

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Slough Health and Well-being Board
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Public Health approach to prevention of youth violence
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Tessa Lindfield, Executive Director for Public Health and Public Protection
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kelly Evans, Deputy Director of Public Health, Rebecca Curley, Serious Violence Lead
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Appendices:</b>	[List appendices and whether any exempt].

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report sets out [*summarise in no more than 3 lines*]

Please indicate which priority in the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, [Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025](#), your report links to:

Priority 1 – Starting Well	Priority 2 - Integration	Priority 3 – Strong, Health and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Priority 4 – Workplace Health
x		x	

1.2 Consideration:

- Information
- Discussion
- Decision
- Endorsement

### Recommendations:

The Health and Well-being Board is recommended to:

- a. Note the progress of year 1 of the Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027.
- b. The Board is asked to champion Priority 4 Mission of the Serious Violence Strategy: *To provide and ensure effective leadership to drive the cultural changes required to prevent violence before it occurs and ensure there are robust and effective systems in place to address the risk of violence.*
- c. To endorse the trauma-informed practice approach for all those working in Slough acknowledging that trauma can affect individuals, groups and communities.

**Reason: To provide oversight of the work to prevent serious violence and how we respond to protecting people from harms outside of the home.**

## **2. Report**

The Public Health approach to preventing youth violence aims to understand and address the root causes of violence. Violence is not something that just happens, nor is it normal or acceptable in our society. Many of the key risk factors that make individuals, families or communities vulnerable to violence are modifiable, including exposure to adverse experiences in childhood and subsequently the environments in which individuals live, learn and work throughout youth, adulthood and older age. Understanding these factors means we can develop and adopt new public health-based approaches to violence. Such approaches focus on the primary prevention of violence through reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors over the life course.

Local strategy – The Serious Violence Duty, was a new law passed in 2023 as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 that required relevant public services, such as the council and the police, to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. The Government at the time also announced an amendment to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to ensure serious violence is a priority for Community Safety Partnerships and they have a Serious Violence Strategy in place.

The Safer Slough Partnership published its Serious Violence Strategy for 2024 – 2027. The Partnership adopted a definition through the wider work of Thames Valley's Violence Prevention Partnership, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and local community safety partnerships. This is defined as: 'Serious violence includes specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents involving a knife and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing'.

The Slough Serious Violence Strategy 2024 – 2027 is based upon a prevention model, focusing on three key prevention priorities. It outlines a multi-agency commitment to prevent people from becoming involved in and reducing instances of serious violence in Slough and takes a Public Health approach which includes surveillance, identifying risk and protective factors, developing and evaluating interventions and implementation.

## **3. Background**

### 3.1 Leadership and oversight

The Serious Violence Strategy outlines a set of priorities, goals, aims and actions. These are based on learnings and findings mentioned in the report and are monitored as a live working document by the Serious Violence Board which reports into the Safer Slough Partnership.

The four priorities aim to:

1. Prevent serious violence before it occurs
2. Develop prevention mechanisms that specifically target those at risk of either committing serious violence or being the victim of serious violence – this will reduce both the number of future assaults and make a sustainable positive change
3. Identify and target those at highest risk of causing serious harm with a range of support and, where necessary, enforcement activity to prevent serious violence
4. Provide and ensure effective leadership to drive the cultural changes required to prevent violence before it occurs and ensure there are robust and effective systems in place to address the risk of violence

**Recommendation:** The HWB is asked to support the fourth priority to provide leadership and oversight.

### 3.2 Collaboration, projects and programmes

The work to prevent and reduce serious violence draws from data set out through the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment as well as partnership intelligence and data, lived experiences and knowledge of communities.

The 2024 Serious Violence Strategic Needs assessment stated that the data during 2024 was showing a slight serious violence rate increase so far compared to previous years.

- Temporal analysis showed Sunday as being the day with the most amount of serious violence activity.
- Demographic analysis reveals 46.7% of male suspects are between the ages of 15 – 27.
- Demographic analysis reveals that 71% of aggrieved were males. The age ranges of 15-17 and 18-21 with the highest numbers.
- Reported Domestic Abuse has remained at a steady level since 2021. Numbers from 2024 are keeping this trend.
- Central Slough has seen high numbers of serious violence, but other areas highlighted are Stoke Green, Upton Lea, Salt Hill and Langley.

When looking at risk and resilience factors for young people who have been shown to be more likely to a victim or perpetrator of violence, the strategy states we will consider the following factors: individual, relationship, community, societal and local.

Consultations were held when the strategy was being drafted to help identify cause, impact, identification of gaps and opportunities to do better. This consultation has continued and will continue when helping to steer diversion and deterrence projects.

Since the publication of the SV strategy in January 2024, the SSP has implemented through support, collaboration and funding the following interventions, projects and programmes:

- Clear Hold Build – Safer Langley [Safer Slough Partnership – Slough Borough Council](#)
- Stay True to You Knife Angel assemblies [Preventing knife crime starts with education – Slough Borough Council](#)
- Community and Detached Youth Work
- Youth Justice intervention through schools
- PHSE network training in the Choices programme
- Street Games
- Hospital Navigator Scheme

- Safer Streets 5
- Slough Street Guardian scheme

**Recommendation:** The HWB is asked to note the progress of year 1 of the Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027.

### 3.3 Trauma-informed training and service re-design

The SV strategy sits alongside the implementation of the Exploitation, Early Help and Domestic Abuse strategies. It makes a commitment to draw on findings from Safeguarding Practice Reviews and other learnings in Slough. Coupled with the recommendations from the Youth Endowment Fund, the strategies touch on how Slough practitioners can be trauma-informed. With this, comes the opportunity to develop a more trauma-informed approach to policy and service design.

The YEF toolkit outlines the impact trauma can have on wellbeing and the long-term relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences and the involvement in crime and violence [Trauma-informed training and service redesign | Youth Endowment Fund](#)

Through the work of the serious violence, domestic abuse and exploitation strategies and along with the findings of recent Safeguarding Practice Reviews, there is an opportunity for Slough to become a trauma-informed borough involving all statutory, education, health, business, voluntary, community and resident partners.

**Recommendation:** The HWB is asked to endorse the trauma-informed practice approach including the environment we meet residents in. Ensuring those areas/buildings are also trauma informed as well as practitioners working in Slough. Realising trauma can affect individuals, groups and communities.

### 3.4 Interface with Partnerships –

*Community safety* - As part of the public health approach to Violence prevention the community safety partnership works in partnership with other local agencies to address local issues including antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse, and re-offending which ultimately feeds into the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) is Slough's community safety partnership, which seeks to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime. The SSP is accountable for compliance with the statutory responsibilities set out in the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#).

*Safeguarding Partnership* - The Serious Violence board reports into the Safer Slough Partnership working alongside the Safeguarding Partnership. The partnership lead for serious violence and exploitation works closely with Slough Children First and attends Strategic MACE and Slough Safeguarding Partnership meetings including Keeping Children Safe in School sub-group.

*Street Games* – Slough Borough Council (SBC), funded by StreetGames and the Thames Valley Prevention Partnership (VPP), has developed and implemented a sports

intervention programme to support children and young people (10-24 years) at risk of or involved in serious youth violence. This initiative uses a public health approach to support a young person who has experienced a combination of underlying factors and is either at risk of offending, already involved in minor offending, is victim of violence or experienced community trauma and who would benefit from additional support, using sport as a positive referral pathway for statutory and non-statutory agencies.

Over the past 2.5 years, Street Games have:

- Established a system-wide approach and referral pathway.
- Processed 70 referrals and partnered with local trusted organisations (LTOs) to provide free participation opportunities.
- Ensured sport practitioners receive trauma-informed training, equipping them with contextual safeguarding knowledge and relational leadership skills to create safe, supportive spaces for young people.

This programme leverages community sport to foster positive environments, reduce risk, and support youth development.

The *Street Guardian Scheme* is a partnership of Slough Borough Council, Thames Valley Police, The Slough BID, Slough Pub Watch, plus the third sector – voluntary and community – Slough Community Transport and Slough Community Support Café. It also includes faith organisations and Windsor Street Angels who are supporting the set up and delivery of the pilot. The Street Guardians are volunteers that patrol in visible purple jackets with Street Guardians clearly marked. They provide a reassuring presence in the High Street area helping and signposting for support to residents, shoppers, shopkeepers and visitors to the town. This will increase the perception of feeling safer and help to support people into partner agencies such as Turning Point, Homeless charities and much more.

*Hospital Navigators* (HNS) was commissioned by Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership as part of a public health approach to violence reduction within the community for three years (ending 31 Mar '25). The pilot scheme involves a Hospital Navigator co-ordinator to work with a team of volunteers who are based in the Emergency Department (ED) – for Slough at Wexham Park Hospital. The Navigators engage with young people who present for emergency treatment – either as a direct experience of violence, or the possible root causes of violence, such as substance abuse or mental health crisis. In Slough, the charitable organisation providing the HNS for the past three years has been Together As One. The Navigator connects with the vulnerable young people which can lead to ongoing support beyond the hospital to obtain necessary specialist input from community services (such as housing, counselling, substance misuse support, long-term mentorship, employment, group work etc.). The pilot has been evaluated and proven successful. It has been written into the violence prevention work of the Police Crime Commissioner. This fits with the narrative around taking a Public Health approach to addressing serious crime and exploitation.

*Safer Langley* is the local name for Clear Hold Build, a national initiative which aims to:

- tackle organised crime groups (OCGs)
- build community resilience
- improve confidence and trust in the police
- make the area a safer place to live.

Langley has been chosen as the focus area because in recent years two young men in Langley have sadly lost their lives due to knife crime and we hope that no other young

person or their loved ones have to experience this. Community concerns have also been shared with local agencies, focusing on anti-social behaviour, robbery and vehicle crime, with reports of serious violence and young people carrying weapons in recent years. Safer Langley is a partnership between Thames Valley Police & Slough Borough Council, as well as charities, colleges, schools, community groups and charities to reduce harm and increase resilience in Langley

#### **4. Summary:**

There is no single reason why some people/communities are more at risk of violence, but being exposed to more risk factors does cumulate and mean some people are more at risk than others such as those that experience more adverse childhood experiences. However, there are protective factors that can be put in place. Taking a public health approach considers understanding the root cause of violence and evidence-based practice in how to prevent violence and abuse happening in the first place.

The work to date has been conducted by the community safety partnership and the safe in slough partnership. Support from the health and wellbeing board, can take a whole systems approach to this work and consider the broader prevention opportunities such as the role of our 0-19 public health nursing service and the MESCH model that is being implemented to increase the protective factors for children and young people. The other work could consider its role in preventing violence such as other parenting programmes lead by early years and their role in preventing violence by strengthening parent and child relationships. The role of the family hubs to consider family approach to preventing violence. The role of the NHS in sharing data on emergency admissions due to violence. The role of planning in how public spaces can be used to influence levels of violence. There is no single reason why some individuals/communities are more at risk of violence, therefore a whole system approach is needed to address violence prevention.

#### **5. Implications of the Recommendation**

##### **5.1 Health and Well-being Board and Partners Implications:**

- The HWB is asked to support the fourth priority to provide leadership and oversight. This would include considering within your organisation how they are preventing violence before it occurs.
- The HWB is asked to note the progress of year 1 of the Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027 and share back into the organisation you are representing.
- The HWB is asked to endorse the trauma-informed practice approach including the environment we meet residents in. Ensuring those areas/buildings are also trauma informed as well as practitioners working in Slough. Realising trauma can affect individuals, groups and communities.

##### **5.2 Equality implications**

Many of those at risk of violence could be one of the equality groups. Conducting this work should help protect these groups from harm and violence.

#### **6. Background papers:**

Read the full strategy here [Safer Slough Partnership - serious violence strategy – Slough Borough Council](#)