly across all community settings with clear guidance and videos. It will be launched in May 2025.

Imagery: Loud Speaker organisation logo in black and white.

Involving Young People in Solutions:

To increase young person involvement in the VRN's work, we have partnered with the Hope Collective to employ a Youth Development Officer. The dedicated role commenced in December 2024 and has supported the development and young person representation at local Youth Joint Action Groups (JAG's) as well as planning how we can integrate young involvement more into our work over the next year.

On 8th July, the VRN partnered with the National Police Chiefs' Council, Hope Collective and Violence Reduction Units across the Midlands, Greater Manchester and Lancashire to hold a Hope Hack in Coventry focused on Reimagining Policing. Over 20 young people from Leicestershire joined young people from across the Country to develop solutions for fairer policing and delivered their solutions to Senior Policing Leads across the Midlands. The day involved performances, panels and workshops led by young people. Community and education partners supported the event by ensuring their young people had the opportunity to attend. This included Go Getta CIC, The Centre Project, St Matthews Big Local, ZamZam Unlimited CIC, The Dialogue Society, SOCOPA, and Limehurst Academy.

Imagery: Three colourful images of the Hope Hack.

Priority 7

Providing opportunities for rehabilitation and recovery

While our preference is to proactively seek out opportunities for primary prevention and early intervention, a comprehensive whole system approach to prevention also includes responding effectively in the aftermath of violence. This year we invested in several initiatives to both support victims but also enable the rehabilitation of perpetrators to prevent reoffending.

Community Response to a Critical incident:

As a direct result of community feedback following a serious incident involving young people, we worked with communities and the wider partnership to develop a process and guide to ensure children, young people and Community Response to a Critical incident communities are better supported in the future. The process involves a multi-agency meeting, with community partners to ensure a co-ordinated offer of support from services and local community groups is put in place swiftly, thereby ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people who may have been affected.

The Phoenix Programme:

Our local partners, Leicester City and Leicestershire County Youth Justice teams, Probation, Police and Ingeus have continued to deliver a 'focused deterrence' based intervention for young people and adults who are involved in serious violence.

Participants in the programme are offered high levels of support from services and communities balanced with deterrence activity if concerns persist or escalate.

The referral pathways have developed this year with the inclusion of a Martial Arts bespoke offer starting with one-to-one sessions to increase confidence and capability to move into group and team-based activities.

Imagery: A graphic providing an overview of the delivery of the Phoenix Programme in 2024/25. The programme reached 98 participants with the following demographic breakdown:

- Ages from 14 plus, with 77% of participants aged under 25
- 98% Male, 2% Female
- 49% White, 19% Asian, 18% Black, 9% Mixed and 4% Other.

Focusing on delivery, the programme has offered over 1700 appointments to the participants, with 65% of these taking place in the community or in the home. Over 250

onward referrals have been made to specialist services. 81% of individuals were exited out of the programme due to good progress or no offending, and across the cohort, improvements were made across a range of outcomes including: substance use, mental health and wellbeing, relationships, positive activities, choices and behaviour and education and work.

Phoenix Programme Highlights:

The Phoenix Programme was highlighted as an example of good multi-agency prevention practice in a recent inspection of Leicestershire Police. The team hosted a visit from the Inspectorate and outlined the design and delivery of the programme and how the analytical team track progress and impact.

This year the Phoenix Programme was also highlighted in the HMIP thematic young adult inspection:

Quote: "In an example of good practice, a young adult in our sample was allocated a 'Community Navigator', who had experience of the criminal justice system themselves. [...] The probation practitioner highlighted how much the young adult appreciated the support of someone who had first-hand experience of the probation system as a young adult and had successfully moved forward in their own life."

Phoenix Programme Case Study:

A.J. consented to the programme and had been in both support and deterrence elements of the programme. The package of support included:

- Referrals to Leicestershire Cares for ETE Support and attended job interviews.
- The team completed visits with the participant in custody, after being arrested for acquisitive crime offences.
- Completed a placement with a mechanic, after expressing an interest in cars and bikes.
- Attended a Youth Course in Birmingham with his Community Navigator, centred around employment and support for young people.

A.J. transitioned out on grounds of good progress and reduction in offending following successful completion of the programme.

Next Steps

This report outlines our continued progress and a myriad of activity and achievements over the last year. As well as regularly receiving positive feedback from our partners about the value of the Network, we have seen another year of reductions in serious violence. Despite this, we know that preventing violence in the long-term remains challenging and requires us to continue with the activity which is proving effective as well as striving to do more for our children, young people and communities. It is encouraging that the new Government has continued to invest in the Violence Reduction Unit programme and their Safer Streets mission will provide us with opportunities to advance our work further. In particular, the VRN has been tasked by the Home Office with piloting the new Prevention Partnerships and Panels. These are designed to ensure local partners are aware of the children and young people most at risk of violence and exploitation and there are visible and effective diversionary pathways in place to prevent these risks becoming a reality. This will assist us to build on progress to date and have a wider impact on this vulnerable group both now and in the future. To support these developments, the VRN's Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26, has an increased emphasis on the earlier diversion of children and young people including investing in community-led provision.

Examples of Planned Activity:

- Work with strategic partners to introduce the new Prevention Partnerships into our area.
- Extend data sharing and analysis to support identification of 'at risk' children and young people.
- Invest in community-led diversionary activity in our priority areas.
- Extend our sexual violence prevention projects into schools and other education establishments.
- Launch and roll-out the new Community Anti-Violence Campaign – 'Voices Against Violence'.
- Delivery a fifth cohort of our Community Leadership Programme and continue to invest in the local Community Leaders Network.
- Provide toolkits for community partners, including our new Social Skills Training for Children and Young People.
- Co-design and deliver a learning and development programme for our partners.
- Complete the evaluations of Reach and Phoenix and agree future investment with partners.
- Map and develop an open access on-line platform to increase public awareness of purposeful activities available for children and young people.

End of document.