

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership

Highlight Report – April – June 2026

Overview:

The **West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP)** is one of twenty Violence Reduction Units (VRU's) across England and Wales funded by the Home Office. Established in 2019, the VRU's lead on capacity building in local places and systems to tackle the root causes of violence. The West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit has evolved into the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), reflecting the significant amount of **collaboration** that exists both **regionally** and **locally** to work together to **tackle violence** affecting young people and communities.

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.

Following Home Office approval of our SVRP Delivery Plan in April 2026, the VRP has continued to commission a range of regional services and provide funding to local violence reduction boards to ensure continuity of support to children and young people most at risk from violence in the West Midlands. We also continue to play a key role in supporting the Young Futures Pilot Prevention Panel (Sandwell) and two Pathfinder Prevention Panels (Walsall and Wolverhampton). We're proud to say that the Violence Reduction Partnership funding has benefitted over **9,000** children and young people during April – June 2026 through both central and local commissioned services.

Serious Youth Violence where a knife is used has continued to reduce with a decrease of 22.89%, compared to the same time last year. This reduction equates to **19 fewer victims of crime**. Since 2022/23 across the West Midlands, we have seen continued reductions in serious youth violence. However, during quarter one 2026/27 we have experienced an increase of 7.10% when compared to the same period last year. The VRP continue to work closely with West Midlands Police to understand and identify the factors which contributed to the increased figures in quarter one. We anticipate the increase in serious youth violence is attributed to seasonal factors, including school holidays, lighter evenings and young people spending more time in public spaces. The VRP Team will work with each of the seven West Midlands local authorities throughout quarter two to develop and deliver a robust summer mitigation plan which will contribute towards suppressing violence spikes across the summer holiday period. We continue to work in collaboration with local authorities to deliver and commission services that keep our communities safe, protect children and young people from harm, build resilience and address the root causes of serious violence.

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, findings from the **Strategic Needs Assessment**, performance data and evidence from literature reviews have informed commissioning conversations and contract requirements for 2026-2027. The Data and Evaluation team have supported commissioned providers to update their Theory of Change and ensured quarterly monitoring templates capture the right level and type of data to understand impact and reach.

In June 2026, we hosted a Research and Evaluation Day, bringing together a range of speakers to share updates on research findings and provide insights into upcoming projects. The event offered a valuable opportunity for research and evaluation professionals to disseminate key findings, recommendations and learning to local violence prevention partners. Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) delivered the findings from their recent community and peer-led research projects, which will inform effective violence reduction practice across a range of priority topic areas. The event facilitated meaningful discussions about key research topics including neurodiversity, online harm and violence fascinated individuals. All VRP analytical reports will be published via our [website](#).

As part of the Home Office's **Knife Crime Concentration Fund (KCCF)**, the Evaluation team have supported West Midlands Police Analysts to develop a set of detailed partnership 'Problem-Oriented Policing' (POP) profiles which will inform local activity in the 22 KCCF areas. The POP profiles will support local violence prevention boards to fully understand the risks and drivers of knife crime in their KCCF areas and to commission the right interventions and responses

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 establishing 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.

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

[Young Futures Prevention Panels \(YPFF\)](#)

The VRP plays a key role in supporting the implementation of the Home Office's Young Futures Pilot and Pathfinder Prevention Panels in the region. 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. The VRP will continue to provide strategic support to the Prevention Panels throughout 2026-27 and to work with local authorities who have not yet established panels to understand opportunities within their systems to develop a similar approach.

Sandwell established their **Pilot Prevention Panel** in October 2025, taking referrals via **West Midlands Police** for children who come into custody two or more times over a period of 12 months where it has resulted in no further action or community resolution. **Walsall** and **Wolverhampton** established their **Pathfinder Prevention Panels** at the same time, taking referrals predominantly from **schools**, focusing on risks such as poor attendance, suspensions and exclusions.

Each Panel established a multi-agency check (or triage), which takes place between the initial 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 or other 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 have received a comprehensive package of support. The panels operate a menu of evidence-informed interventions, targeted positive activities and tailored support aligned to individual needs.

West Midlands Prevention Panels have made considerable progress since the 2025-2026 pilot phase. All panels continue to receive strong multi agency engagement with representation from Youth Services, Children's Services, Local Authority, Family Help, Health and Police.

Further information regarding key highlights from panels during quarter one can be found via our [website](#).

[Knife Crime Concentration Fund \(KCCF\)](#)

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership coordinates the regional and local delivery of the Home Office Knife Crime Concentration Fund (KCCF). The West Midlands has been awarded **£2.77m** to deliver the KCCF programme which focuses on 22 areas across the region. Funding will support targeted hotspot policing alongside a broader package of partnership interventions addressing the root causes of knife crime.

The delivery of this work is embedded into local violence reduction delivery plans and overseen by the relevant local violence reduction delivery board. This ensures that the activity commissioned via the KCCF programme is aligned with and complements other violence reduction activity being delivered in the local area.

VRP and WMP Analysts have worked collaboratively throughout quarter one to develop the first Problem Orientated Policing (POP) plans to inform KCCF activity. Following receipt of the POP plan, each Local Authority, via their local Violence Reduction Board, will develop a multi-agency delivery plan in response to the recommendations. Whilst the POP plans are being drafted, the VRP Director, relevant Local Delivery Manager and Data/Performance Teams are working closely with the local areas to ensure regular updates are shared regarding the progress of the POP plans.

Education, My Tomorrow, and Change Makers:

The VRP continues to directly deliver a range of preventative, evidence-based programmes in schools across the region.

During quarter one, **243** professionals engaged with the VRP webinars which focus on:

- An 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

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.

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

Pol – Ed

The VRP Education Team lead the regional implementation of the [Pol Ed programme](#) - a fully funded platform for schools in the West Midlands. Originally developed by West Yorkshire Police, Pol Ed is an educational programme made up of various phases of intervention, to meet the policing priorities, DfE curriculum framework and Ofsted lines of inquiry in order to keep children safe. It provides children with knowledge and skills that help them stay safe and make positive informed choices through evidence based, engaging, age-appropriate education that equips children with practical safety strategies, fosters resilience, and strengthens partnerships between schools, police, families, and wider communities. Access to the resources is free for all schools and local authorities in the West Midlands.

571 schools in the West Midlands registered to the programme in quarter 1. Teachers and education professionals have accessed over **400** educational resources to support their delivery of workshops. The VRP regularly monitor uptake of the programme in order to ensure it is well understood and accessed across the region.

For any queries about the Pol Ed programme, please contact vrp@westmidlands.police.uk

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. **7,991** young people accessed the **74** workshops delivered this quarter 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 a 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. **60** parents/carers have engaged with the webinar in quarter one 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 commission Phoenix Psychology to deliver a range of work which has included co-ordinating the local implementation of their **Parents Against Grooming and Exploitation** (PAGE) pilot group. This has been introduced 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. The PAGE group will provide a valuable, trauma-informed intervention for parents navigating exploitation-related concerns. An update on delivery will be shared in the next quarterly report.

VRP Sustainability: Support for the Voluntary and Private Sector:

The VRP have continued to work alongside Ernst Young (EY) as part of the VRP Sustainability Plan to ensure the system change activity and delivery of key prevention activity continues with the support of the private sector.

The model seeks to create a central support pool of private sector 'resources' which can be accessed by the community and voluntary sector and the VRP to support local violence prevention work. A number of breakfast meetings have taken place with organisations from the private sector to inform the development of the model, and this work will continue into quarter two, where we will be looking to launch the opportunity to be involved with the hub more widely.

Youth Voice and My Tomorrow

The My Tomorrow and Change Makers programme has continued to make strong progress in quarter one. Positive Youth Foundation successfully recruited a further **12** young leaders to the programme, bringing the total to **36**. They have delivered various sessions within the community which have enabled them to strengthen 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.



A key area for the Change Makers Young Leaders 2026-2027 is ensuring they have access to strategic spaces in their local authority area and have a platform to meaningfully contribute to decision making. They attended the Birmingham Advisory Board which involved working alongside local authority leads and community organisations to identify local priorities and explore opportunities to develop youth-led social action projects. This opportunity has allowed Young Leaders to move from simply discussing change to actively creating it, whilst also building skills in project planning, partnership working, consultation, communication and community leadership.

Through this work, the Young Leaders have contributed their views, experiences and ideas directly into conversations with education professionals and senior decision-makers. The Young Leaders have shaped discussions, challenged thinking and ensured that their voice remains central to the development of local work. This has provided a valuable opportunity for leaders to understand how strategic decisions are made, while also building their confidence to contribute within professional spaces alongside Headteachers, education providers and wider partners.

This is just one example of how children, young people, partners, professionals, and communities have embraced My Tomorrow, using the concept to give children and young people a platform to have 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 will be focusing over the next few months on re-energising the My Tomorrow Campaign to make sure it continues to be front and centre of the work we do alongside our young people locally and regionally.

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. **485** members are engaged with the Faith Alliance, 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.

Recent discussions have taken place to ensure that the work of the Faith Alliance is targeted and having an impact. Membership of the Faith Alliance Executive is being reviewed and refreshed to ensure it is representative and work is taking place to focus the work of the Faith Alliance into Knife Crime Concentration Funded (KCCF) areas in Birmingham. This will enable our work with places of worship, faith spaces and faith leaders to be part of a bigger violence prevention plan developed through the KCCF programme.

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.

Due to late notification of funding from the Home Office and the introduction of a requirement for local delivery plans to be signed off by the Home Office, local areas have been unable to mobilise their delivery plans during quarter one. We will share a more comprehensive summary of local placed based working across the 7 local authorities in the next highlight report.

Despite Home Office funding delays, place based funded projects have continued to provide vital support and interventions to **853** children and young people during quarter one. Local commissioned providers delivered training to **60** professionals to strengthen their work in reducing and preventing violence.

Key highlights from local delivery include:

- Coventry City Council worked closely with the Guardian Ballers to deliver detached outreach sessions. The youth workers engaged **71** young people across the City during May half term.
- Coventry's mentoring offer has mobilised successfully, with two mentoring teams now established in the local authority and the Coventry Local Policing Prevention Hub.
- **45 professionals** attended workforce development training at the Coventry Boys and Girls Club. Keynote speakers delivered sessions on youth work strategies and education psychology.
- **609** young people in Wolverhampton engaged in positive sports-based activities through the Wolves Foundation "Your Space" programme.
- Wolverhampton's Detached Youth Outreach team supported **100** young people this quarter and connected them to local interventions and appropriate support services including diversionary activities, education, training and wellbeing provision. The intervention aims to reduce anti-social behaviour by engaging with young people, building relationships with trusted adults, and offering support and guidance at key times.
- **12 young people** accessed accredited learning pathways, mentoring and performance opportunities through Solihull's "Music Project" - a music-led diversionary programme aimed at engaging young people who are at risk of anti-social behaviour, gang involvement and reoffending. The programme uses music as a vehicle for engagement, helping young people who may be resistant to traditional interventions to build positive relationships with professionals and access wider support services.
- The Smiths Wood Youth Provision programme engaged **88 young people** in and provided a safe and supportive space for young people to build confidence, improve wellbeing and develop social skills. The programme includes interventions focused on physical activity and sports-based approaches to develop leadership, positive relationships and conflict resolution techniques.

£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 school half-term. Local areas have developed summer mitigation plans. Each of the local authorities will commission a range of interventions including youth work, mentoring and sports activities, which will contribute towards suppressing violence spikes across the summer holiday period. The impact of local commissioned summer mitigation intervention will be shared in the quarter two highlight report.

Sport:

The VRP team have engaged with the three active partnerships across the region and agreed to collaborate with them around the development of a workforce development plan which will further support those working in the sports sector in understanding the role they can play in violence prevention. We are in the process of agreeing the contents of the workforce development plan which will be rolled out over the remainder of the year including to those delivering in local communities in grass roots sport. We will also be seeking to understand how this work can broaden to include the role of arts and culture.

Health

The VRP recognises the critical role of hospital services in contributing to preventing and reducing violence and has been commissioning services into Emergency Departments (EDs) for a number of years.

In response to evaluation findings and learning from the previous year, the VRP Hospital Navigator service introduced a revised delivery model during quarter one. The service has transitioned to a primarily community-based model whilst

maintaining some targeted in-reach within West Midlands hospitals. The in-reach element applies specifically to children and young people (CYP) who are admitted to hospital and still receiving treatment; in these cases, a live referral is made, and a hospital-linked mentor will respond to provide real-time engagement. The quarter one figures reflect a period of transition as the providers implemented the revised delivery model as of June 2026. We will share a more comprehensive update in the next highlight report, when the new model will have been fully embedded.

- **240 young people** who had experienced violence and/or violence related injuries were referred to the A&E Navigator programme in quarter one. Referrals were received from Coventry Hospital, Walsall Manor, Midlands Metropolitan, Russell's Hall and New Cross Hospital.
- VRP Clinical Lead, Dr Katie Wright led monthly liaison meetings with Social Care and Exploitation hubs to gauge how new systems are working and areas for improvement, including streamlining communication from Health referrers.
- Launched and concluded a successful tender process, with Oasis Community Partnership appointed to deliver the Hospital and Community Mentoring Service in Birmingham. Further details about the implementation of the service will be shared in the next highlight report.
- Dr Katie Wright delivered training to **100 professionals** at the RCEM National conference on the importance of sharing case reports to enhance learning, build a research base and change public health policy.
- Dr Katie Wright continued to build the confidence and competence of frontline health professionals who often have contact with individuals at an early stage in the risk pathway, which supports the early identification of risk, vulnerability and emerging trends in serious violence.

Senior Clinical Psychologists from Phoenix Psychology have continued to work closely with the VRP to provide 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 Birmingham Serious Youth Violence (EMPOWER U) hub based in Birmingham Children's Trust. The Hub provides a 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. **39** young people have received support from specialist mental health practitioners this quarter, through clinical supervision, psychological case consultations, trauma therapy, neurodevelopmental assessments and pilot interventions.

Exploitation

The VRP 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 establishment of The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduces new offences, new civil orders, and new enforcement powers directly relevant to exploitation, cuckooing, trafficking-related behaviours, and safeguarding. The VRP are coordinating regional implementation of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 through our regional Exploitation Board

Criminal Justice

The VRP Criminal Justice work includes a variety of commissioned projects and interventions that 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.

The VRP commission Bringing Hope and Phoenix United to deliver targeted support for young people in Birmingham who are leaving the secure estate with resettlement needs. Bringing Hope and Phoenix United CIC provide pre-release support, intensive post-release support and resettlement service for young people who are impacted by serious youth violence, exploitation, or gang-related harm. Both providers are well embedded into the Birmingham Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Hub. This delivery model aims to strengthen referral pathways between local exploitation partners and our commissioned services.

The revised St Giles Trust Custody Navigator model is a community-based service across the West Midlands, with referrals received directly from the seven local authority exploitation meetings and the seven West Midlands Police Custody suites (Oldbury, Perry Barr, Bloxwich, Bourneville, Stetchford, Willenhall and Wolverhampton). The service supports young people who have been recently arrested for serious youth violence. Community referrals are triggered by local authority exploitation leads or via presentation at West Midlands Police custody suites.

The quarter one figures reflect a period of transition as St Giles Trust implemented a revised delivery model as of June 2026. Following evaluation recommendations, the St Giles Trust mentors have transitioned from supporting young people in

custody suites to solely community-based settings. We will share a more comprehensive update in the next highlight report, when the new model will have been fully embedded.

Due to the revised delivery model and delays in implementation, numbers during quarter one are lower than anticipated although plans are in place to improve this position. Criminal justice related/based interventions have reached:

- **65 children** and young people under 24
- **33 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](#):

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. We recently 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 eight 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 identified habitual knife carriers, defined as a young person under the age of 18 who has been identified as carrying a knife twice or more in a 12-month period. This is a consent-based programme. **13** young people have received bespoke mentoring and support this year. You can read more about the impact of the programme [here](#):

West Midlands Police have worked closely in partnership with Barnardo's on their journey towards becoming a trauma informed force. Barnardo's are developing a set of sustainable products to ensure West Midlands Police can continue to deliver their Trauma Informed Workforce Strategy. Barnardo's are collaborating with local young leaders to co-design a West Midlands Police Youth Complaints System. Throughout quarter one, young people have contributed to the development of an e-safety record system for stop and search. Progress on the Police Youth Complaints System will be shared in the next highlight report.

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 quarter we have funded intensive support for **10** young people in the West Midlands who have been identified as at risk/vulnerable in relation to violence in their community. Interventions have included **bespoke therapeutic mentoring** and **detached youth workers** to offer reassurance, assist with patrols and add an additional layer of support to the community. We are currently reviewing the way we engage more widely with local

communities and faith leaders following serious incidents to ensure we can mobilise all available support and develop more medium to longer term community led responses.

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

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