



Annual Report Summary

2021/22



West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority



Tracy Brabin
Mayor
of West Yorkshire



Introduction

The West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has launched its Annual Report for 2020/21. This summary provides an overview of the continued development of the VRU, delivering the resources and interventions required to help prevent and reduce the impact of serious violence across our county.

The unit, which launched in early 2020, has a partnership emphasis, with specialists from health, police, local authorities, education, youth justice, prisons, probation, community groups and others. It takes a fundamentally different approach to violence reduction, one where the public sector institutions and communities that make up West Yorkshire act together to help cut violence through early intervention, prevention, education, and joint working.

**The full annual report was
submitted to the Home Office
in Spring 2022**

West Yorkshire Overview



Home to
around
2.35 million
people

Made up of
5 metropolitan
boroughs and **3** cities

A mixture of busy cities
and towns with quiet
villages and rural
locations.

**Significant
student population:**
It has a number of
universities across Bradford,
Leeds and Huddersfield
in addition to further
education colleges.

West Yorkshire has
a predominantly
comprehensive secondary
education system with an
additional **3** grammar
schools and **52**
independent schools.

It is a
diverse region,
with people from a
range of ethnicities,
lifestyles, and
backgrounds, bringing
great cultural
diversity

The overall
estimated cost for
Serious Violence
in West Yorkshire at
£960,534,113
- almost £1 billion.

Between April and
December 2021,
5816 young people
were supported across
41 VRU funded
interventions.

The West Yorkshire
VRU has helped
around **200** people
over the age of 25 in
2021/22.

Hospital Admissions
for Assault with a
Sharp Object: Up **16%**
comparing 2021
against the previous
12 months.

Crimes Involving a
Knife/Sharp
Instrument: Up **5.2%**
(12 months to
Jan 2022)

Section 18
Wounding Offences:
Up **19%**
(12 months to
Jan 2022)

Crimes for
Possession of
Weapons:
Up by **15.1%**
(12 months to
Jan 2022)

Responding to Serious Violence

In early 2022, the VRU updated its strategy in response to issues of serious violent crime, outlining seven ambitions:

- 1. Criminal Justice and Reducing Re-offending:**
Reducing the risk of young people entering the criminal justice system and reducing reoffending
- 2. Domestic and Sexual Abuse:**
Supporting families affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse
- 3. Complex Needs and A&E attendance:**
Supporting people to move away from violent lifestyles, providing support with some of the complex needs that make many frequent attenders in Emergency Departments.
- 4. Education:**
Promoting meaningful engagement in education
- 5. Violence Against Women and Girls:**
Creating an environment where women and girls can feel safe and be safe
- 6. Local solutions through co-production:**
Working with communities to develop locally based initiatives
- 7. Adversity, Trauma, Resilience:**
Reducing adversity and ensuring a trauma informed approach throughout partner's work.

Each of these are evidence based and draw on the latest research, data and feedback from our partners and communities.

Crucially, they are delivered through multi-agency leadership and strategic coordination, which allows us to collectively respond to serious violence. This partnership approach is inclusive of both core members and wider stakeholders, ensuring everyone can participate in decision making at different levels.

The breadth of membership also means that we can connect with other strategic boards and mechanisms on a local, regional, and national level.

- Partnership Executive Group (PEG):
Chaired by the Mayor of West Yorkshire Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, this is a quarterly meeting of Chief Executives, Chief Constable and leaders who provide scrutiny and oversight of the VRU core function, delivery progress, strategic direction, and financial decisions.
- Reducing Serious Violence Executive Strategic Group: Chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, this is a bi-monthly meeting of senior strategic leaders who provide system leadership and accountability for key areas of responsibility, including the delivery of a public health whole systems approach and driving the strategic direction.
- Partnership Delivery Group (PDG):
This is a monthly meeting, chaired by the VRU Director, involves wide ranging stakeholder and partnership representation.

The VRU delivered an intervention portfolio worth over £1.8million

Partnerships

During 2021/22 the VRU delivered an intervention portfolio worth over £1.8million, working in partnership with colleagues from across Health, Local Authorities, Education, Criminal Justice and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector. In January 2022, the West Yorkshire VRU launched a delivery initiative offering small grants of up to £10,000. It encouraged schools and grass roots charitable organisations to collaborate in tackling criminality and exploitation at a community level. As a result, we were able to support 13 providers from across West Yorkshire to engage over 500 young people.

Our close alignment with the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership (WYH&CP) has also paid dividends in further developing a trauma informed approach and saw a joint campaign to help 'root out racism'.





Diversity Equality Inclusion

Our Team

The VRU is proud to be an inclusive team, embracing the principles of diversity, equality and inclusion in its daily business.

It has the benefit of working closely with a public health lead, having teamed up with the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership (WYH&CP)

The unit also utilises the skills and experiences of a wider multi-agency team.

Meeting Your Needs

The VRU has prioritised the need to bring together key data to help understand the bigger picture of violence in the county.

Our Needs Assessment (NA) is instrumental in guiding the direction of the VRU and assessing risk in the region.

It follows a public health approach, understanding the scale and nature of violence. Examples include crime hotspots and paramedic attendance for violent incidents. This analysis helps us to understand where the VRU needs to focus resources to best address the problems affecting West Yorkshire.

To complement the violence data, we have drawn together a wealth of open-source information that helps us better understand the root causes of violence.

This provides insight on the make-up of local areas, including inequalities, deprivation, housing, employment, and education.

We know that not every violent crime that occurs is reported to police.

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Paramedics may attend to treat a patient, or a person may go straight to hospital, therefore we recognise the importance of drawing upon multiple sources to understand a truer picture of violence.





...each year, we are expanding our understanding and fine tuning our approach...

Knowledge Hub

The West Yorkshire VRU 'Knowledge Hub' was launched in 2020/21, drawing together information from Police, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, NHS hospital trusts (ISTV data – Information Sharing to Tackle Violence) and West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

It offers a simple to use platform informing strategic decision making by identifying trends, patterns and changes in data concerning serious violent crime.

It has enabled the VRU and our partners to plot preventative measures and interventions aimed at the right people and places.

With each year, we are expanding our understanding and fine tuning our approach to violent crime through new insights and information generated.

Working with the Community

Dawn is an active member of the VRU Community Advisory Group (CAG) with lived experience of childhood trauma and domestic abuse.

Dawn has previously been homeless and has been through the care system. Her first suicide attempt was at 12 years of age.

She submitted several pieces of art and poetry to the VRU for use on our website as part of the CAG group biographies.

She is a campaigning poet and artist and has released some publications. Dawn filmed a short recording with the VRU, reflecting on her lived experienced.

This was used on social media channels and also at a regional conference celebrating women.

Engaging and Involving

Co-production was included in our engagement approach for 2020/21 to ensure that communities were involved in our interventions in a meaningful way and had influence over the work being delivered in their area.

We spoke to those particularly impacted by knife crime and sought their views on how best to tackle it.

Co-production projects were delivered in two districts, including Leeds and Kirklees.

We have evaluated and learnt from each, with plans to further develop the model.



Campaigns

In the summer of 2021, the VRU broadcast a 30 second advert on ITV Yorkshire over a month-long period as part of the 'Are You Listening?' campaign, raising awareness of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).



Depicting different scenarios, it highlighted the tell-tale signs and was complimented by a dedicated CCE webpage hosted by West Yorkshire Police and endorsed by the VRU.

Over the period of the broadcast, page views increased to 578 compared to a figure of 69 the month before. This equates to a 738% increase and a difference of 509.

A key indicator of the viewer's intentions to seek further information on the theme of CCE.

Reports of CCE related offences to the independent charity Crimestoppers in the Yorkshire region also saw a 25% increase over the course of the broadcast period.



Raising Awareness

One of our flag-ship projects of the last year was a new public exhibition entitled 'At the Sharp End: Tackling Violent Crime Together in West Yorkshire'.

It officially opened at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds in January 2022.

Developed in partnership, the hard-hitting display, used objects, evidence and first-hand accounts to highlight both the effects of violent crime and the positive work undertaken by the VRU and the police to intervene and prevent youth violence.

It features the results of Operation Jemlock – the successful West Yorkshire police operation that has made over 6,000 arrests and confiscated over a thousand weapons over the last two and half years. Young people from across the region also took part in a creative art competition on the subject of violence and how it affects them, with the winning pieces exhibited within the display.

A 16 year-old from Leeds was awarded 1st place for her artwork, using images of dominoes to reflect the consequences of violence on individuals and communities.

6,000 arrests
1,000+ weapons confiscated



Sharing a common commitment across our 5 places

Promising Practice

A West Yorkshire Adversity, Trauma and Resilience programme was jointly developed by the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership and West Yorkshire VRU.

Sharing a common commitment across our 5 places to prevent harm and improve the wellbeing of our population, it has a particular concern for those who are most vulnerable, facing multiple difficulties, complex needs, and childhood trauma.

To deliver our agreed ambition, our approach is for all organisations and system leaders to work together, as trauma and adversity cannot be prevented and responded to by one sector.

Navigator Pilots

Working with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and Bradford Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust A&E departments, we are intervening at the critical moments, which could change the course of someone's life.

Trained Youth Workers identify and support young people arriving with injuries following incidents of violence, and/or with other issues such as mental health concerns, at risk of or experience of exploitation, domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse and experiences of trauma.

This programme is supported by an ongoing specialist package of support. During the 21/22, work has continued to develop the hospital navigator service, broadening the focus to include responding to adversity and trauma.

It is being rolled out across West Yorkshire trusts with the addition of Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust and Mid Yorkshire Hospital Trust.

'Hot Spot' Policing

Operation Jemlock is West Yorkshire Police's operational response to delivering the Serious Violence Crime Strategy and in 2021 became fully embedded within the VRU. It provides additional deployments of police officers into 'hotspot' areas across West Yorkshire.

These officers are deployed on foot and in vehicles and deliver a visible, preventative and evidence-based policing style utilising several Policing tactics. In 2021, Op Jemlock moved to developing highly localised 'micro-hotspots' delivering the most efficient and effective targeted approach.

In 2021, whilst patrolling these hotspots, officers arrested 1827 individuals, recovered 452 weapons, hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of Class A and B drugs and tens of thousands of pounds in cash.





Data and Evaluation

We place heavy emphasis on continual learning and dedicate a portion of our budget to evaluation.

Interim reports indicate that the majority of our funded interventions represent good value for money and significant savings achieved with every reduction in violent crime in the region.

Our final evaluation reports will take us that step further in understanding 'what works' and 'for who'.

In conjunction with rapid literature reviews, we will use all of our evaluation findings to shape future decision making and commissioning, influencing whole system change and refining our delivered interventions.

Conclusion

The VRU continues to engage and work with partners to embed a public health approach to tackling serious violence.

We recognise that listening to the voice of the community and lived experience, especially through young people is key, and this will both enable us to identify root causes and mould our future delivery.

By capturing the community experience in everything we do, we can ensure our endeavours are both inclusive and representative of those we serve.

In achieving this, we can tailor our approach to best meet local needs with truly tangible outcomes.

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For further information about the West Yorkshire VRU visit:

<https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/policing-and-crime/west-yorkshire-violence-reduction-unit/>

