

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership

End of Year Highlight Report – April 2025 – March 2026

Overview:

We're proud to say that the Violence Reduction Partnership has reached over **60,000** children and young people through both central and local commissioned services this year, an increase of **52.70%** compared with the same time last year.

End of year figures demonstrate a positive picture, with an encouraging **2.44%** reduction in serious youth violence, compared with the previous financial year and an overall **15.17% reduction** over the last two years. The West Midlands also demonstrated a reduction in serious youth violence specifically, where a knife has been used of **8.68% compared with the previous year** and an overall **26.62%** reduction over the last two years. These reductions indicate that partnership working continues to have a positive impact on the lives of communities across the region.

Following a period of uncertainty in relation to funding, the Home Office issued grant conditions in March 2026 for the **Serious Violence Reduction Programme (SVRP) 2026/2027**. This confirmed that the Violence Reduction Partnership Core Grant would continue for a further year at the same level and it would be consolidated with the Serious Violence Duty and Prevention Panel funding. This provides a combined pot of approximately £5m.

Towards the end of 2025/26, in anticipation of future funding, the VRP led various meetings with the local violence reduction leads and specified authorities to agree shared priorities for future commissioning. The priorities from these meetings have now been triangulated with recommendations from our recent evaluations and findings from the updated [Strategic Needs Assessment](#) to develop our West Midlands VRP Delivery Plan 2026/2027. Subject to Home Office approval, we will continue to commission both central and local services that ensure continuity and availability of vital provision to children and young people most at risk from serious youth violence in the West Midlands and supporting the three prevention panels across Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Data & Evaluation

A key role for the VRP is to contribute to the evidence base of what works to reduce violence. Whilst 2025-26 evaluation reports are in the process of being finalised, insights from evaluation activity have guided delivery for the next financial year. Findings from the Strategic Needs Assessment, performance data and evidence from literature reviews have informed commissioning conversations and contract requirements. The data and evaluation team are supporting providers to update their theory of change and ensuring quarterly monitoring templates capture impact and support evaluation plans for the upcoming year.

The [Strategic Needs Assessment](#) has recently been updated and work is ongoing to align future updates with local Community Safety Partnership Strategic Needs Assessments. This year's assessment builds on previous findings whilst also incorporating new evidence, evaluation insights and performance data to ensure recommendations are both relevant and impactful. The following recommendations are designed to guide strategic decision-making and support the delivery of effective interventions:

1. Establish a shared cross-agency definition of serious violence
2. Prioritise repeat harm and repeat involvement
3. Align prevention activity to peak risk windows in time and place
4. Use a life-course approach that supports people at every stage of development
5. Promote locally driven approaches to interventions
6. Ensure community and peer research is embedded as a fundamental driver of intervention design
7. Improve understanding of the role of social media and online harm
8. Support multi-agency data sharing to develop a shared violence performance product

The Serious Violence Duty Information Sharing Agreement (SVD ISA) is in the process of being signed by specified authorities. This will strengthen regional data sharing and support the development of a comprehensive multi-agency dashboard. This is an important step to establish a more secure and collaborative framework for data exchange, which will strengthen our shared understanding of the risk, threat and harm of violence in the region.

As part of the Home Office's pilot Hyper Local Working in Birmingham, we collaborated with key partners to develop a set of detailed partnership 'Problem-Oriented Policing' (POP) profiles which informed local activity in the hyper local areas. Extensive analysis has ensured that planned interventions are accurately targeted, both geographically and towards the cohorts most affected. An update on the evaluation will be shared in the next quarterly report.

Across the 2025-26 financial year, the Data and Evaluation team have worked with three evaluation partners to strengthen evaluation and community research. The University of Wolverhampton, Edge Hill University and Research Core have

undertaken an impact evaluation of the St Giles Teachable Moments programme. The evaluation looked at whether current data, monitoring systems, and processes can reliably track programme outcomes over time. The impact evaluation contains both quantitative and qualitative data analysis to understand the impact of the programme and the final report will be published shortly. The Data and Evaluation team have also supported Research Core to produce a quantitative evaluation of the A&E teachable moments programme and the Children Heard and Seen programme.

We have collaborated with Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) Research to deliver a programme of community and peer-led research projects. BVSC have overseen the delivery of high-quality, mixed-methods research that strengthens our understanding of community needs and informs effective violence reduction practice across a range of priority topic areas including, SEN and Neurodiversity; Counter Narratives and Messaging; Social Harm and Social Capital; Online Harm transferring into in-person violence. Findings from the reports will influence our commissioning priorities in the next financial year.

All analytical reports will be published via our [website](#).

Young Futures Prevention Panels (YPPF)

The VRP plays a key role in supporting the local implementation of the Home Office's Young Futures Prevention Panel pilot and pathfinders. The panels have identified children and young people vulnerable to being drawn into crime and ensure access to appropriate support and other interventions and services.

Sandwell established their Prevention Panel in October 2025, taking referrals via **West Midlands Police**. The Sandwell prevention panel established a referral route of children who come into custody one or more times in the last 12 months, and it results in no prosecution or community resolution. **Walsall** and **Wolverhampton** established their **Pathfinder** panels, taking referrals predominantly from **schools**. Walsall and Wolverhampton established a discretionary referral pathway, taking an education focus, looking at school attendance, such as suspensions and exclusions.

Each Panel established a multi-agency check (or triage), which takes place between the initial identification/referral and the multi-agency Panel. The purpose of this check is to understand whether the young person is already known to and receiving support from statutory services, avoiding any potential duplication, and to assess suitability for the type of support provided by the panel. The panels operate a consent-based model, with informed consent required from the young person and their parent/carer before a referral to support can be made. Young people discussed at the panel (following consent) have received a comprehensive package of support. The panels operate a menu of evidence-informed interventions, targeted positive activities and tailored support aligned to their individual needs.

98 young people were discussed across the three panels this year, who are otherwise 'unseen', visible but not adequately supported, or are identified but lack access to appropriate services. The panels have improved early support provided to young people who are typically missed or not prioritised for support. **96** young people were referred to a non-statutory/statutory service including cognitive behavioural therapy, mentoring and knife crime education programmes. Where **2** young people were identified as "no further action", the panel continued to meet with schools and relevant authorities to further explore appropriate intervention and support.

We strongly recognise that the Prevention Panels and Pathfinders fill a longstanding gap in early intervention, and the space for shared discussion and problem-solving has already led to improvements in practice. The VRP will continue to coordinate the Prevention Panels and Pathfinders throughout 2026-27 to ensure alignment and connectivity across the region, relating to information, resources, and best practice sharing.

Education, My Tomorrow, and Change Makers:

We are committed to working with schools and other education settings to support, engage and safeguard children and young people. Our priority is to support the implementation of long-term prevention plans across education settings, to ensure that there is a systematic and consistent approach to prevention within education

We have offered a menu of fully funded training, interventions and resources to support the development of violence prevention programmes. The VRP has directly delivered a range of preventative, evidence-based programmes in schools across the region. **4,475** professionals engaged with the VRP webinars this year including:

- Introduction to childhood adversity and Trauma Informed Practice
- Trauma Informed Practice in Early Years
- Ending Male Violence Against Women and Girls (EMVAWG)
- Introduction to Exploitation

- Serious Violence Duty
- Public Health Approach
- Parents and Carers

To view and register for future VRP webinars, please visit our [Eventbrite](#) page.

Education Prevention Pilot

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership introduced the Education Provider Pool this year to support the delivery of a pilot project across the region to test the impact of long-term prevention planning in education. The provider pool has enabled the VRP to have direct access to **80** providers and over **200** interventions all of which have been subject to appropriate due diligence and safeguarding checks.

As part of the pilot, the Education Intervention Officers (EIO's) have worked with **13** schools across Birmingham, Solihull, Walsall, and Wolverhampton to develop comprehensive education prevention plans spanning across the academic year. The interventions delivered across the pilot schools have reached over **800** young people. Interventions have included social skills training, knife crime education programmes, cognitive behavioural therapy and restorative justice programmes.

The provider pool has enabled swift access to a range of bespoke interventions to support the effective delivery of the education pilot. The provider pool will re-open for expressions of interest in 2026/27 and we will be using it to support a range of projects and programmes including the habitual knife carrier programme, response work and other projects requiring local interventions and support. Please visit our [website](#) for more information on how to submit an expression of interest to be in the provider pool.

Precious Lives

The VRP leads the implementation of the Precious Lives project which commissions lived experience trainers to deliver sessions in schools to equip young people with an understanding of the key risks and issues relating to knife crime, violence, and the criminal justice system. The Precious Lives trainers have real life experience of knife crime either as a victim, offender or professional and lead workshops with young people to help them understand the consequences of carrying or using a knife. Over **39,000** young people benefited from the **406** workshops delivered this year across schools in the West Midlands.

Please email us via vrp@westmidlands.police.uk for further information about the Precious Lives programme.

Parents and Carers

Supporting parents and carers to understand the role they play in violence prevention is an key priority for the VRP. As part of this work, we launched our Parents and Carers webinar **“Building safety for our children & young people”** which explores the key risks and issues facing children and young people. **178** parents/carers have engaged with the webinar to consider the ways they can support their children's safety and wellbeing. The webinar covers important topics such as peer pressure, influence, online safety, exploitation, mental health and strategies for talking with young people. To register for the next Parents and Carers webinar please visit our [Eventbrite](#) page.

The VRP coordinated the first **“Parenting in Today's Society”** conference in March 2025 in partnership with the Blesst CIC and Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT). The conference brought together parents and carers from across the region to explore how local support services can be improved for them and their children, with the aim of reducing violence and making the region safer. Feedback and reflections from the conference are being developed into a report which will be shared in the next quarterly update.



“We created this safe space where people were allowed to open up and ask those difficult questions they don't often get to ask as parents”. – Parent A

We conducted a survey throughout February – March 2026 to gather insights from parents and carers about their concerns regarding violence against young people in their care. **244** parents and carers responded to the survey and provided valuable

insights about their worries. Feedback and learning from the survey will shape the development of targeted VRP resources and webinars to support parents and carers in addressing violence affecting young people.

Phoenix Psychology developed the **Parents Against Grooming and Exploitation (PAGE)** pilot group in response to the growing recognition that child criminal and sexual exploitation present a significant and ongoing safeguarding concern, requiring early intervention and coordinated support for families. Phoenix engaged with a small group of parents about connecting with children during periods of conflict, withdrawal, or risk, using approaches such as PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy). The pilot demonstrated that the PAGE group provides a valuable, trauma-informed intervention for parents navigating exploitation-related concerns. While attendance challenges reflected the complexity of families' lives, the group successfully created a space for learning, reflection, and connection. Learning and feedback from the pilot will inform future delivery plans for the PAGE group.

We will continue to provide an update on this work within our future highlight reports. Please contact us via vrp@westmidlands.police.uk for more information.

Voluntary Sector Development

In partnership with the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, we developed a programme of specially designed workshops and webinars to support the vital work the voluntary sector delivers in relation to victim support, crime prevention and violence reduction. Over **200** voluntary sector professionals attended the four workshops between January and March 2026. The workshops provided opportunities for voluntary sector professionals to:

- Directly engage with large funders
- Identify funding opportunities
- Support to develop bids and proposals
- Develop a Theory of Change for your interventions
- Build long-term sustainability plans for your organisation
- Enhance your partnership work
- Network with key statutory and non-statutory organisations from across the region
- Explore opportunities to work with the private sector

My Tomorrow

The My Tomorrow and Change Makers programme has continued to make strong progress this year. The **30** Young Leaders have delivered various sessions that have strengthened their leadership skills, confidence, and understanding of their impact within their communities. Young leaders have built robust relationships with other young people, promoted the importance of being an upstander, and inspired more young people to think about leadership.

The Young Leaders partnered with various organisations across the West Midlands this year and gained valuable opportunities to engage with senior leaders, develop their confidence and ensure their voices are heard:



- The **“My Tomorrow & Child Friend Coventry”** sessions have continued successfully throughout 2025-26. The campaign has provided young people with opportunities to develop their leadership and presentation skills. Various sessions led by His Honour Judge Matthew Walsh (Crown Court Judge) provided the Young Leaders with a platform to engage with senior local leaders to discuss challenges and identify opportunities to improve opportunities for young people in the community. The campaign has shaped a positive message about the role young people have in the future of the city.
- The Young Leaders also led on Change Makers sessions with the Faith Alliance in Walsall and Birmingham to develop the skills of young leaders within the alliance. The programme focused on leadership development, the upstander approach and personal growth, to equip young people with the confidence and tools to lead and make a positive impact in their communities.

- The Young Leaders collaborated with Ernst and Young (EY) to co-design an EY Charity and form part of the Youth Advisory Board. The young leaders have thrived in this environment and learned a myriad of new skills, supported by senior leaders within EY.

16 young leaders planned and delivered a successful, engaging and empowering session to an audience of sector professionals at the VRP Annual Conference in February 2026. This showcased their organisational and leadership skills, and ability to communicate effectively in a formal setting.

These are just a few examples of how children, young people, partners, professionals, and communities have embraced My Tomorrow, using the concept as a platform to give children and young people access to opportunities to make their voices heard. This is at the heart of My Tomorrow, and we are so grateful to the commitment that has been shown to grow the movement, building a counter-narrative around the vibrancy, positivity, creativity and potential of our children and young people. We look forward to sharing the key highlights of the My Tomorrow campaign and the continued success of the Young Leaders throughout the next financial year.

Change Makers

Change Makers – our flagship upstander programme, alongside the My Tomorrow campaign has continued to excel this year. Led by the VRP Education Team, using a ‘train the trainer model’, Change Makers offers an initial 6 sessions which can be delivered in schools, youth and community settings, and explores the upstander approach, which seeks to empower and equip young people with skills and confidence to use their voice for positive change and stand up to violence. **16 train-the-trainer** sessions have been delivered to **77** professionals across the region this year, with further bookings confirmed for 2026-27. You can see the programme in action [here](#).

As part of the Change Makers programme, the Young Leaders delivered sessions on key issues affecting young people, including online safety, peer pressure, and crime. **Over 400 young people** have engaged in the Change Makers workshops led by the Young Leaders this year. The workshops were delivered across a range of settings such as youth groups, faith organisations, and sports venues to ensure the programme remained accessible and inclusive.

Our team of Young Leaders are equipped to deliver these sessions to youth groups, professionals, and community leaders across the West Midlands, supported by the VRP and the Positive Youth Foundation. To arrange a session, you can contact: info@positiveyouthfoundation.org

Faith and Community Engagement

The West Midlands Faith Alliance plays a key role in fostering collaboration between different faith communities and public services in the West Midlands. The Faith Alliance membership increased to **485** members this year, demonstrating the breadth and strength of the partnership. The regional multi-faith network is dedicated to equipping and empowering faith communities to take an active, leadership role in violence prevention through bespoke training programmes, strategic prevention planning, and educational webinars.

The Faith Alliance developed a Community Engagement Strategy to increase the involvement of faith communities in violence reduction and alongside that, a strategic plan has been developed to connect with places of worship, using data to highlight areas where engagement is limited. Part of this work includes a series of visits to places of worship to introduce the role of the Faith Alliance, connect more widely with faith communities, and equip the faith sector with an understanding of the role they can play in violence reduction. We will continue to provide an update on the progress of the Faith Alliance strategic plan in the next highlight report.

We launched our Faith Alliance Webinar in July 2025, which is designed to equip faith communities with a better understanding of the role they can play in violence reduction. The webinars have been well attended, with **over 60** faith community members trained. Since the launch of the first webinar, the Faith Alliance membership has positively increased, meaning the faith sector has greater access to the tools and resources available to effectively support their communities. To register for the next Faith Alliance webinar please visit our [Eventbrite](#) page.

We have worked with various faith organisations this year to develop bespoke prevention plans. Part of this work included delivering the VRP universal offer and raising awareness of how places of worship can deliver youth activities and provide a safe space for young people. We supported two local organisations to develop a Faith Alliance Youth Space. Both spaces are now well established and provided **277** young people a safe space to connect with a positive role model, access resources which support their development, and engage in skills development opportunities.

Local Placed Based Working

VRP funding has continued to support the delivery of local violence prevention and reduction plans across the region, as well as providing resources to help local partners to respond to incidents of serious violence when they occur. VRP Navigators continue to support local areas to deliver their violence prevention and reduction plans and support partnership responses to serious incidents of violence and/or emerging patterns and trends.

£245,000 has been allocated to help local areas plan and implement initiatives that aim to reduce the risk of summer violence spikes and sustain activity through the summer and October half-term. This year we saw a range of youth work, mentoring and sports activities delivered, which all played a role in suppressing spikes across the holiday period.

Place based funded projects provided vital support and intervention to **34,359** children and young people this year. Local commissioned providers delivered training to **1189** professionals to strengthen their work in reducing and preventing violence.

Highlights include:

Birmingham

- **1249** children and young people benefitted from VRP funded interventions.
- The EMPOWERU Serious Youth Violence Hub provided a new referral pathway for children and young people experiencing extra-familial harm and violence.
- VRP funded Clinical Psychologist is now effectively embedded within the SYV hub, to ensure that the complex and layered needs of young people are identified and responded to effectively and delivered in a clinically safe way. **131 young people** accessed Phoenix Psychology's clinical supervision through the SYV Hub.
- The Children's Trust's NRM Devolved Decision-Making Pilot reached over **500** young people. The multi-agency programme provides bespoke support for victims of child exploitation and modern slavery.

Home Office Hyperlocal Knife Crime Initiative (Birmingham City Centre)

The VRP supported the Birmingham Violence Reduction Board to develop the Home Office hyperlocal knife crime initiative in the City Centre. Delivery of various interventions commenced in October 2025. The activities formed part of a wider national pilot programme tackling violence, using data to identify areas with higher levels of knife crime and providing funding to support a targeted response.

The project has resulted in increased police patrols, knife arches to detect those carrying weapons, better lighting, CCTV and youth workers based on the youth bus. An evaluation report is currently being produced and will be shared in the next highlight report.



Coventry

- Established the Coventry and Warwickshire Boys Impact Hub with local youth organisations, charities, West Midlands Police and local authority leads. The Hub is a cross-sector initiative committed to improving life chances for disadvantaged boys - particularly those eligible for Free School Meals.
- Expanded youth outreach provision during summer reached **over 1,200** new young people.
- St Giles Trust supported **500** new young people through their "SOS+" mentoring programme relating to knife crime awareness, exploitation and decision making.
- Over **300** new young people engaged with early years intervention "Tizz Time," which provides a protective behaviours programme in nurseries. You can read more about the project [here](#):
- Supported West Midlands Police to establish and coordinate the Coventry Partnership Tactical Board to support violence reduction which reports to the Coventry's Strategic Violence Board.
- Explored new weapon surrender bin locations.
- The Step Together programme engaged with **3000** young people this year. The VRP continue to manage the programme across the City Centre and Hillfields. Regular meetings have taken place with relevant schools, Sky Blues in the Community (the provider), Coventry City Council, and the Police to ensure the programme continues to meet local needs in terms of keeping children safe during their journey home from school.

Dudley

- **701** children and young people benefitted from VRP funded interventions.

- CSKN and Cranstoun Here 4 YOUth delivered mentoring interventions, including lived experience focused interventions to young people at risk of violence/exploitation. **87** young people benefited from intensive interventions this year.
- Phase Trust delivered consultation sessions to over **100** practitioners to equip them with the skills and knowledge to respond thoughtfully and proportionately to concerns relating to harmful sexual behaviours (HSB).
- Worked with Public Health and Dudley Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to re-establish the local Violence Prevention Group, known as the Dudley Violence Prevention Partnership.
- Explored new weapon surrender bin locations.

Sandwell

- **3793** children and young people engaged in VRP funded interventions. These services included sport activities, detached youth work, mentoring, and diversionary activities.
- Interventions during half-term reached **359** children and young people. Sandwell Council deployed youth workers across the 6 towns in the borough and launched the Sandwell Safe Spaces Youth Bus. The youth bus provided a visible and welcoming base for informal engagement in community locations.
- Explored new weapon surrender bin locations.



Solihull

- VRP funded interventions reached **3869** children and young people. These services included sport activities, detached youth work, mentoring, and diversionary activities.
- Supported local organisations to apply for funding to sustain the provision of interventions in the Borough.
- Supported the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Chelmsley Wood to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- Explored new weapon surrender bin locations.

Walsall

- **4953** young people engaged in VRP funded mentoring and outreach sessions.
- Supported the sustainability of projects through identification of alternative funding streams.
- Mapped faith spaces across Walsall to identify gaps and pursued opportunities to establish stronger engagement in those areas identified.
- Explored new weapon surrender bin locations.
- Promoted the VRP universal training offer and developed a bespoke training plan for professionals and young people.

Wolverhampton

- **2452** children and young people benefitted from VRP funded interventions.
- Collaborated with local authority partners to develop the Wolverhampton Youth Prevention Workplan. The workplan established shared priorities and strengthened multi-agency partnership working.
- Worked in partnership with Wolverhampton Football Foundation to embed the Change Makers programme throughout their service.
- Detached youth outreach delivered by The Wolves Foundation engaged directly with over **150** young people, offering support, guidance, and positive diversion throughout half term and summer.
- Explored new weapon surrender bin locations.
- Through the My Tomorrow campaign, we have coordinated regular meetings with the Wolverhampton Youth Prevention Group, providing a forum to discuss a range of relevant issues affecting young people.

Health

- A&E Navigators provided critical interventions to **927** young people who had experienced violence and/or violence related injuries and trained **317** hospital staff to provide violence reduction interventions.
- The VRP Health Delivery Manager delivered the "Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice in Healthcare settings" to over **50** healthcare professionals. The webinar introduces the basics of understanding adversity & trauma, its impacts on health, and begins to explore working in a more trauma informed way in healthcare settings.
- The VRP Clinical lead delivered training to **260** professionals, including trauma informed practice and exploitation awareness sessions to first year resident Doctors, and presented an update on the progress of Paediatric Guidelines to the regional Special Interest Group of named Doctors for Safeguarding.

- Led the SVD strategic & operational groups for health partners; the Strategic Group is a vital forum which encourages collaboration across the health sector to reduce serious youth violence.

Senior Clinical Psychologists from Phoenix Psychology have worked closely with the VRP this year to develop toolkits, resources, and support for local violence reduction boards to streamline pathways and connect young people effectively to mental health support and intervention.

Phoenix Psychology's Clinical Psychologist is now well embedded into the recently established Serious Youth Violence (EMPOWER U) hub in the city, based in Birmingham Children's Trust. The Serious Youth Violence Hub provides a new referral pathway for children and young people experiencing extra-familial harm and violence. Phoenix Psychology support the hub with clinical case formulations and reflective supervision. Over **270** young people received support from Phoenix Psychology this year, through clinical supervisions, psychological case consultations, trauma therapy, neurodevelopmental assessments and pilot interventions. **709** professionals have accessed training delivered by Phoenix Psychology on 'Low Intensity CBT Approaches', 'Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)', 'Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)' and 'Speech and Language Disorders and Learning Disabilities'.

Barnardo's supported Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) plans across Sandwell, Solihull and Wolverhampton local authority, which included a TIP train-the-trainer programme. Barnardo's trained **22** local authority professionals in Sandwell, **20** professionals in **Wolverhampton** and **25** professionals in Solihull. Barnardo's also launched several new Trauma Informed online training programmes. **77 professionals** who have an existing understanding of trauma informed theories attended the "Beyond Trauma Theory" which explored the central role of relationship-based practice, relational styles and biases.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG):

169 professionals attended the "Introduction to Ending Male Violence Against Women and Girls" (EMVAWG) webinar this year. The webinar is regularly reviewed and refreshed to ensure that it reflects emerging government policy, best practice, and regional developments. We have adapted our VAWG webinar to include topics such as positive masculinity, online influencers, the 'manosphere' and ways to work constructively with boys. Feedback remains positive with participants expressing they are learning new things and finding the content useful.

The VRP, together with Wolverhampton Local Authority, commissioned a female specific exploitation service - Expect Respect. Credible, lived experience caseworkers supported young females under the age of 18, on the periphery of/or entrenched in harm from Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), gang associations, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and sexual violence. **112** young females have been referred to the service. The programme has increased their ability to engage in healthy relationships and helped female children establish a positive path forward deterring them away from vulnerability and increased risk.

Sport:

Street Games have provided strategic guidance to the development of sport-based interventions aligned to Young Futures Prevention Panel (YFPP) programmes in Sandwell, Wolverhampton, and Walsall. Through a combination of network sessions and structured workshops, Street Games have supported providers to build competency and strengthen understanding around the intentional delivery of evidence-based sport interventions.

169 professionals attended various awareness sessions delivered by Street Games on the following topics:

- Using Sport to Enhance Positive Outcomes for Young people in the Context of Serious Youth Violence - awareness workshop
- Using the WM sport and violence dashboard to support intervention design and sustainability - awareness workshop
- The Impact of Sport on Crime and ASB - Training course Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) & Trauma Informed Practice Training in Doorstep Sport - Training course

Street Games have supported hyperlocal provision aligned to the HEX programme in Birmingham. **295** young people engaged in diversionary activity delivered by Street Games across the Christmas and February holiday periods. The interventions gathered youth voice insight, explored motivations for travelling into the city centre and identified what young people consider to be high quality and relevant provision.

Criminal Justice and Exploitation:

Criminal Justice

The VRP Criminal Justice work includes a variety of commissioned projects and interventions that are in the community, police custody, and prisons. The interventions target young people across the region who may be on the periphery or entrenched in exploitation, serious youth violence, and/or the criminal justice system.

In this financial year, criminal justice related/based interventions have reached:

- Over **1325 children** and young people under 24
- Over **129 young people** over 25
- Over **320** professionals, trained on a variety of topics, including (but not limited to) the impacts of parental imprisonment.

You can read more about the impact of VRP criminal justice based interventions [here](#):

Exploitation

Through the Exploitation workstream, the team has worked closely with partnerships in local exploitation hubs and key stakeholders to ensure that there is an effective joined up approach to preventing, identifying, and responding to children, young people, and adults at risk of or experiencing exploitation.

The Exploitation Screening Tool language pilot has made significant progress this year. Facilitated by Phoenix Psychology, the aim of the pilot was to influence and change risk categories used in local screening tools, encouraging the move away from high/medium/low risk. The proposed language which we encouraged local areas to use is entrenched; targeted; and vulnerable. Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Coventry and Birmingham have now moved away from the use of High/Medium/Low risk categories. We will continue to engage with local areas to influence and encourage them to regularly review their screening tools.

Weapon Surrender Bins:

As part of the Police and Crime Commissioner's commitment to tackle and prevent knife crime across the West Midlands, the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) is leading on the installation of a further **30** bins over the next three years, in addition to the existing bins already in situ across the region.

Weapon surrender bins provide an opportunity for anyone to deposit knives and other harmful items safely and anonymously. Since April 2025, over **3000** weapons have been surrendered across the region.

We have worked closely with the 7 local authority violence prevention boards (or equivalent) to identify new locations to install weapon surrender bins. This year we have installed two new weapon surrender bins in Birmingham and Sandwell. We are in the final stages of progressing permissions with relevant landowners and West Midlands Police for a further six weapon surrender bins across the West Midlands. A further update on new installations will be shared in our next report.

We will continue to work with local violence prevention leads and West Midlands Police to identify new areas to install weapon surrender bins throughout the next financial year.

A map of the OPCC commissioned weapon surrender bins in your local area can be found [here](#).

When a new weapon surrender bin is launched, the VRP and OPCC will update via our socials and [webpage](#):

If you have any queries or requests relating to weapon surrender bins, please email vrp@westmidlands.police.uk

Working in Partnership with West Midlands Police (WMP)

The Violence Reduction Partnership and West Midlands Police continue to work closely together to strengthen our individual and collective responses to preventing violence. Police serious youth violence data is regularly shared within the wider strategic partnership to ensure a collective understanding of patterns and trends and to support a multi-agency response.

We have worked with West Midlands Police to provide a bespoke package of support to any young person under the age of 18 who has carried a knife twice or more in a 12-month period, identified as a habitual knife carrier. Where consent is obtained, up to £2,000 per person is provided for support which includes mentoring and diversionary activity. **29** young



people have received bespoke mentoring and support this year. You can read more about Habitual Knife Carrier's and police survey data on knife crime [here](#).

Barnardo's supported the implementation of the West Midlands Police Trauma Informed Strategy and successfully delivered trauma informed training to various West Midlands Police departments including Force Contact, the Firearms Unit and the Public Protection Unit (PPU). Barnardo's delivered 13 trauma aware policing sessions to **286** WMP officers this year.

Response

The VRP have delivered crucial support to communities when incidents of violence occur and/or when patterns emerge in relation to increasing violence. This year we have funded intensive support for **1137** young people in the West Midlands who have been identified as at risk in relation to violence in their community. Interventions have included detached youth work, mentoring, therapeutic support, youth club services and outreach sessions.

For further information on each of the themes in this briefing, please contact:

- **Localities, sport and community engagement:** Matthew.stone@westmidlands.police.uk
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