



HM Government

# Serious Violence Strategy

April 2018



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# Home Secretary Foreword





I am determined we take action to address serious violence and in particular the recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. I am also very concerned about the unspeakable attacks involving acid

and corrosive substances, as well as the violence and exploitation caused through the spread of county lines as a means by which criminals supply hard drugs.

These crimes are unacceptable and the Government is determined to do all it can to break the deadly cycle of violence that devastates the lives of individuals, families and communities. I am clear that there is no place in society for these horrendous crimes and anyone committing these acts of violence must feel the full force of the law.

That is why we have been leading significant action to tackle knife crime and other forms of serious violence. This includes the action plan to tackle acid attacks I announced in July 2017 and the further measures on offensive and dangerous weapons we have been consulting on.

The Serious Violence Strategy represents a very significant programme of work involving a range of Government Departments and partners, in the public, voluntary and private sectors. We know intervening early can help us catch young people before they go down the wrong path, encouraging them to make positive choices. This strategy stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes and provide young people with the skills and resilience to lead productive lives free from violence.

The strategy supports a new balance between prevention and effective law enforcement. By investing in initiatives such as the new Early Intervention Youth Fund we will help provide critical support for young people to provide them with the tools, support and opportunity to live violence-free lives. It underlines the importance of steering young people away from crime in the first place, whilst ensuring that the police have the tools and support they need to tackle violent crime.

In addition to our focus on early intervention and prevention we are also placing communities and local partnerships at the heart of our approach. I am clear that we cannot arrest our way out of this issue and that tackling serious violence requires a multiple-strand approach involving police, local authorities, health and education partners to name but a few. I am also clear that Police and Crime Commissioners have a pivotal role to play and I want to see them prioritise (within their police and crime plans) and work in partnership to tackle the serious violence that damages communities.

The strategy sets out a new challenge for Community Safety Partnerships and other local partnerships. We will put measures in place to help them respond to serious violence and to make it their mission to tackle this crime and involve communities in doing so.

The changing drugs market is identified as one of the drivers of the recent increase in violent crime. We are therefore taking a range of action to tackle county lines and the misuse of drugs. The Home Office will support a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to take action to tackle county lines and the misery it brings through drugs, violence and exploitation of the vulnerable.

Finally, we will continue to support an effective law enforcement and criminal justice response so that those who commit these offences feel the full force of the law. We are planning new legislation and providing law enforcement with the additional tools they need to disrupt and prevent serious violence. Our support for the police, together with a greater emphasis on early intervention, will address violent crime and help young people to develop the skills and resilience to live happy and productive lives away from violence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber Rudd'.

**Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP**

# Executive Summary



The Government is determined to do all it can to break the deadly cycle of violence that devastates the lives of individuals, families and communities. This strategy sets out how we will respond to serious violence.

The strategy consolidates the range of very important work already being taken forward and renews our ambition to go further, setting out a number of significant new proposals. **We want to make clear that our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but depends on partnerships across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, and victim services.** In particular it needs the support of communities thinking about what they can themselves do to help prevent violent crime happening in the first place and how they can support measures to get young people and young adults involved in positive activities. **Our overarching message is that tackling serious violence is not a law enforcement issue alone. It requires a multiple strand approach involving a range of partners across different sectors.**

The strategy sets out our analysis of the evidence and the trends and drivers of serious violent crime. The evidence shows that while overall crime continues to fall, **homicide, knife crime and gun crime have risen** since 2014 across virtually all police force areas in England and Wales. Robbery has also risen sharply since 2016. These increases have been accompanied by a shift towards younger victims and perpetrators. Most of the violence is also male on male. About half the rise in robbery, knife and gun crime is due to improvements in police recording. For the remainder, drug-related cases seem to be an important driver. Between 2014/15 and 2016/17, homicides where either the victim or suspect were known to be involved in using or dealing illicit drugs increased from 50% to 57%.

**Crack cocaine markets have strong links to serious violence** and evidence suggests crack use is rising in England and Wales

due to a mix of supply and demand factors. Drug-related cases also seem to be one of the driving factors in the homicide increase in the United States. Drug-market violence may also be facilitated and spread to some extent by social media. A small minority are using social media to glamorise gang or drug-selling life, taunt rivals and normalise weapons carrying. There has also been an increase in vulnerable groups susceptible to the related exploitation and/or drug use.

The strategy is framed on four key themes: **tackling county lines and misuse of drugs, early intervention and prevention, supporting communities and partnerships, and an effective law enforcement and criminal justice response.** This strategy represents a step change in the way we think and respond to serious violence, establishing a new balance between prevention and law enforcement.

Given the strong link between drugs and serious violence and the related harm and exploitation from county lines, we have set out the action we will take to tackle this violent and exploitative criminal activity. The Home Office is supporting the development of **a new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre.** We will continue to raise awareness of county lines and the related exploitation, and we will provide funding to support delivery of a new round of Heroin and Crack Action Areas.

Our work on early intervention and prevention is focused on steering young people away from crime and putting in place measures to tackle the root causes. **The Home Office has committed £11 million over the next two years through a new Early Intervention Youth Fund** to provide support to communities for early intervention and prevention with young people. We will **support Redthread to expand** and pilot its Youth Violence Intervention Programme outside London, starting with Nottingham and Birmingham, and to develop its service in major London hospitals. We will also continue to **fund Young People's**

**Advocates** working with gang-affected young women and girls, and exploring whether the model should be expanded. The Home Office will work with the Department for Education and Ofsted to explore what more can be done to support schools in England to respond to potential crime risks and to provide additional support to excluded children.

We need an approach that involves partners across different sectors, including police, local authorities and the private and voluntary sector. Communities and local partnerships will be at the heart of our response. This issue must be understood and owned locally so that all the relevant partners can play their part. We will support local partnerships, **working with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)**, to galvanise the local response to tackling serious violence and ensure that they are reflecting local challenges within their plans. We have launched a **new media campaign raising awareness about the risks of carrying knives**. To help communities tackle knife crime, the Home Office is providing up to **£1 million for the Community Fund** in both 2018/19 and 2019/20, in addition to continuing the **Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) Fund and EGVE review programme**.

We are clear that tackling serious violence is not a law enforcement issue alone and requires partnerships across a range of agencies; however we want to ensure that we are providing the tools to support the law enforcement and criminal justice response. We are planning new legislation to strengthen our controls on knives, corrosive substances and firearms. The Home Office will also work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) to ensure their **PEEL inspections** focus on serious violence and support a **HMICFRS thematic inspection of county lines** in 2018/19. The Home Office has commissioned the Centre for Applied Science and Technology to ensure that the police have the capability to undertake **street testing for corrosives**.

Finally, we will ensure that there is a framework in place to support delivery of the strategy. The Home Office will establish a new cross sector **Serious Violence Taskforce** with key representatives from a range of national, local and delivery partner agencies to oversee delivery and challenge the impact of delivery of the Serious Violence Strategy. The current Inter-Ministerial Group on Gangs will be refocused to oversee and drive delivery of the strategy. The Home Secretary will also hold an **International Violent Crime Symposium** to bring together the international academic community to understand the trends in serious violence in different parts of the world.



# Introduction



The Government is concerned about recent increases in homicides, gun crime and knife crime. These offences – homicides and knife and gun crime – account for around 1% of all recorded crime, but the impact of serious violent crime on society is significant. There is a huge cost to individuals, families and communities through loss of life, and the trauma caused through both the physical and psychological injuries suffered. That is why tackling serious violence is a Government priority.

Crime has fallen rapidly over the last 20 years. Indeed violent crime has seen very substantial reductions since its peak in the mid-1990s as recorded by the Crime Survey for England and Wales, regarded as the most reliable independent survey of crime. Violence with injury in the year ending September 2017 was 40% lower than in the year ending June 2010 and 76% lower than its peak in 1995.

However some types of violent crime recorded by the police have shown increases since late 2014. Some of this increase can be attributed to improvements in how police forces record crime, but some of the increases are thought to be genuine, including a rise in offences involving knives and firearms.

The Government already has significant programmes of work in place to tackle serious violence (and the associated exploitation that often comes with some types of violence). The programmes include: the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) programme which, since January 2016, has been in place supporting communities and local areas to respond and build resilience against both violence and the exploitation that often comes with it; the related work on drug-dealing gangs and county lines, driven by a national working group since November 2016, that is overseeing a key set of actions on enforcement and awareness raising; the acid attacks action plan, announced in July

2017, that we have been delivering and which includes actions to improve policing, support for victims, and work with retailers; our work to tackle knife crime that was set out in the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy published in March 2016 and which includes the voluntary agreement with major retailers on sales of knives, banning zombie knives in August 2016, and support for national weeks of action against knives by police forces under the Operation Sceptre banner.

We have been supporting early intervention and prevention work, often through the voluntary sector, such as youth workers from Redthread who are based in hospital emergency departments and Young People's Advocates, who work with gang affected young women and girls. We have also provided support for local communities working with young people and young adults at risk through the EGVE Fund, the Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) 'Prevent' Local Pilots Fund which supports projects to stop vulnerable individuals from involvement in SOC offending or re-offending, and the anti-knife crime Community Fund.

The Government has also undertaken work to prevent firearms getting into the hands of criminals including: tightening up legislation on firearms in the Policing and Crime Act 2017; making changes to the licensing regimes to make it harder for weapons to move from legal to illegal ownership; establishing the new National Firearms Threats Centre in 2017; and support for joint work by police forces, the National Crime Agency and Border Force on operations to tackle the illegal supply of firearms through our borders.

This strategy details the range of very important work already being taken forward but it also demonstrates our ambition to go further, detailing a number of significant new proposals. We want to make clear that our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but depends also on partnerships across a

number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, victim services and others. In particular it needs the support of communities thinking about what they can themselves do to help prevent violent crime happening in the first place and how they can support measures to get young people and young adults involved in positive activities. **Tackling serious violence is not a law enforcement issue alone and it requires a multiple strand approach involving a range of partners across different sectors. That is the overarching message in this strategy.**

Using the available evidence we outline our analysis of what is happening in serious violent crime, the research on the risk factors that draw young people and young adults into crime, and we have proposed further action under three key themes, early intervention and prevention, supporting communities and local partnerships and effective law enforcement and criminal justice response. Given the significant role of the misuse of drugs and county lines in serious violence we have set out the action we are taking under a separate heading.

- **Tackling County Lines and Misuse of Drugs** – we want to tackle the significant role of drugs and county lines in serious violence. This chapter in the strategy sets out the measures to tackle county lines, which includes the creation of the new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre to strengthen significantly our response to tackle this violent and exploitative form of crime.
- **Early Intervention and Prevention** – we must prevent people from committing serious violence and being drawn into exploitation by building resilience, supporting positive alternatives and providing timely interventions at the “teachable moment”. This chapter in the strategy signals our intention to deliver a step change in early intervention and prevention and outlines proposals for action which support interventions to

help young people and young adults to live positive lives away from violence.

- **Supporting Communities and Local Partnerships** – we want communities and local partnerships to be at the heart of our multiple-strand approach to tackling serious violence. This chapter outlines measures to help communities to build resilience and respond to serious violence. It also sets out measures to support vulnerable individuals, communities and the wider public through encouraging partners to take action to reduce the opportunities for crime to take place, including raising awareness of the key issues and how best to respond.
- **Effective Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Response** – we will pursue those who commit serious violent crime through effective law enforcement and ensuring that the criminal justice system is effective and responsive, especially for victims. This chapter sets out how the Government is planning legislation to support law enforcement and is tightening up the legal framework on firearms ownership to prevent such weapons getting into the hands of criminals.

The scope of the strategy is concerned with specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing. It also includes emerging crime threats faced in some areas of the country such as the use of corrosive substances as a weapon.

Serious violence extends to other forms of serious assault of course. We know that a significant proportion of violence is linked to either domestic abuse or alcohol, but these two important elements are not driving the increases we are seeing in violent crime. That is why they are not the focus of this document. The strategy also does not address specifically sexual abuse, modern slavery or violence against women and girls. They may all involve forms of serious violence but there are already specific strategies addressing those important issues, and so they are not included within the scope of this new strategy.

Over the past few years there has also been a significant programme of work to tackle serious and organised crime including the establishment of the National Crime Agency (NCA) in 2013. This strategy has important links to the Government's work on serious and organised crime, particularly for threats such as county lines and firearms offences. We set out the links through this strategy and are clear that particularly for our prevention and enforcement activity we will seize the opportunities to maximise our work in this area, linking up on implementation to ensure a joined up approach both locally and nationally where relevant. The Drugs Strategy, published in July 2017, also informs the key sections in this strategy on the supply and demand for illegal drugs.

The Serious Violence Strategy is for England and Wales. We recognise that some of the areas of focus are devolved matters in Wales, such as health and education. Similarly the delivery and implementation of some elements of the strategy also vary in Wales due to the devolved landscape of local services, and so we will work with the Welsh Government in taking this strategy forward. We also recognise that some of the issues identified in the strategy also apply to Scotland and Northern Ireland and we will engage closely with their respective Governments.

The strategy includes data, research and measures aimed at young people (under 18s) and young adults (by which we mean a broader group of younger adults up to the age of 25). Where we have referred to data or evidence which relates to differing age groups or where measures are targeted at adults we have attempted to make that clear in the strategy itself.

## Chapter 1

# Trends in serious violence and its drivers

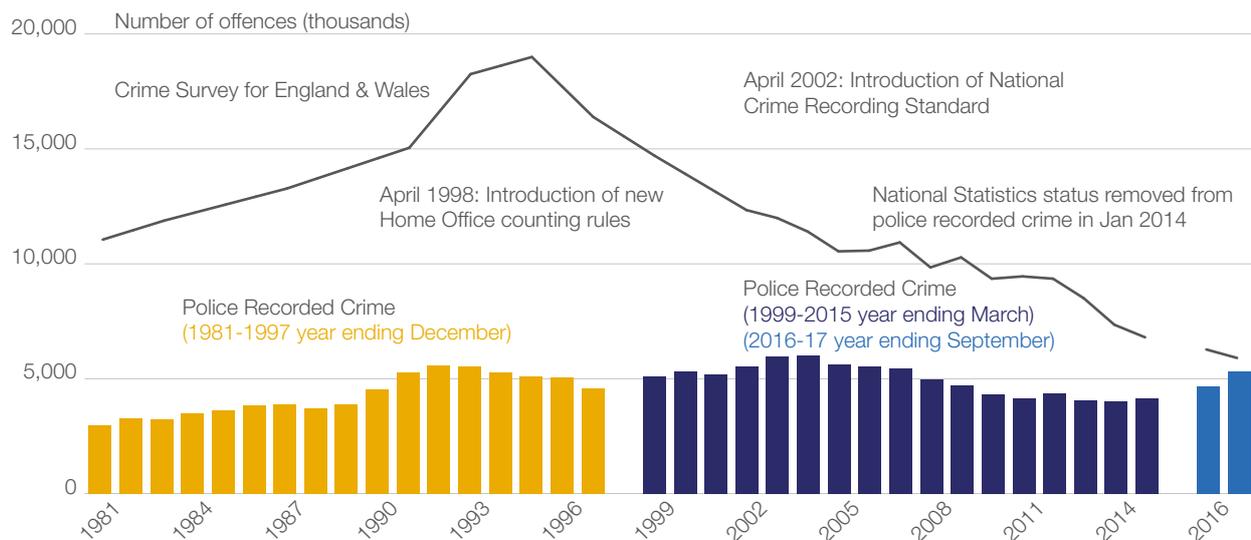


This chapter sets out our thinking on the trends in serious violence and the drivers behind recent increases. It focuses on knife crime, gun crime and homicide. From time to time, the chapter draws on data on robbery offences. A sizeable proportion of robbery offences (21%) involve the use – or the threat of use – of a knife. On the other hand, knife robberies account for 40%

of all offences involving a knife or sharp instrument.

Crime has fallen markedly over the last twenty years, as the graph below shows. One of the remarkable things about the decline, over the period as a whole, is that it has been common to almost all crime types from petty theft to murder.

Figure 1: Trends in Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime, year ending December 1981 to year ending September 2017



Source: Police recorded crime; Crime Survey England and Wales

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
2. CSEW data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1981 to 1999 refer to crimes experienced in the calendar year (January to December) b) from year ending March 2002 onwards the estimates relate to crimes experienced in the 12 months before interview, based on interviews carried out in that financial year (April to March).
3. From the year ending March 2012 onwards, police recorded crime data have included offences from additional sources of fraud data.
4. CSEW data relate to adults aged 16 and over or to households.

Some serious violent offences have been increasing since 2014 – homicide, knife crime, gun crime – but these typically make up just 1% of crime recorded by the police.<sup>1</sup> For the other 99%, the balance of evidence suggests that overall crime has continued to fall, according to the most recent Crime Survey data (to the year ending September 2017).<sup>2</sup> However, crime statistics are complex and easily misunderstood. The complexity is due to two main factors. Firstly, the police have made significant improvements to the way they record crimes<sup>3</sup>; and secondly, victims have increasingly come forward to report previously ‘hidden’ offences like domestic

and sexual abuse.<sup>4</sup> This means that the number of crimes reported to and recorded by the police has risen, irrespective of trends in actual criminality.

To get a better picture we need to turn to alternative sources: the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales, and hospital statistics. While violence has increased by 94% in police figures between 2012/13 and 2016/17, it fell by 26% on the Crime Survey and by 17% in hospital data.<sup>5</sup> However, the hospital data, which are unaffected by the changes to police figures, also show that certain types of serious violence are genuinely rising, and have been since 2014/15.

Police recorded knife crime has risen by 36% between 2013/14 and 2016/17.<sup>6</sup> However, there is evidence that around half of these extra offences are due to improved police recording – across the same period, hospital admissions for assault by sharp object show an increase of only 18%.<sup>7</sup> Offences involving firearms increased by 31% between 2013/14 and 2016/17.

Here too there is evidence that part, but not all, of the increase is due to specific improvements in the recording of firearms offences.<sup>8</sup> Homicide, which includes both murder and manslaughter, and is not affected by police recording changes, has risen by 18% between 2013/14 and 2016/17 (excluding the victims of Hillsborough).<sup>9</sup>

Figure 2: Indexed long-term trends in police recorded homicide, firearms offences and knife crime offences<sup>10</sup>



Table 1: Trends in police recorded homicide, firearms offences and knife crime offences<sup>11</sup>

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Homicide	553	558	533	539	574	628
Knife crime offences (a)	28,393	24,566	23,665	24,178	26,547	32,014
Firearms offences (b)	6,022	5,158	4,856	4,911	5,182	6,375

Source: Police recorded crime

(a) The knife crime data collection is based on use of a knife in selected offences. These are: attempted murder, threats to kill, assault with injury, assault with intent to cause serious harm, robbery, rape and sexual assault.

'Use' means that a victim is stabbed with the knife or sharp instrument, where the skin is pierced. It also includes threats where the victim is convinced they were going to be stabbed and there is evidence of the suspect's intent to create this impression.

(b) Firearms offences includes those where the weapon is either fired, used as a blunt instrument or as a threat.

While these offences make up only 1% of total crime, they are of course among the most harmful to society. So these recent increases are disturbing but they also need to be put into context. Despite the recent increase, the number of homicides in 2016/17 is still 31% lower than its peak in 2003/04<sup>12</sup>, which equates to 276 fewer homicides.<sup>13</sup> Offences involving firearms are 43% lower than at their peak in 2005/06.<sup>14</sup> England and Wales is one of the safest places to live, as the UN's most recent global homicide report makes clear. The rate for the UK is well below the global and European average.<sup>15</sup>

While homicide rates differ across nations, there has been some similarity in the long-term trends. In many developed nations, there have been three recognisable and significant turning points in the last 160 years.<sup>16</sup> In England and Wales more specifically, homicide rates fell markedly from the middle of the nineteenth century until the 1960s. They then turned upwards for around 40 years until 2003/04<sup>17</sup>, when they began falling through to 2014. The same general pattern is found in many other nations, even for the recent increase since 2014 (see table 2). This suggests the possibility that there is a global component to the trend. It is too early to know whether the recent turning point will be of the same long-term importance as previous ones, but it is important we are aware that such a trend might be developing.

Table 2: Homicide trends by country, 2008 to 2014, and 2014 to 2016

	Homicide	
	Change from 2008 – 2014	Change from 2014 – 2016
England & Wales	-22%	16%
US	-14%	22%
Scotland	-37%	3%
Sweden	6%	22%
Canada	-15%	17%
France	-21%	0%
Germany	-4%	15%
Australia	-8%	-5%
Denmark	9%	-16%
Finland	N/A	-23%
Italy	-23%	-16%
Spain	-24%	-10%
Netherlands	-18%	-24%

Source: for England and Wales: Home Office Homicide Index. International data: see endnote 18.

Notes:

1. Percentages shown in the table for Scotland indicate changes in the number of homicide victims between 2008/09 and 2014/15, and between 2014/15 and 2016/17.
2. Homicide Index, Home Office, as at 16 November 2017; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. Excludes 96 victims of Hillsborough and 2 victims of terror attacks in 2016.
3. Changes for France exclude victims of terror attacks. Homicides have also increased in France, although rises commenced more recently than in England & Wales and are not reflected in the 2014-2016 comparison. Following a fall in homicides in France in 2015, there was an 11% increase in 2016 and a further 12% increase in 2017.

In some countries a similar trend is evident for robbery offences – although robbery data are not as consistently measured across countries as homicide. Table 3 illustrates that in common with England and Wales, six of the twelve countries examined also experienced a rise in recorded robbery in 2016.

Table 3: Robbery trends by country, 2008 to 2015, and 2015 to 2016

	Robbery	
	Change from 2008 – 2015	Change from 2015 – 2016
England & Wales	-37%	10%
US	-26%	1%
Scotland	-55%	8%
Sweden	-5%	1%
Canada	-32%	-2%
France	-2%	-5%
Germany	-11%	-4%
Australia	-46%	5%
Denmark	-40%	7%
Finland	-9%	8%
Italy	-24%	-6%
Spain	-10%	-2%
Netherlands	-26%	-7%

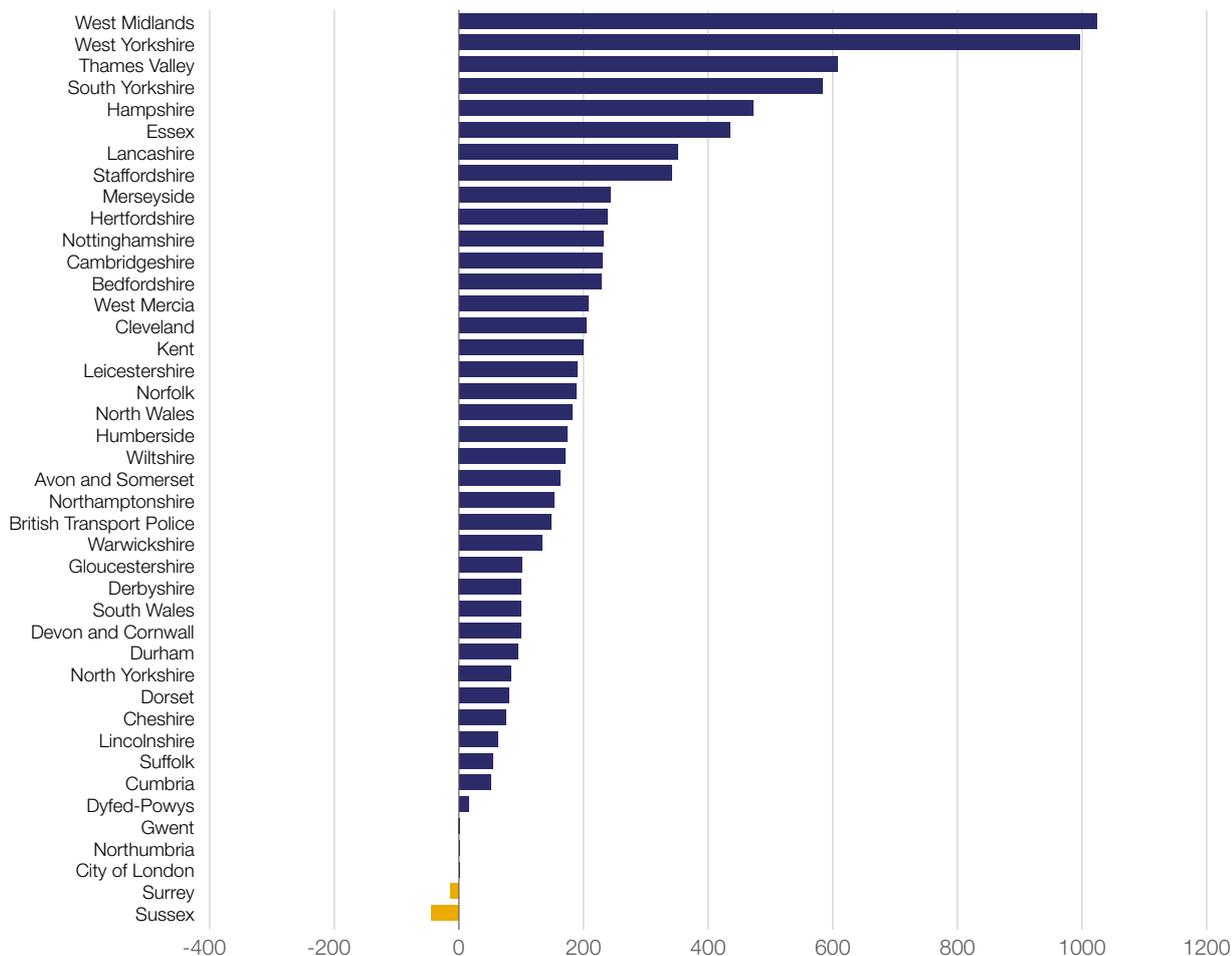
Source: for England and Wales: Home Office police recorded crime statistics, as at 6 October 2017. International data: see endnote 19.

Note:

- For Scotland, percentages shown in the table indicate changes in recorded robbery between 2008/09 and 2015/16, and between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Just as the fall in crime was seen in all areas of England and Wales, this increase in serious violence offences has also occurred nationally across England and Wales. Grouping English police forces together shows an aggregate rise in all four crime types: homicide, gun crime, knife crime and robbery between 2013/14 and 2016/17. The same is true if Welsh forces are aggregated, although the rate of increase is lower than for England. In fact, almost all police forces have seen increases in knife crime since 2014, (see figure 3).<sup>20</sup>

Figure 3: Changes in the volume of crimes involving a knife or sharp instrument from the year to September 2014 to the year to September 2017



Source: Police recorded crime statistics

Note: MPS, not shown, is up by 3,454 offences. At time of publication of this strategy, Greater Manchester Police were reviewing their knife crime figures and these are therefore excluded from this chart

## Drivers of serious violence

Analysis shows that there are many different types of serious violence, and hence that there are likely to be many different drivers. This means that levels and trends in serious violence are likely to reflect upward and downward pressures across a number of different drivers. The Modern Crime Prevention Strategy set out this approach based on six key drivers of crime, which are explored below.<sup>21</sup>

### Drugs and Profit

There is strong evidence that illicit drug markets can drive sudden shifts in serious violence. For example, in the US, many academics believe the crack cocaine epidemic was one of the main reasons for the sharp rise in homicide and robbery through the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>22</sup> Some drugs, like crack cocaine, have been linked to violence directly via their psychoactive effects.<sup>23</sup> In other instances drugs can drive up serious violence indirectly, either by fuelling robberies to service drug dependence, or through violent competition between drug sellers.<sup>24</sup> Grievances in illicit drug markets cannot be settled through legal channels, so participants may settle them violently. This can lead to escalation as dealers seek to portray themselves as excessively violent, and carry weapons, so as not to be cheated in the market. In

one UK study containing interviews with 80 convicted firearms offenders, over half of whom had also committed robbery, the authors concluded that: *“illegal drugs markets represent the single most important theme in relation to the use of illegal firearms – in effect a ‘golden thread’ that runs through all the interviews to some degree.”*<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, for serious violence, drugs and profit (which captures more organised criminality aimed at making a profit over and above an immediate need) are closely linked. Violence can be used as a way of maintaining and increasing profits within drugs markets.<sup>26</sup>

There is good evidence that these dynamics are a factor in the recent rise in serious violence. Table 4 below is based on an analysis of homicides where it was possible to classify the offence as involving a known drug dealer or user - victim or suspect - or where **neither** victim nor suspect had a known drugs link. Between 2014/15 and 2016/17 homicides involving known illicit drug dealers and/or users, as either victims, suspects, or both, increased from 206 to 247. The number of homicides in which neither the victim nor the suspect was a drug user/dealer fell. The share of homicides where either victim or suspect was a drugs user or dealer increased from 50% to 57% (Table 4).

Table 4: Homicides in which either the suspect or victim was a drug user / drug dealer, 2014/15 and 2016/17 (a) (b)

	2014/15		2016/17	
	Number	Col%	Number	Col%
Victim and/or suspect drug user or dealer	206	50	247	57
Neither victim nor suspect had a drugs link	210	50	190	43
<b>Total: homicides where it was possible to classify whether there was a drugs link or not (b)</b>	<b>416</b>		<b>437</b>	
Not known whether drugs link or no suspect identified	90		152	
<b>Total homicides</b>	<b>506</b>		<b>589</b>	

Source: Bespoke analysis of Home Office Homicide Index.

- (a) Homicide Index, Home Office, as at 16 November 2017; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available. Excludes 96 Hillsborough victims, 5 victims of terror attacks and 19 offences initially recorded as corporate manslaughter in 2016/17 and 5 offences initially recorded as corporate manslaughter in 2014/15. Suspect data are based on principal suspect.
- (b) Drugs homicides were offences which met the following conditions:
- the victim was known to be a drug user or dealer; and / or,
  - the suspect was known to be a drug user or dealer.
- If the victim was known to be a drug user or dealer, and the suspect was unknown, the offence was included (as this would meet the criteria of a drugs homicide, regardless of the drugs 'status' of the suspect).
- Homicides were classified as not having a drugs link if neither the suspect nor the victim was known to be user or dealer.<sup>27</sup>

Indicators show that overall prevalence of illicit drug use remains stable, and at a much lower level than in the 1990s or 2000s.<sup>28</sup> But within the overall market there have been important shifts that have probably contributed to the rise in serious violence. One has been the emergence of New Psychoactive Substances like spice which has been linked to serious violence within prisons and homeless communities.<sup>29</sup> Another is the increased involvement of young people in different aspects of the illicit drug market. For example, the latest survey and treatment data suggest that there has been a recent increase in recreational drug use (for example cannabis) among those aged 11-15 years.<sup>30</sup> And while there is no evidence of this age group increasing their use of class A drugs, convictions of young people (10-17s) for class A drug production and possession with intent to supply have increased by 77% between 2012 and 2016, three times the equivalent increase among adult offenders.<sup>31</sup> But perhaps most

important is a rise in crack use since 2014, which is likely to be driven by both supply and demand factors.<sup>32</sup> Columbia, the main source country for cocaine in the UK, has seen coca cultivation surge since 2013, according to a UN report.<sup>33</sup> In line with this, crack-cocaine purity in England rose from 36% in 2013 to 71% in 2016.<sup>34</sup>

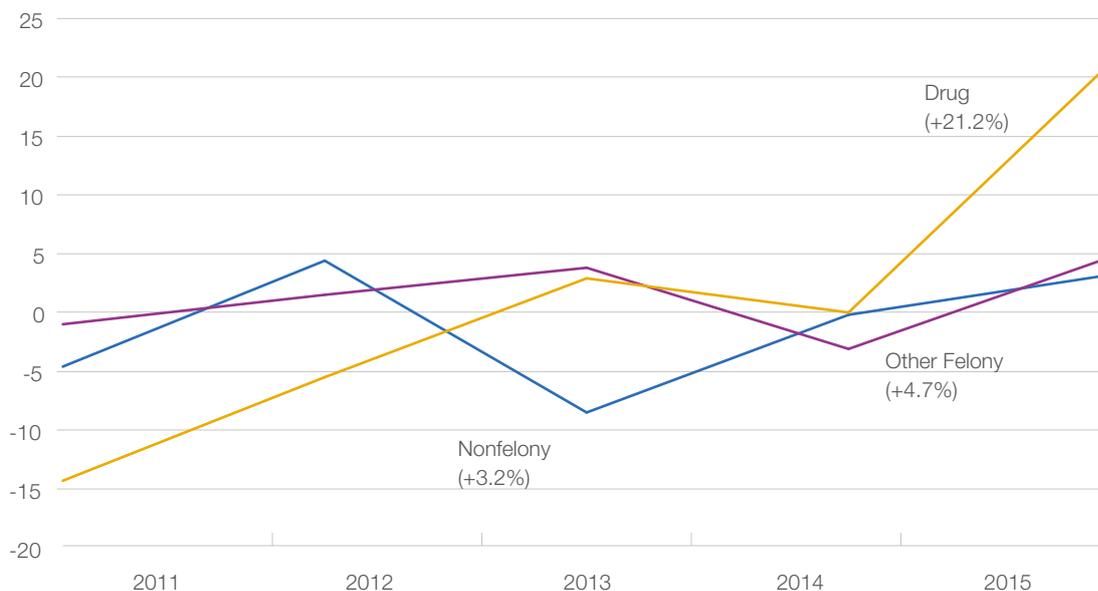
Drug markets may also help to explain the geography of the current increases. One of the most striking findings about the rise in serious violence since 2014 is that it has not been limited to the main metropolitan areas. While forces like Essex experienced a marked rise in recorded knife crime from 2012/13, recorded knife crime in London only began rising in 2016.<sup>35</sup> And although changes in recording practice are likely to have influenced these patterns, increases in knife offences outside the main metropolitan centres are also reflected in NHS 'assault with a sharp object' admissions data.<sup>36</sup>

These patterns may at least be partly due to the phenomenon of county lines in which drug-selling gangs from the major urban areas, like London, Birmingham and Liverpool – possibly driven by excess supply – have sought to exploit markets in other towns and areas. The latest threat assessment on county lines published by the National Crime Agency (NCA) in November 2017 showed that nearly every police force area in England and Wales has been affected to some degree.<sup>37</sup> Of the 44 police forces, 35 mentioned knife crime linked to county lines and 32 forces mentioned gun crime. The NCA report also noted that a majority of forces identified the involvement of vulnerable people – and particularly children – in county lines activity.<sup>38</sup> Academic evidence also shows that county lines

drug-selling gangs are generally much more violent than the local dealers who had controlled the market previously.<sup>39</sup>

Drugs may also be part of the reason for the global similarity in trends. A report produced in 2017 for the US National Institute of Justice suggested that expansion in illicit drug markets brought about by the heroin and synthetic opioid epidemic may be a key contributor to rises in homicides in the US. Using FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports for 2015 the authors identified an increase of around 20% on the previous year in drug related homicides compared to a much smaller (5%) rise in other felony murders (e.g., those connected to robberies or burglaries) and a 3% rise in non-felony murders (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Year to year percentage changes in US homicide circumstances, 2011-2015



Source: Rosenfeld, R., Gaston, S., Spivak, H. and Irazola, S. (2017). Assessing and Responding to the Recent Homicide Rise in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/251067.pdf> [accessed 28/02/2018]

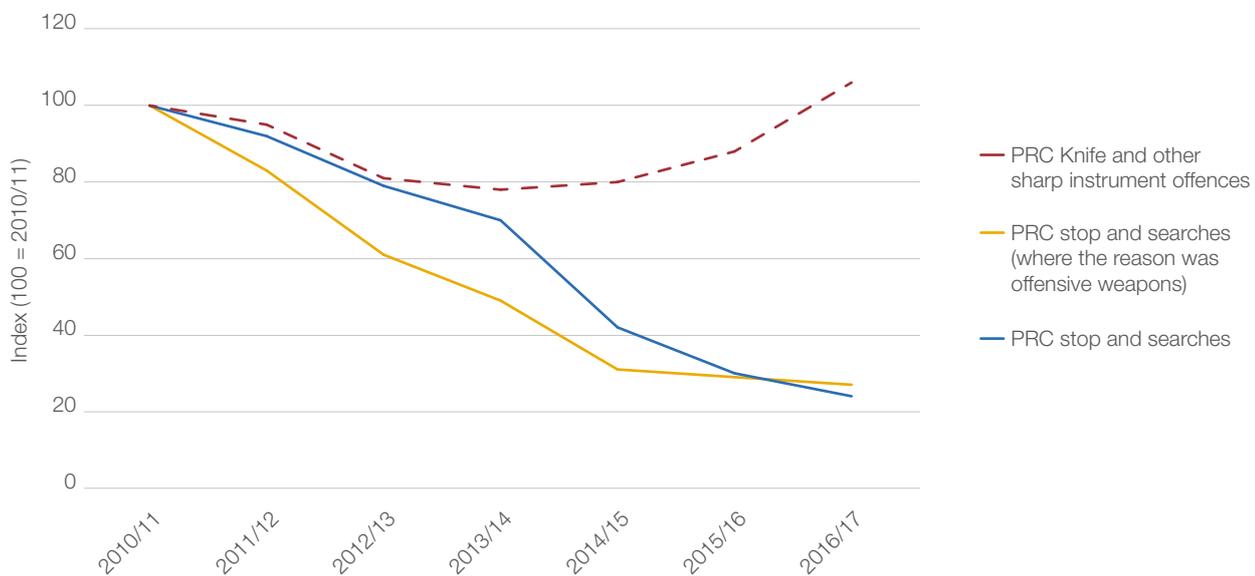
## Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

While there is good evidence that enforcement can play a vital role in tackling these offences, most academics agree that big shifts in crime trends tend to be driven by factors outside of the police's control – like drug trends and markets, changes in housing and vehicle security, and so on.<sup>40</sup>

Available evidence suggests this latest shift in serious violence is no exception. Some have questioned whether the reduction in

the use of stop and search is driving the increase. The data do not support such a conclusion. It is true that numbers of stop and searches have fallen as knife crime, gun crime and homicide have risen (figure 5). But, as the chart also shows, stop and searches fell between 2010/11 and 2013/14, when knife crime was *also* falling.<sup>41</sup> Research by the College of Policing and the Home Office has also shown that changes in the level of stop and search have only minimal effects – at best – on trends in violent crime, even when measured at the local level.<sup>42</sup>

Figure 5: Indexed trends in police recorded knife crimes and stop and searches, 2010/11 - 2016/17

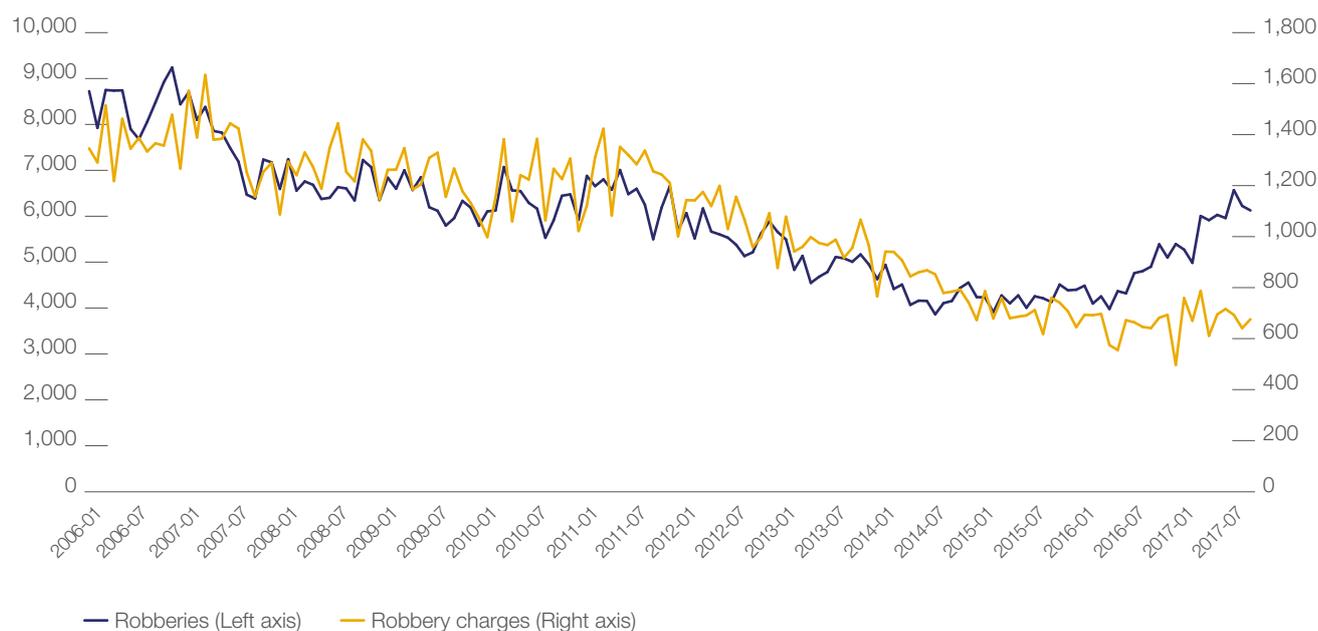


Source: Home Office police recorded crime (PRC) and police powers and procedures statistics

That does not mean that stop and search should not be part of a targeted strategy to turn these trends around. Targeted stop and search can be an important tool when used as part of a wider approach.

The primary focus could be on hot-spot policing and other forms of targeted policing, where there is proven evidence of effectiveness (see box 1). We also know that the certainty of punishment is likely to have a greater impact than its severity.<sup>43</sup> The recent downward trend in arrests and charges for some crimes lessens the certainty of punishment. For example, as robbery offences have risen, the number of robbery charges has remained broadly flat, meaning the percentage of offences resulting in a charge has fallen (see figure 6).<sup>44</sup>

Figure 6: Police recorded robberies: trends in offences and charges/summons, England and Wales



Source: Police recorded crime statistics

## Character

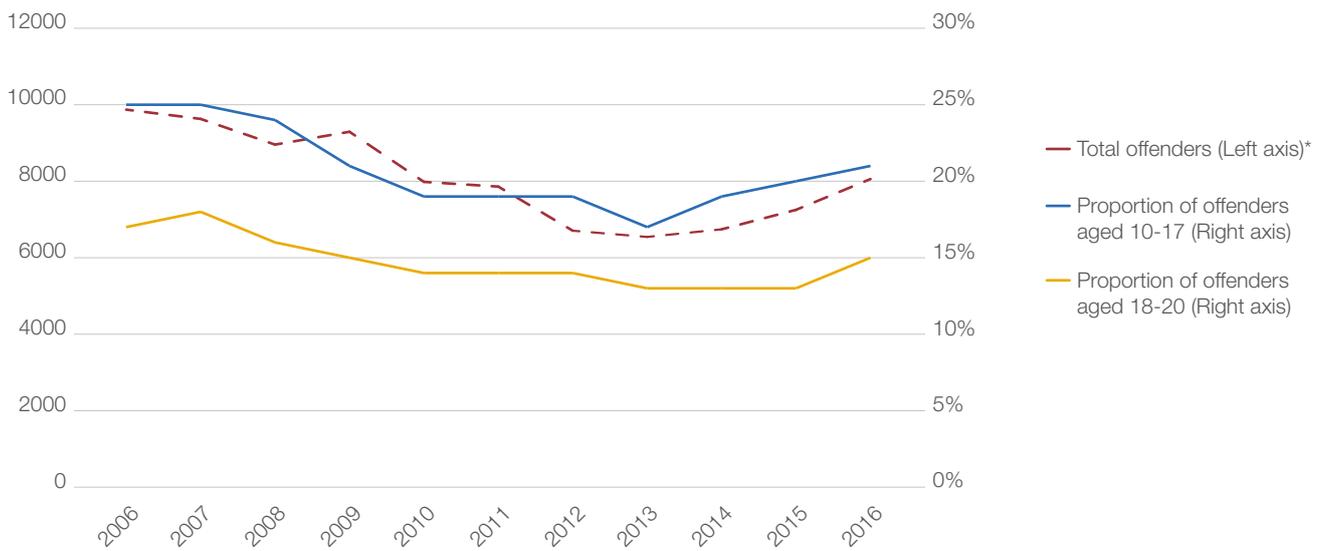
One of the most important findings in criminology is that a small minority of people commit the majority of crimes. Serious violence is no exception. In the Millennium Cohort Study, which tracks a nationally representative sample of individuals born in 2000/01 (making it an important study for understanding the current youth cohort), only 3% of individuals, when asked in the Age 14 'sweep' (2015/16), reported weapon carrying at any time.<sup>45,46</sup> This, along with the research outlined in the next chapter, suggests that while situational factors like alcohol and the degree of provocation are no doubt important, factors to do with personal circumstances whilst growing up can give some individuals a higher propensity for violence.<sup>47</sup>

Generally an inverse relationship might be expected between trends in crime and the average age of offenders. That is, crime increases when the average age of the offending population falls, and crime falls when it goes up. Underlying this pattern is

strong evidence that crime trends tend to be driven by a small proportion of highly prolific individuals whose criminal career tends to decrease via a lengthy 'ageing out' process.<sup>48</sup> For interpreting current trends then, it is important to understand whether conditions have changed in some way that would explain a shift towards younger offenders.

Although data on offenders' ages are limited, various data sources do indicate a shift in that direction. Figure 7 shows trends in cautions and convictions for knife possession. Throughout the last decade, the majority of proven offenders were over, rather than under the age of 21. When the number of offenders was falling, from 2006 to 2013, the proportion of offenders aged 10-17 (juveniles) and aged 18-20 (young adults) also fell. Conversely, when the total number of cautions/convictions turned upwards, the proportion of offenders who were juveniles and young adults both increased.

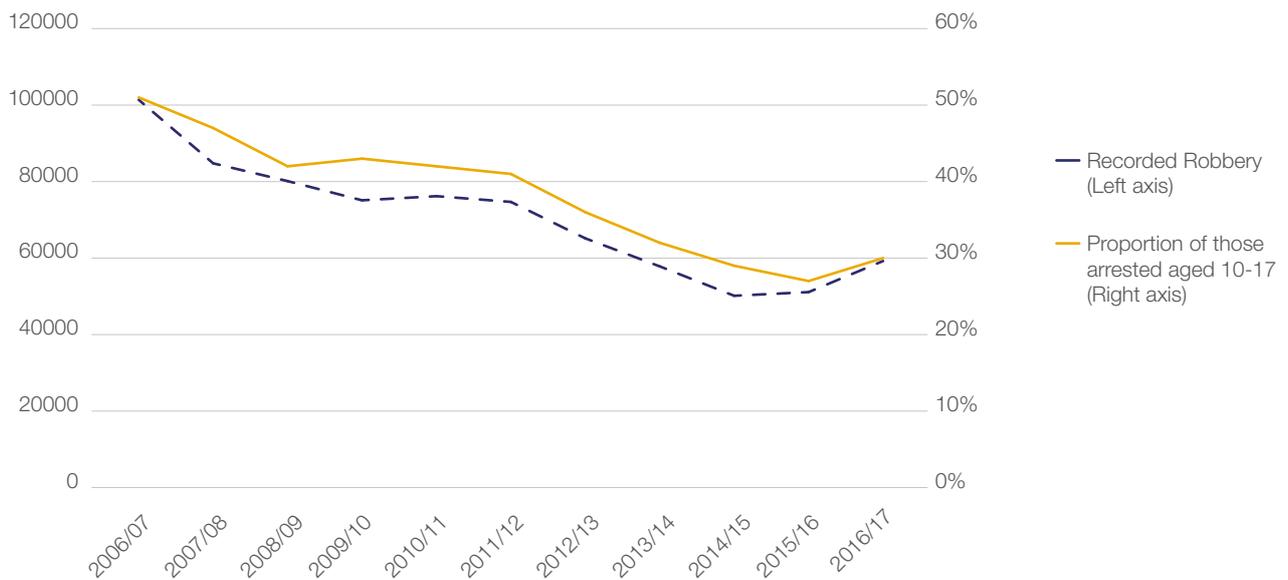
Figure 7: Possession of article with a blade or point – total offenders convicted or receiving a caution, and proportion aged 10-17 and 18-20, England and Wales, 2006 - 2016



\*Total proven offenders include all offenders receiving a caution or conviction in the given year.  
 Source: Ministry of Justice criminal justice statistics outcomes by offence tool.  
 Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2016> [accessed 1 March 2018].

In relation to robbery, figure 8 illustrates that as recorded offences increased between 2015/16 and 2016/17, the proportion of those arrested who were juveniles (aged 10-17) also increased. This was due to a 6% increase in the number of juveniles arrested for robbery in 2016/17, alongside a decline in the number of adult robbery arrestees. The recent upturn in both recorded robbery and juvenile suspects followed an extended decline in recorded robbery since the mid 2000s. During this period, robbery arrestees aged 10-17 fell from half of arrestees in 2006/07, to a low of 27% in 2015/16.

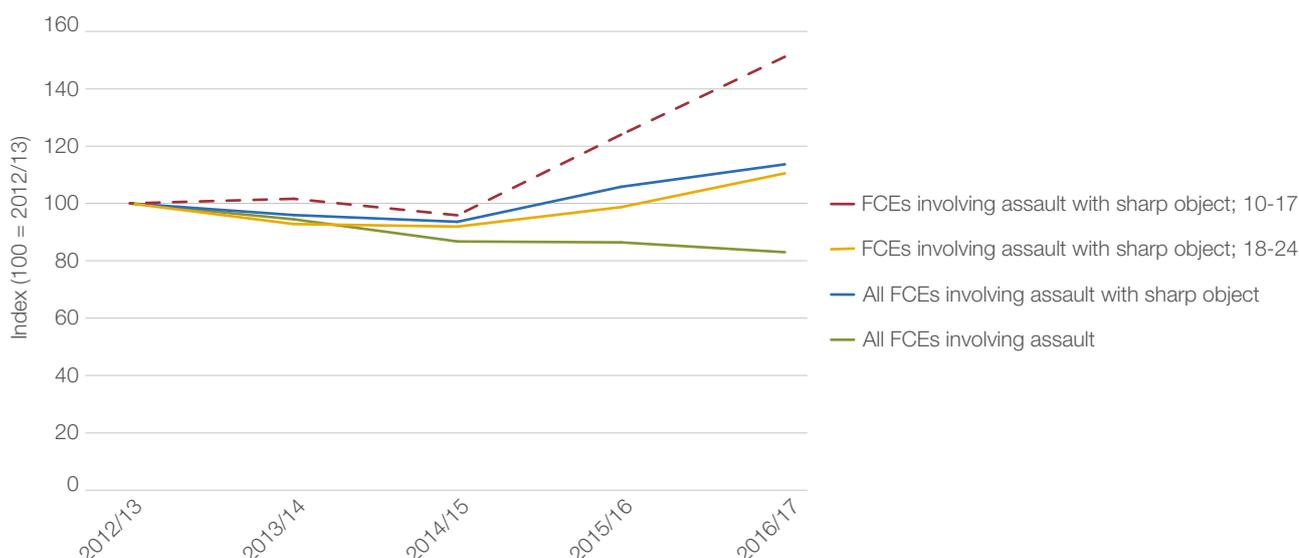
Figure 8: Police recorded robbery – offences and proportion of those arrested aged 10-17, England & Wales, 2006/07 - 2016/17



Source: Crime in England and Wales bulletin tables – Year ending March 2017.  
 Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesbulletintables>;  
 and Arrests open data tables from the Police powers and procedures England and Wales year ending 31 March 2017 second edition.  
 Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2017>

And while we do not have national data on the age of knife crime offenders, inferences on the age profile of victims can be made on the basis of NHS data (Finished Consultant Episodes, FCEs).<sup>49</sup> Victim age can be linked to the age of perpetrators, so the data provide some insight into offending patterns.<sup>50</sup> The NHS data for England on assaults with a sharp object show that, since 2012/13, the number of episodes involving individuals aged under 18 has increased by 51%, up from 313 to 473. For those episodes involving individuals aged 18 and over, the equivalent increase was only 10%. However, the increase in knife assaults takes place against a backdrop of reducing overall episodes for assault.

Figure 9: NHS 'Finished Consultant Episodes' for assault, 2012/13 – 2016/17:  
indexed data for all assaults, and assaults with a sharp object by age, England



Source: NHS Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity. Available from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/article/4144/Hospital-care>

There are very few episodes of assaults with a sharp object involving individuals aged under 10. Between 2012/13 and 2016/17 there were a total of 39 episodes involving individuals aged under 10 compared with 1,792 episodes involving individuals aged 10-17.

For 'any assault' codes X85-Y4 and Y08-Y09 were used. 'Sexual assault by bodily force' (Y05), 'neglect and abandonment' and 'other maltreatment' have been excluded.

These patterns tend not to be repeated for overall crime. In other words, what we are currently not seeing is a wholesale shift towards younger offending. But for serious violence the pattern appears to be different. One reason may be spillover effects from violence associated with the drugs market. Evidence shows that if gangs start carrying more weapons due to drug-selling activity, others may also feel the need to arm themselves for protection.<sup>51</sup> This only escalates violent trends, as it means any conflict is likely to result in a more serious outcome.

Finally it is helpful to look at recent trends in the characteristics of homicide victims. Table 5 shows recent trends in the age of homicide victims. Unlike the NHS episodes data, where the largest increase was for 10-17 year olds, the increase in homicide victims is most marked in the 18-24 and 25-29 age groups, which saw increases of 20% and 26% respectively, 2014/15 – 2016/17.

Table 5: Homicides, by age of victim, 2014/15 to 2016/17

Age band	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	% Change
				2014/15 - 2016/17
Under 10	46	27	48	4
10-17	21	28	23	10
18-24	74	68	89	20
25-29	42	53	53	26
30 and over	323	381	376	16

Source: Bespoke analysis of Home Office Homicide Index, as at 16 November 2017.

Note: Excludes Hillsborough victims, victims of terror attacks and corporate manslaughter offences.

Another issue may be an increase in the number of individuals who are most vulnerable. Data show that numbers of children in care, excluded children and homelessness amongst adults have all risen since 2014.<sup>52</sup> The evidence suggests that being in care and school exclusion are *markers* for increased risk of both victimisation and perpetration and also substance abuse.<sup>53</sup> While this does not mean there is a *causal link* between increases in the most vulnerable and serious violence, these groups possess some of the factors that puts them at higher risk of being exploited for offences such as drug market-related violence.<sup>54</sup>

Data from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) helpfully illustrate the overlap between homicide victims and suspects. Of the 306 suspects named in 134 MPS homicide investigations in 2017, 72% had previously been a victim of crime, and 26% a victim of knife crime. Excluding terrorist incidents and domestic homicides of adults and children, three-quarters of the 108 homicide victims had previously been known to the MPS as a suspect in a criminal investigation.<sup>55</sup>

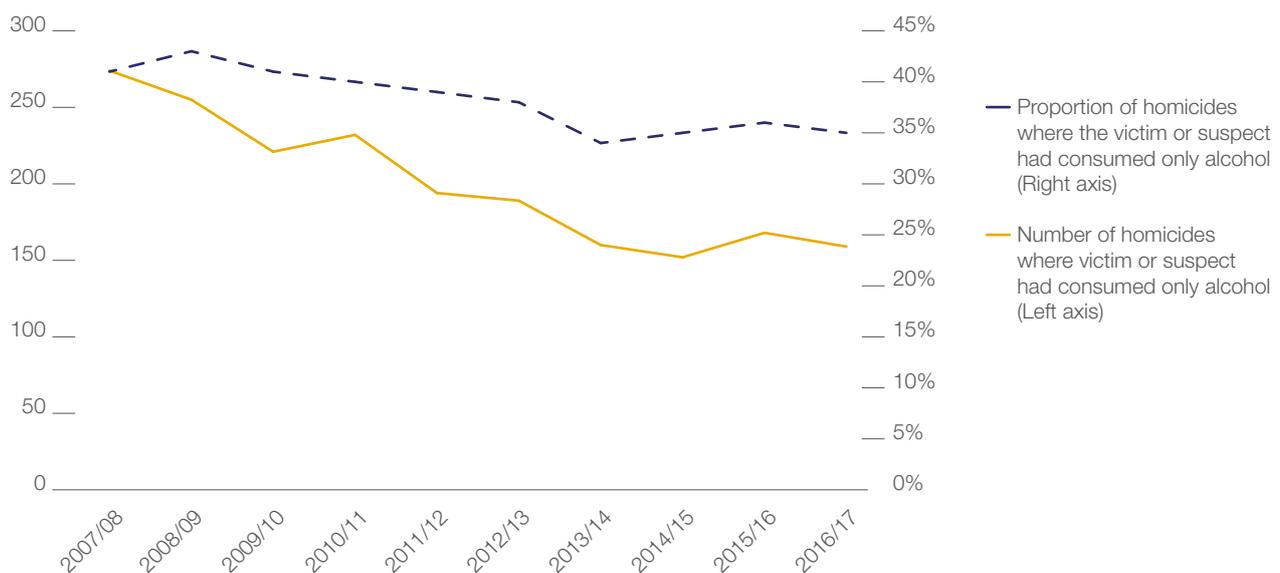
Homicides against women and intimate partners have been relatively stable over the past three years. It is largely male on male cases driving the increase.<sup>56</sup>

## Alcohol

A substantial proportion of serious violence is linked in some way to alcohol. In more than a third of homicides (35%) in 2016/17 either the victim or suspect had consumed alcohol prior to the incident (only alcohol, i.e. excluding alcohol and illicit drugs).<sup>57</sup> Alcohol is also often a factor in domestic abuse. Homicide data reveal that around a quarter of homicides involve victims and suspects who are either intimate partners or ex-partners, or family members.<sup>58</sup>

This means that evidence-based interventions targeting alcohol-related violence and domestic abuse are likely to help bring serious violence levels down. Since 2007/08, the absolute number of homicides where the suspect or victim consumed only alcohol has reduced and they now account for a smaller proportion of total homicides (down from 41% in 2007/08). So there is little evidence that the current increase is being driven by these kinds of offences.

Figure 10: Homicides where the victim or suspect had consumed only alcohol, England and Wales, 2017/08 - 2016/17 (a)<sup>56</sup>



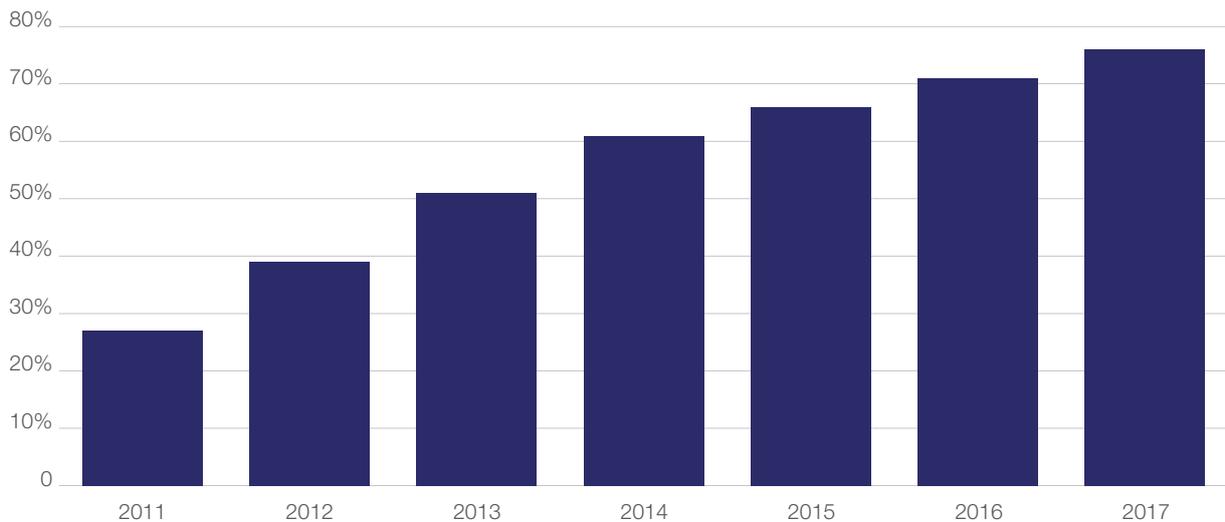
Source: Bespoke analysis of Home Office Homicide Index, as at 16 November 2017.  
 (a) Excludes homicides where either the victim or the suspect had consumed both alcohol and drugs

## Opportunity

One of the most influential criminological theories states that crime can be driven not just by individuals with a greater propensity for offending, but by factors that make the opportunity for crime greater.<sup>60</sup> For example, more people in confined pubs and clubs consuming alcohol increases the opportunity for provocation and violence. But, as the section above showed, there is no strong evidence that the current increase is being driven by night-time economy violence.

One way in which opportunity for serious violence has changed globally in the last few years is due to social media. Just as the vast majority of individuals do not get involved with serious violence or carry weapons (less than 1% of 10-29 year olds, according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales<sup>61</sup>), so the vast majority of social media usage has nothing to do with serious violence. But a very small minority of use does, and while popularity of social media pre-dates the rise in serious violence, growth in smart-phones between 2011 and 2014 has transformed social media accessibility and created an almost unlimited opportunity for rivals to antagonise each other, and for those taunts to be viewed by a much larger audience for a much longer time period.<sup>62</sup> This may have led to cycles of tit-for-tat violence.<sup>63</sup>

Figure 11: UK smart phone take up (adults 16+), 2011 – 2017



Source: Ofcom (2017) Communications Market Report- United Kingdom. Ofcom.  
Available at: [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/105074/cmr-2017-uk.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/105074/cmr-2017-uk.pdf) [accessed 2 March 2018]

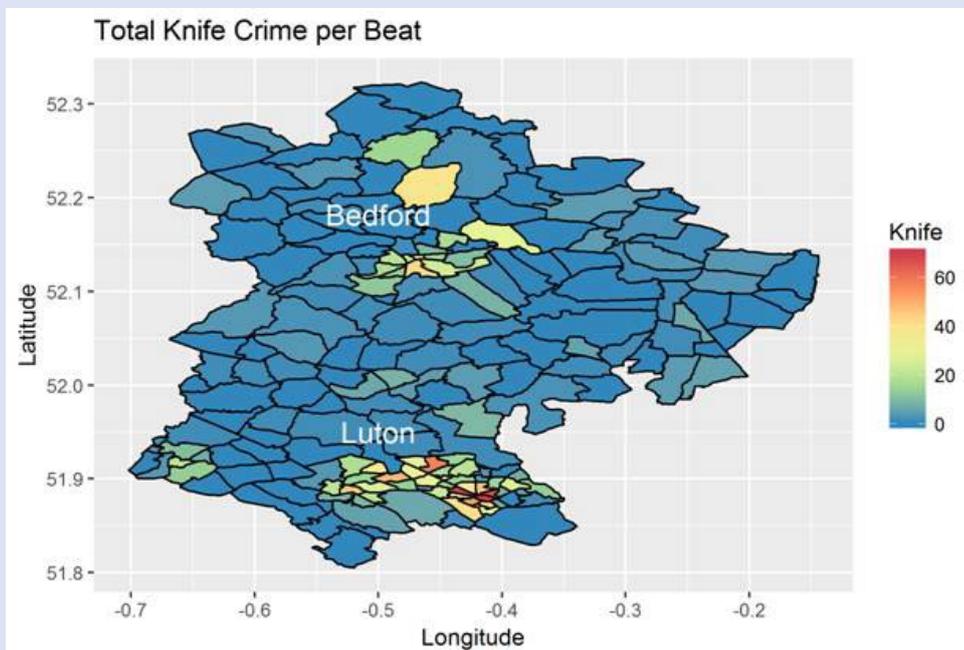
There is strong evidence that rival gangs are using social media to promote gang culture, taunt each other and incite violence.<sup>64</sup> Some gang members have thousands of followers.<sup>65</sup> Research shows the most viewed comments and videos are the ones most likely to result in retaliatory violence.<sup>66</sup> This glamorises weapons and gang life, possibly leading to emulation.<sup>67</sup>

Social media also offers a method for promoting drug selling activity and recruiting others into the lifestyle.<sup>68</sup> Drug selling provides a potential route to material goods that may be viewed as unobtainable through other means. It provides wealth to a select group at the top of the drug-selling hierarchy whom others may look up to. But previously this process required physical proximity. Cyberspace has removed this barrier. One of the most common things for drug-related groups to do on social media is to post pictures of themselves surrounded by money purportedly made from selling drugs.<sup>69</sup>

## Box 1: Hot-spot policing - what it is and why it works

Data reveal that within police force areas, serious violence offences are highly concentrated in certain areas, known as hot-spots (see figure 12 below).

Figure 12: Map showing concentration of knife crimes in Bedfordshire



Source: Bedfordshire Police data

This has an implication for preventative police activity. Studies have shown that rather than waiting for a crime to occur and reacting to it, crime can be reduced by doing highly visible activity within these hot-spots in order to deter criminality whether through patrols, targeted stop and search, weapon sweeps, and community activities, through targeting police resources in such hot-spot locations.<sup>70</sup> For example, a recent trial in Peterborough found that increasing 15-minute patrols by Police Community Support Officers (who had no powers to stop and search or arrest) in known hot-spots reduced crime by 39%.<sup>71</sup> Another important, and thoroughly tested, research finding is that hot-spot policing does not just shift criminal activity to another location.<sup>72</sup> It results in genuine reductions in crime. Furthermore, this is something that can be monitored and tested in every force via data analytics. Mobile technology allows police time spent in hot-spots to be monitored, adjusted and tested to determine optimal deployments.

## Key Points:

- While overall crime continues to fall, homicide, knife crime and gun crime have risen since 2014 across virtually all police force areas in England and Wales. Robbery has also risen sharply since 2016.
- These increases have been accompanied by a shift towards younger victims and perpetrators. For homicide, the rise is being driven by male-on-male cases rather than violence against women and girls.
- The long-term serious violence trend in England and Wales has been similar to that in other developed nations, many of which are also seeing a new increase. This suggests the possibility of a global component to the trend.
- About half the rise in robbery and knife/gun crime is due to improvements in police recording. For the remainder, drug-related cases seem to be an important driver. Between 2014/15 and 2016/17, homicides where either the victim or suspect were known to be involved in using or dealing illicit drugs increased from 50% to 57%.
- Crack cocaine markets have strong links to serious violence and evidence suggests crack use is rising in England and Wales. This is probably driven by supply and demand factors. For supply, cocaine production and purity have soared. For demand, there was a 14% increase in the number of people presenting to treatment services with crack cocaine problems between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Drug-related cases also seem to be one of the driving factors in the homicide increase in the US.
- Drug-market violence may also be facilitated and spread to some extent by social media. A small minority are using social media to glamorise gang or drug-selling life, taunt rivals and normalise weapons carrying.
- There is no evidence that falls in stop and search are driving this trend. Research evidence suggests the police should focus on increasing the likelihood that offenders are caught, and improved targeting of known offenders and hot-spot locations.
- There is evidence of considerable overlap between victims and offenders of serious violence. The rise may also therefore be related to increases in certain vulnerable groups like the homeless and excluded children. This is not to say that homelessness or being excluded necessarily causes violence, but that these are markers for being at higher risk of becoming a victim or offender.

## Chapter 2

# Risk and protective factors and interventions



This chapter looks at drivers at the individual level and provides an assessment of preventative interventions.

Serious violence is only perpetrated by a small minority, but those individuals can do considerable harm. Studies show that those who commit robbery and use weapons before they reach the age of 18 are much more likely to have long criminal careers than young people who commit less serious crimes. First-time offenders who commit robbery are around three times more likely to go on to commit 15 or more offences within the next 9 years.<sup>73</sup> One incident of violence with injury is estimated to have an economic and social cost of £13,900.<sup>74</sup> Much research has therefore been dedicated to identifying those individuals who might become seriously violent and/or prolific.

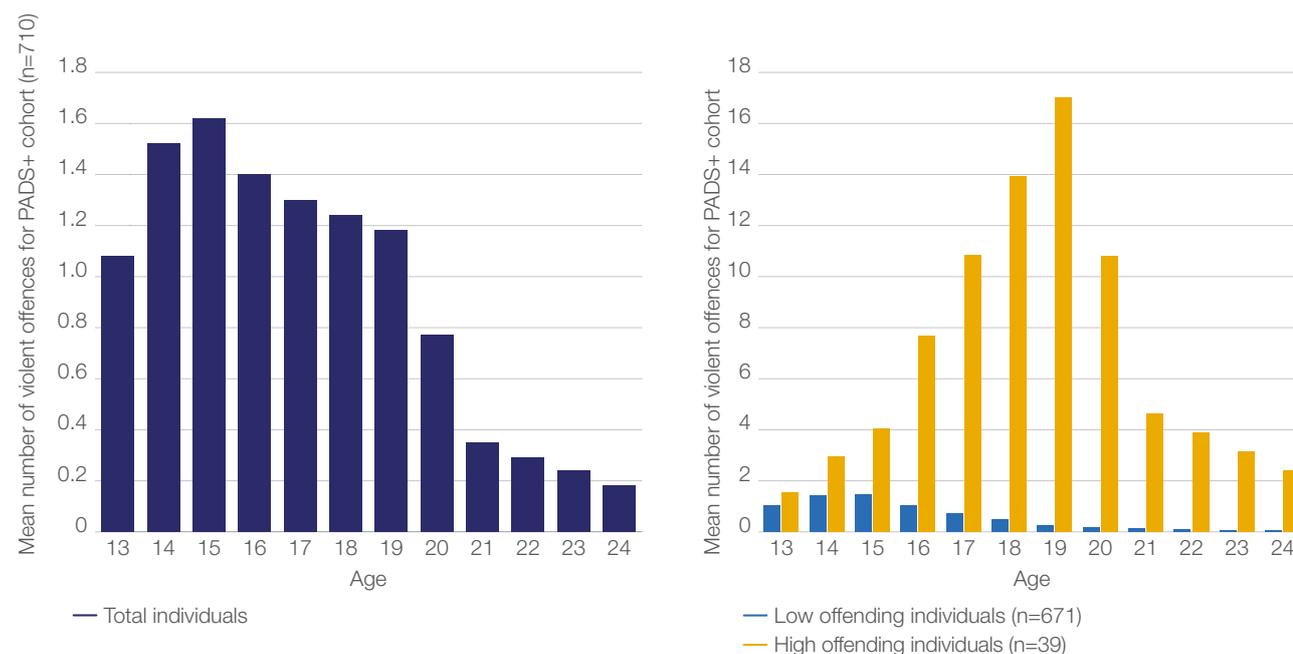
### **Risk and protective factors for violence**

There is a large body of research on factors that predict or protect against violence. This evidence base has limitations, but some conclusions are clear:

- **Age:** self-reported violence and weapons carrying peaks at the age of 15. However, a minority of chronic offenders continue their offending beyond that and this group commits a large proportion of overall serious violence<sup>77</sup> (see for example figure 13).
- **Ethnicity:** Victim and suspect rates for serious violence vary by ethnic group as illustrated by the homicide rates below (table 6). Despite the representations made in the table, the evidence on links between serious violence and ethnicity is limited. Once other factors are controlled for, it is not clear from the evidence whether ethnicity is a predictor of offending or victimisation.<sup>78</sup> In his report into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the Criminal Justice System,<sup>79</sup> David Lammy MP highlighted the rising proportion of BAME young people in the youth justice system, comprising 19% of first time offenders, 19% of reoffenders and 41% of young people in custody in 2016. The review noted that, unless something changes, the current group of young people who offend would become the next generation of adult offenders. We also know that there is a significant amount of distrust between children and young people from BAME communities and the criminal justice system. Research<sup>80</sup> shows that this lack of trust among children and young people stems from experiences of being stereotyped and harassed.

- **Gender:** Males commit the majority of serious violence. 76% of those convicted for homicide were male in 2016/17<sup>75</sup> and 87% of weapons users in the Millennium Cohort Study Age 14 'sweep' are male.<sup>76</sup>

Figure 13: Age and violent offending in the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult study



Source: (left graph) Special calculations from the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adulthood Development Study (PADS+); (right graph) Wikström P-O H & Roman G. (forthcoming). *When Violence Becomes Acceptable*.

Table 6: Offences recorded as homicide, rates per million population by victim’s and principal suspect’s ethnic appearance: combined data for three years, 2013/14 to 2015/16<sup>81</sup>

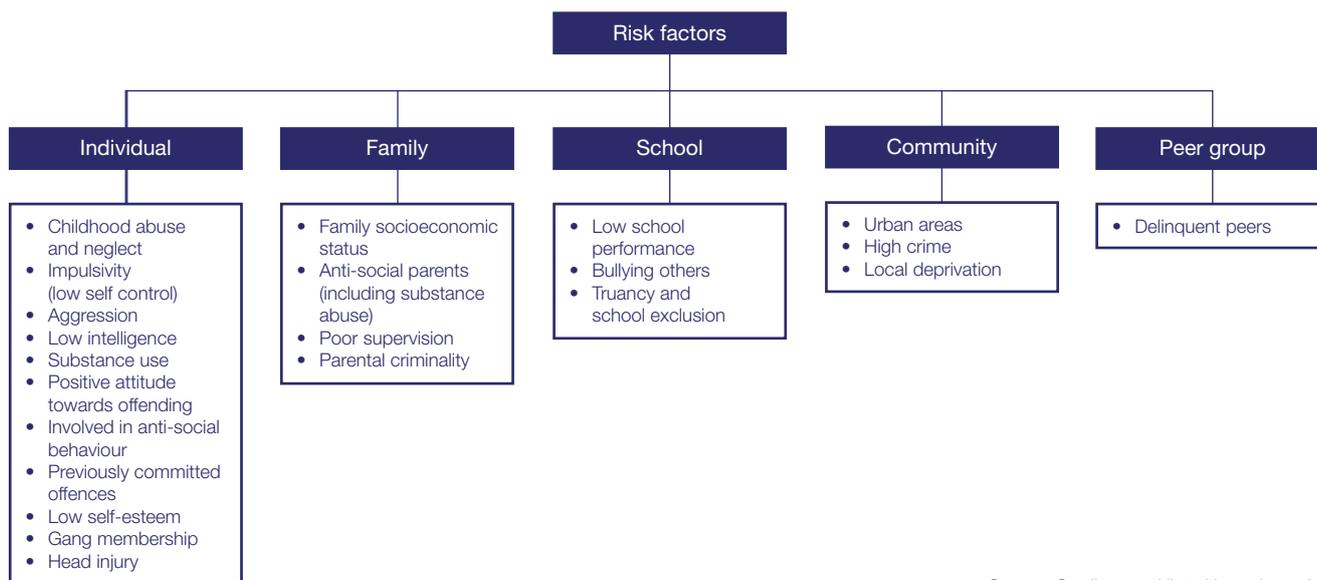
Ethnicity	Victim		Principal suspect	
	Volumes	Rate per million	Volumes	Rate per million
White	1,207	8	954	7
Black	181	32	232	41
Asian	127	11	113	10
Other	43	7	31	5

Source: Ministry of Justice (2017). Race and the criminal justice system 2016 Chapter 3: Victims tables. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/race-and-the-criminal-justice-system-2016> [accessed 26/02/2018].

Beyond these demographic factors, a whole range of other factors have been linked with both perpetration and victimisation of crime and violent behaviour. Figure 14 highlights a subset of these. It includes factors identified as predictors of at least one form of *serious* violence (homicide, knife crime, gang membership) in systematic reviews, and/or robust longitudinal studies, or in relevant UK studies.<sup>82</sup>

However, it should be kept in mind that violent crime will share similar risk factors with other types of crime and anti-social behaviour and will also correlate with other poor life outcomes such as low educational attainment, poor health and unemployment.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, by addressing violent crime risk factors, interventions can bring wider benefits to individuals and wider society.

Figure 14: Identified risk factors for serious violence



Source: Studies used listed in endnote 82

Most of the research on risk factors comes from the US. UK studies that look at serious violence are rarer, but still provide useful information. For example, The Murder in Britain study<sup>84</sup> showed that out of 786 men convicted of homicide, 73% were persistent offenders before they committed homicide and many had a cluster of risk factors such as those in figure 14. A fifth began offending before the age of 13, and this group had the most chaotic backgrounds: 30% had been physically abused, 17% sexually abused and 45% had been taken into care before the age 16.

A study looking at 80 firearms offenders convicted in England and Wales, half of whom had also committed robbery, reached similar conclusions.<sup>85</sup> Most came from disrupted family environments and over half reported being excluded from school. The study also noted that gang membership and involvement in drug markets were important. Separate statistics support this conclusion: 89% of the robberies committed by a sample of arrestees were committed by current or former gang members, and gang members were also much more likely than non-gang members to be involved in drug supply offences.<sup>86</sup>

However, there is some evidence that risk factors for knife carrying are slightly different to gang-related crime. A longitudinal study carried out in Edinburgh examined both gang membership and knife carrying and found some key differences.<sup>87</sup> Young people who became involved in gangs were characterised by childhood disadvantage, including family poverty and living in high crime neighbourhoods. Young people who carried knives, on the other hand, had less history of disadvantage, but did show other signs of vulnerability, such as lack of support from parents, social isolation and tendencies towards low self-esteem and self-harm.

This may be because knife carrying is particularly susceptible to peer influence with studies distinguishing between those who use weapons for instrumental reasons (for example to bully other young people or defend drug profits) and those who carry knives out of fear of the first group or in order to fit in with them.<sup>88</sup> While the impact of peer influence on weapons carrying is troubling, studies are clear that not everyone is susceptible. Research shows that fear is a predictor of knife carrying, but generally only in those who already have previous tendencies towards aggression *and* who feel victimised.<sup>89</sup>

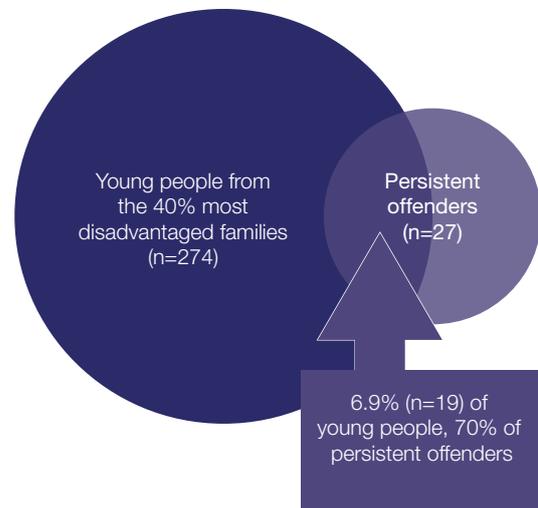
Another important finding is that the risk factors for violence overlap to some degree with those for domestic and sexual abuse.<sup>90</sup> For example, analysis of longitudinal data from London showed that predictors of domestic violence and street violence were similar and that individuals who committed both types had the most risk factors overall.<sup>91</sup> This means effective preventative interventions should have benefits across crime types. There is also a complex relationship between substance abuse and serious violence. The two behaviours have many of the same risk factors,<sup>92</sup> and substance abuse may also be a risk factor for involvement in violence, either through exposure to market violence or through the psychoactive effects of drugs. The evidence for the latter is stronger for stimulants like crack-cocaine than for depressants like cannabis or heroin.<sup>93</sup>

The evidence assessing protective factors is more limited than that for risk factors, and most factors are often the opposite of the risk factors. In a study of 411 South London boys, parental incarceration increased the risk of offending, but a high family income was protective. Among boys from low income families, 59% of those with parents convicted of a crime offended themselves, compared to 19% of those without convicted parents. In boys from high-income families, parental incarceration was associated with a smaller impact on offending: 26% vs. 18%.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, socio-economic improvements, strengthening ties to family, school and non-violent norms are key areas for reducing violence.

This research does have limitations. Factors may vary across time and place. Predictors of serious violence in the US may differ from those in the UK. Also, it is very important to stress that most people with a risk factor will not go on to commit serious violence. Figure 15 presents an example from a study in Peterborough.<sup>95</sup> Of 27 prolific offenders identified, 19 (70%) were from disadvantaged families, suggesting that disadvantage is a risk factor. But the vast

majority of young people from disadvantaged families (255 out of 274, 93%) did *not* become persistent offenders.

Figure 15 Venn diagram showing the overlap between disadvantage and persistent offenders



Source: Wikstrom, P.-O. H., & Treiber, K. (2016). Social Disadvantage and Crime: A Criminological Puzzle. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(10), 1232-1259

Finally, the sheer number of different risk factors and the complex relationships that exist between them means it is hard to know *exactly* which factors may be causal and which are simply markers. This makes it difficult to decide which factors to target and at which ages. However, there are at least three ways forward.

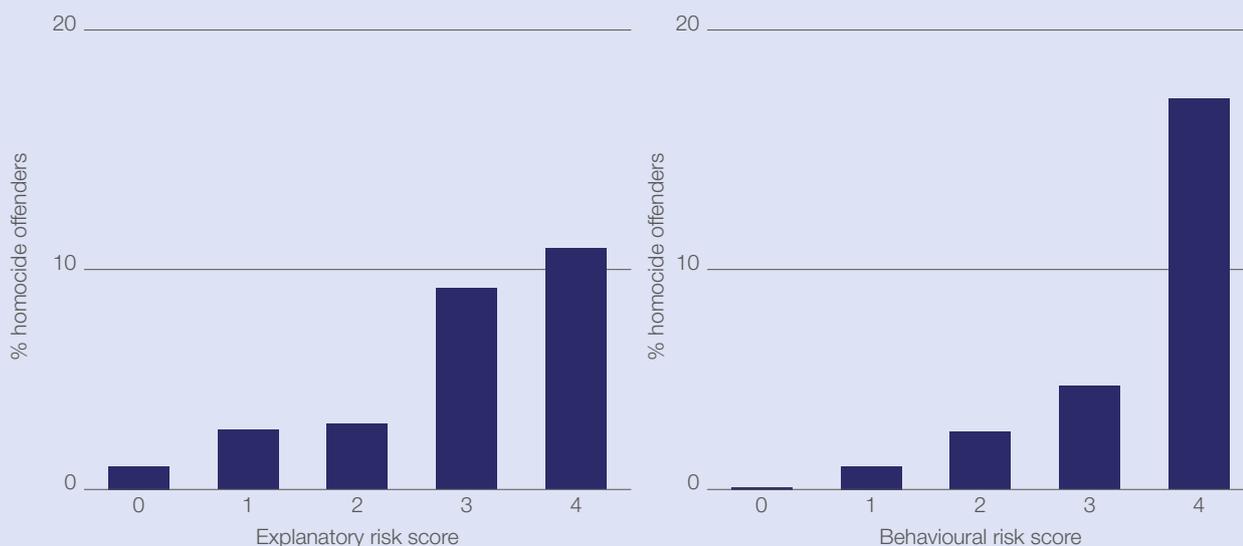
The first is to try and determine which of all the risk factors are *most* important in explaining who goes on to offend, given that most people with a given risk factor do not. Researchers at Cambridge University argue that two factors are particularly important: a positive attitude towards offending, and low self-control.<sup>96</sup> They therefore recommend that the establishment of anti-violent norms and self-control training should be promoted, particularly within families and schools and young people's leisure activities. At the same time, these researchers argue that more intense family and in-school support should be made available from a young age for those from the most chaotic backgrounds.

Another approach is to look at the number of risk factors per individual. This is based on the consistent finding that the presence of multiple risk factors increases the risk of offending. For example, the study of South London boys developed a risk score for offending based on six risk factors: having a convicted parent, high daring, low school attainment, poor housing, a disrupted family and large family size. Of those with five or six risk factors, 17 out of 20 (85%) went on to offend. Of those with none, 21 out of 103 (20%) went on to offend.<sup>97</sup> Assessing the number of risk factors has therefore been a common method for predicting those at high risk and targeting interventions – see Box 2.

The third and perhaps simplest way to improve our knowledge and reduce serious violence may be to test preventative interventions better. Separating the individual effect of, for example, parental substance abuse from all the other factors that might contribute to an individual's risk of serious violence is incredibly complex. But if a robust evaluation can demonstrate that an intervention targeting parental substance abuse reduces serious violence, this provides strong evidence of parental substance use as a cause. Evolving data analytics techniques should make this process easier. Rather than relying on small-scale longitudinal studies, we are looking to match larger datasets together so that interventions can be routinely evaluated on an ongoing basis.

## Box 2: Is it possible to predict who will be affected by serious violence?

Predictive analytics has become a hugely important tool. For example, a US study found that four risk factors measured before age 14 predicted later homicide perpetration: living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, low socioeconomic status, having a young mother and having an unemployed mother.<sup>98</sup> Boys with all four were almost five times more likely to commit homicide than the rest of the boys (see chart left). When the researchers included behavioural factors like being suspended from school and having a positive attitude to delinquency, it became even more predictive, (see chart right).<sup>99</sup>



Source: Farrington, D. P., Loeber, R., & Berg, M. T. (2012). Young Men Who Kill: A Prospective Longitudinal Examination From Childhood. *Homicide Studies*, 16(2), 99-128.

So it is possible to determine those at greater risk, and use that to design and target interventions. Studies are now looking at using algorithmic approaches to predict serious violence on a much shorter timescale. For example, a Philadelphia study used past offending behaviour and socio-demographic characteristics to try and predict who would commit a murder in a sample of 60,000 people on probation or parole. Of the total sample, 1% was later charged with a homicide within 2 years; within the identified high risk subgroup, this figure was 8%.<sup>100</sup>

Despite its potential, predictive analytics has limitations. It can identify high-risk individuals but that is not the same as identifying *all* serious violence offenders. For example, in the South London study it was found that although 17 out of 20 high-risk individuals offended, a larger absolute number of offenders had no risk factors at all.<sup>101</sup> Another issue is that predictive analytics can only tell us who should receive support; it cannot provide the intervention itself. That is likely to involve human interaction and support – see next section.

Finally, individual/group based approaches may raise concerns about stigmatisation. But it need not do so.<sup>102</sup> As this review shows, punitive activity is less effective than preventative support. Predictive analytics does not just predict future offenders, it could also predict future victims. The risk factors are often the same because the people are often the same. The Chicago Police Department use an algorithm to try and determine those most likely to be involved in gun violence.<sup>103</sup> The most important predictor is gun violence **victimisation**. Of 80 UK firearms offenders, half had been threatened with guns themselves and 40% had been shot or stabbed.<sup>104</sup> Predictive analytics is not just about preventing, it is also about protecting.

### Early interventions for violence prevention

For this strategy, we examined 14 systematic reviews that looked at interventions aimed at reducing aggressive behaviour in individuals aged under 21.

There was one very clear finding. Of the 14 systematic reviews – which contain only the most robust evidence – 11 found that early interventions were effective in reducing violent behaviour.<sup>105</sup> The most recent review by Cambridge University showed an average reduction in aggression of about 25%.<sup>106</sup> Another review found an average decrease of 13% in criminal behaviour among high-risk young people.<sup>107</sup>

Of the three studies that did not find a positive effect, two reviewed programmes aimed at preventing gang involvement rather than violence,<sup>108</sup> and were dominated by studies from the US where gang activity is arguably different from England and Wales. The only study which found an increase in violence post-intervention looked at the effectiveness of a very specific deterrent programme, Scared Straight,<sup>109</sup> which tested whether bringing young offenders to meet adult offenders in prison would put them off a life of crime. In fact, the research showed that participants were between 1.1 and 2.6 times more likely to commit a crime than similar peers who did not take part in such programmes.

Overall, there is good evidence that early intervention programmes can work to prevent violence, even for those most at risk, provided they are not focused on 'scare tactics'. There is also good evidence that preventative programmes can offer good value for money – see Box 4.

However, generating more detailed recommendations is more difficult due to evidence gaps and caveats. For example, hardly any of the studies measured the effect on the most serious types of violence. This is because these outcomes are rare and occur with a considerable time lag. An intervention aimed at 5 year-olds could not hope to find a statistically significant effect on knife crime for at least 10-15 years and even then only with a large sample size. Only a very small number of studies therefore provide any direct evidence for prevention of serious violence. One of the exceptions is the Perry Preschool programme,<sup>110</sup> a US-based intervention that provided high-quality preschool education and home visitation to 3 and 4 year-old African-American children living in poverty. It followed up participants to the age of 40 and found decreases in all types of violence, including murder and robbery.<sup>111</sup>

While this evidence exists for the US, no UK interventions were identified that had measured effects on serious violence. Instead, the evaluations looked at interim behavioural outcomes. For example, one robust UK study looked at the effects of the Incredible Years Preschool Programme, which comprises 20 weekly group sessions for parents aimed at emphasising positive rather than negative interactions between parents and children aged 3 to 6 years old. The evaluation showed that the programme drove a reduction in both the frequency and particularly the severity of disruptive behaviour in the children.<sup>112</sup> While this is a positive result, and studies have shown a link between disruptive behaviour and later criminality, we cannot know for certain that the intervention actually went on to decrease crime.

## Types of early interventions

Two types of classification systems are frequently applied to prevention approaches: universal/selected/indicated and primary/secondary/tertiary. The latter indicates the timing of the intervention. Primary programmes attempt to address violence before it occurs; secondary programmes take place immediately after violent acts and try and prevent short-term consequences, while tertiary programmes also take place after violence has occurred but try and prevent long-term consequences. The other classification system looks instead at the individuals involved:

- **Universal** programmes are those administered to everyone within a defined population regardless of risk. This type of programme tends to be soft-touch and deliver a range of positive impacts ranging from behavioural outcomes to educational attainment and health. However, the evidence of their long-term impact on violence is limited.
- **Targeted** programmes are for individuals who have already committed violence (so called ‘indicated’ programmes) or groups who have been identified as high-risk but have not committed violence yet (selective programmes).

### Box 3: Targeted interventions

The reviewed, well-evidenced targeted programmes tend to be family-focused interventions with some of them applying multi-modal approaches by tackling both family and school issues. Parents are taught strategies for improving the quality of their interactions with their child, reducing negative child behaviour and increasing their efficacy and confidence in parenting. Most programmes are delivered by a practitioner (e.g. family social worker) on an individual basis or, for a smaller number of programmes, in groups. In some very complex cases, Intensive Fostering can be used to promote stability in a young person’s life and the ability to live in a family, whether the outcome is a return to their birth or extended family, long-term fostering, or adoption.

#### Example of an indicated programme

**Multi-Systemic Therapy** focuses on 12-17 year olds at risk of placement in care or custody due to severe behavioural problems. Trained therapists with small caseloads (4– 6 families) provide families with weekly contacts for 3–5 months (60 hours). MST seeks to improve parenting skills, children’s academic and vocational performance, peer relationships, and families’ support networks. It has been robustly evaluated both in the UK and the US and although results vary, most studies show significant benefits. For example one study found a reduction of 16% in the number of participants with a violent arrest compared to those who had not received any treatment by the age of 28-29.<sup>113</sup>

There is evidence that targeted approaches, whether selective/indicated or primary/secondary/tertiary, are more effective at reducing violence than universal programmes.<sup>114</sup> This emphasises the importance of developing successful targeting strategies that do not stigmatise the individuals involved.<sup>115</sup>

Linked to this, evidence shows that programme intensity should be tailored to need. While those with the greatest number of risk factors were often the hardest to reach, some intense interventions showed positive results. For example, Multi-Systemic Therapy, which involves working with trained therapists, reduced violent offending by about a third.<sup>116</sup> By contrast however, there was also evidence that for medium and low risk individuals the use of very intense programmes had no greater success than lighter touch ones.<sup>117</sup>

The evidence is less clear on which settings achieve the best results. Interventions typically follow the socio-developmental path of young people. The interventions for pre-school children are concentrated around improving parenting and family relations. Once a child reaches school, interventions recognise their social world is growing with them, thus broader risk factors including those linked to school-settings and peers are addressed. There have been successful interventions in both areas and it is not yet clear whether school or family-based interventions are the most effective. A recent systematic review by University of Cambridge (2017)<sup>118</sup> suggests that family-based interventions are more effective, while a slightly older review by the US National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2012) found that school-based programmes had a relatively larger effect.<sup>119</sup>

There is a common assumption that the earlier an intervention takes place, the better the outcome is likely to be. Research shows that the early years are a key period for brain development so some researchers argue that interventions which address risk factors at that age are vital.<sup>120</sup> We did not find enough evidence to conclude that interventions aimed at the 0-5 age group had the best results. Some of the most successful programmes were aimed at slightly older children, those who had already offended or shown signs of anti-social behaviour. However, our evidence review did show that brain impairments driven by head injury were a risk factor.<sup>121</sup> In a group of 186 young male UK offenders, self-reported head injuries were associated with a higher number of convictions. Moreover, when offenders suffered three or more injuries to the head they used greater violence in offences.<sup>122</sup>

Successful interventions for preventing reoffending tend to focus on skills building, cognitive behavioural therapy or restorative justice. These had more positive effects than mentoring, where study results were quite mixed (findings were most positive when used early in a young person's potential offending career), or more punitive approaches, for which there is little supporting evidence.<sup>123</sup>

Effective programmes tended to be tailored to the young person's learning styles, motivation, abilities and strengths, and applied multi-agency approaches.<sup>124</sup> Young offenders often come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have very complex needs such as homelessness, poor educational attainment, lack of employable skills, mental health issues etc. Addressing just one of those needs may not make a significant difference on its own.<sup>125</sup>

#### **Box 4: Value for Money Interventions**

It is important to understand whether a programme is value for money. That is, whether the costs of administering the programme are outweighed by the benefits to the individual and society. The Dartington Social Research Unit (DSRU) took a consistent cost-benefit analysis approach to estimating value for money of a range of public and private sector investments in child health and development.<sup>126</sup> The benefits estimated ranged from reduced crime to improved health and educational outcomes which benefitted a range of different people including participants, taxpayers and wider society.

#### **Examples**

**Perry Preschool** (US programme) – for each £1 spent on the programme £1.61 of benefits were estimated. The costs per participant of the programme were estimated at £13,393 and the benefits were estimated at £21,598 and these were split between increased earnings, reduced crime and improved educational outcomes.

**Multi-Systemic Therapy for Juvenile Offenders** (US programme) – for each £1 spent on the programme £2.09 of benefits were estimated. The costs per participant of the programme were estimated at £9,732 and the benefits were estimated at £19,893. Again, the programme produced benefits across multiple domains, including crime reduction and increased earnings.

## Key Points

- Because a relatively small number of individuals commit the majority of crime and serious violence there is a large potential benefit to preventative intervention.
- The most robust studies (systematic reviews) show that preventative interventions for violence can work. Cost benefit analysis shows they also offer value for money and have benefits across a range of domains, including reduced crime but also better health, education and employment outcomes.
- There are many risk factors for future violence and having a large number of these is a good indicator of both perpetration and victimisation.
- These risk factors can therefore help identify people in need of more targeted early support.
- Interventions need to be tailored to an individual's needs and the intensity should match their level of risk.
- Interventions focused on the establishment of cognitive or character-based skills and/or non-violent norms seem to be more effective than punitive interventions.
- However we still do not really know the most important *causal* drivers of serious violence at the individual level, nor the *exact* types of interventions that are most effective in England and Wales.
- There is therefore a substantial opportunity to refine and improve existing preventative measures through testing with larger samples. In the age of 'big data', when datasets can be linked and analysed more effectively, this is something that should be more achievable than ever before.

## Chapter 3

# Tackling county lines and misuse of drugs



Chapter One sets out the important role of drug markets in driving recent increases in serious violence with drug related cases accounting for around half the increase in homicide since 2014. It also sets out our analysis of changes in the drugs market and how this impacts on violent crime and the significant part played in this through the spread of county lines.

Through the Government's 2017 Drugs Strategy and our ongoing work to tackle serious and organised crime, there is a wide range of activity underway to tackle drugs importation, distribution and misuse. This includes targeted action to better understand criminal markets, to inform targeted interventions aimed at addressing the factors that drive, enable and perpetuate them, and disrupt the criminals operating within them. County lines are one element of this broader market, but it also involves violence and the abuse and exploitation of children and vulnerable adults who are often groomed, coerced and subjected to threats of violence and intimidation in order to support the county lines model. This strategy therefore focuses on the activity proposed to reduce this violence, exploitation and abuse and complements the broader programme of work to tackle drugs and serious and organised crime.

## Tackling County Lines

### National County Lines Action Plan

The County Lines Working Group was set up in November 2016 at the request of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Gangs to drive delivery of a cross government and agency programme of work to tackle county lines. The work of the Group is to tackle the particular county lines model of drug dealing because of its high harm and exploitative practices. Success is therefore in effectively tackling county lines operations, rather than drug dealing more widely.

Members of the Working Group include senior officials from the Home Office, Department for Education, Ministry

of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department of Health and Social Care, Ministry of Justice, the Youth Justice Board, Department for Work and Pensions, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), National Crime Agency (NCA), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Local Government Association (LGA), and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London (MOPAC). The Group met for the first time in November 2016 and through delivery of a 12-month programme of work focused on raising awareness in police forces and key sectors (including housing, health, children's social care), and on providing training, tools and capacity building in the law enforcement response. This initial phase of activity was completed with some notable results on the back of it, including:

- 100% return rate from police forces for the 2017 NCA threat assessment of county lines (up from 56% in 2016);
- introduction and implementation of legislation for police and the NCA to apply to the civil courts for an order to compel mobile network operators to close down phone lines used in connection with drug dealing (DDTROs);
- publication of guidance for frontline practitioners which has been downloaded 4,770 times from July to December 2017; and
- support for a series of events to raise awareness of county lines in different sectors such as social services, housing, safeguarding and youth justice.

The initial phase has been successful in delivering a number of key actions but we recognise that there is much more to do. In November 2017 the Inter-Ministerial Group on Gangs tasked the County Lines Working Group with developing a second phase of activity, to consolidate and build on the good work undertaken to date and to address the specific threats and challenges highlighted through the NCA's third threat assessment of county lines published in November 2017,

feedback from frontline practitioners and the knowledge and insights of Working Group members. This plan is included at Annex A to this strategy. However, we recognise that county lines operations are constantly evolving and we will review our response and consider new actions as the nature of the threat changes.

### **Definitions of county lines and criminal exploitation**

As set out at the beginning of this chapter, 'county lines' is a term used by police and partner agencies to refer to drug networks (both gangs and organised crime groups) who use children and young people and vulnerable adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf. Gangs dealing drugs is not a new issue but the extent to which criminal exploitation (often organised) of children and vulnerable adults, as well as the increasing use of violence, has become an inherent part of it through county lines makes it especially damaging.

In order to support different agencies and sectors working together it is important we have common definitions of the issues we are tackling. The UK Government definition of county lines is set out below together with our definition of child criminal exploitation, which is increasingly used to describe this type of exploitation where children are involved:

**County lines** is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

**Child Criminal Exploitation** occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal

*activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.*

### **National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC)**

Police forces are taking a range of action against criminal gangs and organised crime groups involved in county lines drug dealing with an approach focused on both disrupting and prosecuting offenders but also, crucially, identifying and safeguarding those caught up in the model. Children and young people are used to carry drugs and money, or vulnerable adults have their homes taken over for use as traphouses (known as 'cuckooing'). Once caught up in county lines, exploited individuals are at risk of extreme physical and/or sexual violence, gang recriminations and trafficking. The growing problem of county lines and its impact on levels of violence and exploitation has been the subject of reports by the National Crime Agency, who have issued threat assessments of county lines in 2015, 2016 and in November 2017. These describe the very damaging impact of the violence on individuals, families and communities, including murders linked to county lines.

The NCA threat assessments have increasingly informed the policing response, including the landmark conference on county lines held by the NPCC in March 2017 which for the first time brought all police forces together in response to this issue. Following the conference, the NPCC lead set up a national working group, which identified the need for a platform to share information and co-ordinate the policing response.

A new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC) is being established to

help bring the law enforcement effort together. The links behind county lines are complicated and the threat crosses police force boundaries. The NCA provides a central point at which intelligence and information is shared and the links with criminal exploitation and illegal drugs markets are identified. It is also helping the NCA and police to improve their understanding of county lines, and it will also support operational policing, for example, through supporting police forces in their use of the Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders (DDTROs) to close down mobile phone numbers used for county lines drug dealing. The Home Office will support the work of the NPCC lead and NCA to develop the Centre's role by providing specific funding of £3.6 million over the next two years.

### **Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders**

All of the national NCA county lines assessments have highlighted the centrality of the county lines gang's deal (phone) line in this form of drug dealing. Each county line phone number has the potential to be used by hundreds of drug users and to facilitate thousands of deals. County lines gangs make on average £3000 per day from each phone line, and on some prominent lines in excess of £5000 per day, from supplying drug markets. This level of demand presents an attractive market. In servicing these markets, drug dealers use a number of tactics to minimise the risk of being identified and arrested. This includes the use of children and young people to service the deal lines.

The NCA assess that shutting down phone lines and disabling mobile handsets used by county lines gangs and organised crime groups to deal and supply drugs will significantly impact upon county lines gang-related class A drug supply and its associated exploitation. We have responded by bringing forward new primary legislation in the Digital Economy Act 2017 that through new regulations enables the NCA and the

police to go to the civil courts to get an order - the Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Order (DDTRO) – to compel the relevant mobile phone operator/s to close down a particular phone number and/or handset used for drug dealing. The regulations came into force in December 2017, and after an initial pilot undertaken by the Metropolitan Police in January 2018, the power to use DDTROs is now open to all police forces.

The intention is that this disruption tactic, when paired with complementary police and safeguarding action, will make the county lines operating model inoperable and unattractive, so helping to prevent the supply of drugs, reduce the associated serious violence and protect those vulnerable individuals who county lines gangs exploit as part of their business model.

### **Prosecuting criminal cases linked to county lines**

The Crown Prosecution Service has issued an overview in November 2017 of the approach to be taken in building criminal cases and prosecutions linked to county lines, with a particular focus on the relevance of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Powers under the Modern Slavery Act are being used successfully to prosecute members of county lines gangs, with the first convictions secured at Swansea Crown Court in December 2017. The use of modern slavery charges is in addition to using and charging with any drug-related offences and other offences such as assault.

To complement the CPS approach on county lines, the NPCC lead is taking forward work to develop an operational 'toolkit'. This toolkit draws together the tactical options available to officers when confronted with county lines-related offending.

### **Increasing awareness of the threat of county lines gangs amongst practitioners**

Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults is a widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county

lines activity. It is a harm which needs to be more widely understood and recognised by those best placed to spot its potential victims, i.e. frontline staff who work with children, young people and potentially vulnerable adults. This includes professionals working in education, health, social care services, the youth and adult criminal justice system, housing, benefits, the police and related partner organisations. Guidance for practitioners was published by the Home Office in July 2017 to explain the nature of harm perpetrated by county lines gangs to enable practitioners to recognise its signs and respond appropriately, so that potential victims get the support and help needed.

The guidance outlines who could be vulnerable to county lines exploitation and the signs to look out for. It also draws parallels with other forms of abuse and exploitation in terms of those affected, and highlights that one of the key factors found in most cases of county lines exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (e.g. carrying drugs in return for something), whether tangible or intangible. This is within the context in which there is an unequal power dynamic in which this exchange occurs, and the receipt of something in return does not make the young person or vulnerable adult any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange: for example, a young person who engages in county lines activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

The guidance gives advice on what to do if practitioners have concerns, and it highlights their role in the safeguarding process. The guidance has been shared with a range of frontline professionals including social workers, housing officers, Youth Offending Teams and health professionals who have welcomed it. The guidance has been downloaded 4,770 times between July and December 2017 and 63% of statutory staff surveyed who had seen the guidance stated they used it in their day to day work.

We will continue to keep this guidance up to date and relevant, and continue to raise awareness of county lines related exploitation amongst practitioners.

In addition, the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* are being updated for publication later in 2018. The refreshed documents will reflect the risks to children of serious violence including the serious risk of harm associated with county lines exploitation and abuse. This will ensure that statutory safeguarding processes and multi-agency support can be put in place to protect and prevent harm to children at risk from criminal exploitation and abuse.

### **Raising awareness of the risk from county lines gangs and supporting victims**

The Home Office will support nationwide awareness raising communication activity about the threat of county lines targeted to young and vulnerable people and how to avoid becoming involved and exploited by gangs. The activity is designed to deliver a range of communications and engagement activities in collaboration with the NPCC and Crimestoppers.

The activity is being delivered through a range of tailored communications materials including posters and online content. The communications material raises awareness of the signs to spot of a young person who is being exploited as part of county lines activity, and it signposts anonymous reporting via Crimestoppers. The activity will be launched in spring 2018.

# Tackling the misuse of drugs: demand, supply and recovery

## Drug Strategy 2017

The Government's Drug Strategy, published in July 2017, aims to reduce the number of people taking illicit drugs, and increase the rate of people leaving treatment successfully. To achieve these aims, the strategy sets out a comprehensive programme of action to:

- Reduce demand for drugs, through a universal approach focused on children and young people, with more targeted interventions with at risk groups, such as those who are not in education, employment or training, the homeless, or people with entrenched inter-generational substance misuse problems;
- Restricting supply by criminal gangs, by disrupting domestic drugs markets, responding effectively to the threat posed by organised crime groups, and by making our borders more resilient; and,
- Supporting recovery, by helping individuals with substance misuse problems recover and live a life free from drugs.

As the analysis in Chapter One makes clear there are a number of recent warning signs about which we should be concerned:

- There was an 18% increase in the estimated number of users of opiates and/or crack cocaine in the East of England; and
- There was a 21% increase in the estimated number of crack cocaine users in the South East.

These trends are confirmed by other sources: 2016/17 treatment data published by Public Health England (PHE) shows a 14% increase in the number of adults presenting at drug treatment services for crack cocaine problems (either on its own or with opiates). Other sources corroborate

the trend in crack prevalence: between 2014 and 2016, there was a 28% increase in the proportion of drug injectors who report using crack.

While these trends, specific to the use of crack cocaine, are worrying, the Government's overall approach is working: fewer people are taking drugs than a decade ago. However, in response to the changes in use of crack cocaine, the Government is supplementing its comprehensive and ambitious programme of work in the Drug Strategy with a series of focused measures in direct response to the change in crack use.

## Drugs disruption and serious and organised crime

As part of our ongoing work to tackle serious and organised crime, we are improving our ability to pursue and prevent the high-harm Organised Crime Group cohorts that control the importation and distribution of drugs into and around the UK – and which are involved in other forms of serious and organised crime. We also continue to work with international partners to restrict the upstream supply of drugs. This involves operational cooperation and capacity building in source and transit countries, designed to disrupt Organised Crime Groups and address the socio-economic, governance and criminal justice related factors that drive, enable and perpetuate their activity.

## Young people and at-risk groups

The Drug Strategy focuses on two approaches to reducing demand: first, a universal approach for all young people; second, through targeted activity aimed at specific vulnerable groups. Examples of this include an online resilience building resource, 'Rise Above', aimed at 11- to 16-year olds, which provides resources to help develop skills to make positive choices for their health, including avoiding drug use; and with funding from Public Health England and the Home Office, Mentor UK runs the Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Information Service (ADEPIS)

which provides practical advice and tools based on the best international evidence, including briefing sheets for teachers.

In addition to the significant programme of work already underway in this area we will go further to reduce demand and prevent young people and at risk groups being drawn into drug use and drug related crime by providing additional support for young people in pupil referral units.

We will build on the work of Mentor UK's 'Unplugged in England' feasibility study to provide additional support for vulnerable young people in areas with known problematic substance misuse. We will provide funding of up to £175,000 to support a pilot involving up to 20 schools and a number of pupil referral units in England to steer young people away from becoming involved in drug use and drug related crime.

In addition, we will ask the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to look at the level and extent of the collaboration between Children and Young People's services and the treatment system. This will enable us to look at how effectively Children and Young People's services are identifying individuals who may be potentially vulnerable to substance misuse problems and the extent to which they are being equipped with the resilience and risk management skills to help avoid the onset of substance misuse problems. In addition, we will ensure this work considers the extent to which Children and Young People's services refer individuals into drug treatment services where they have identified an issue.

### **Understanding the current cohort**

In direct response to the increased use of crack cocaine, we and PHE will work with frontline practitioners, service users and peer mentors to understand more about the current cohort of crack cocaine users. We will use this opportunity to assess how we can more effectively respond to the challenge presented by an increased

prevalence of drug use, particularly crack cocaine use. In addition to identifying good practice around prevention, we will also review the availability of evidence based treatment interventions for this cohort and how these can be more widely implemented.

### **Support for communities in restricting drugs supply**

The Drug Strategy sets out a comprehensive programme of action aimed at tackling production/ distribution, sharing intelligence, tackling the enablers of criminality, and taking a smarter approach to drug-related offending. We have already taken action to tackle the supply of so-called "legal highs". Since the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into force, hundreds of retailers have either closed down or are no longer selling psychoactive substances; police have arrested suppliers; and action by the National Crime Agency has resulted in the removal of psychoactive substances being sold by UK based websites. We recognise how dangerous synthetic cannabinoids, such as those supplied under the brand name of spice, can be and the devastating impact that they can have on communities, families and the individuals taking them. That is why we acted to control these substances as class B drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act and give the police the powers they need to take action, including making possession illegal and delivering longer sentences for dealers. The Drug Strategy emphasises the importance of a joined up approach to tackling the harms caused by drugs to prevent substance misuse, restrict the supply of drugs and support people from drug dependency. We strongly support the multi-agency approach being taken in local areas to respond to the problems caused by spice, and the Home Office will publish a review of the operation of the Psychoactive Substances Act by November 2018.

## **A new round of Heroin and Crack Action Areas**

To enhance the activity on law enforcement the Home Office will build on this extensive activity and provide £500,000 over two years to support delivery of a new round of Heroin and Crack Action Areas (HACAAs). These areas will provide local partners and communities with the space to consider their response to a variety of public health issues, particularly around problematic heroin and crack use and the increase in drug-related deaths. The Home Office will work with the NPCC lead for drugs to ensure that this activity benefits from national and local leadership and has a significant and lasting impact.

Specifically, the Home Office will provide funding for up to seven co-ordinators to provide support for the HACAAs, as well as for the match-funding of specific initiatives that the local area wishes to pursue. The co-ordinator will bring local partners together (e.g. local authority, health, policing and probation) to focus on heroin and crack use and offending in their area; ensure that there are coordinated pathways available to provide appropriate support to users; gather soft intelligence to help understand the drivers of the crack increase and recommend solutions to areas; and encourage local partners to commit to actions and hold them to account.

### **Drug testing on arrest**

We will continue to work with the NPCC lead for Drugs to encourage wider use of drug testing on arrest to support police forces in monitoring new patterns around drugs and crime. This will help provide an early opportunity to identify and refer offenders into treatment.

## **The Role of the Recovery Champion**

Recovery remains at the heart of our approach with treatment being based on the best evidence and provided alongside the wider recovery support essential to achieving and sustaining recovery. While there are reports of reductions in investment in treatment, the evidence about the performance of the system is mixed. The headlines are positive: waiting times remain low, numbers of non-opiate-using clients in treatment has remained steady. However, there are a number of points of concern: numbers of opiate-using clients in treatment have fallen by 14% over the last seven years, and recovery rates among this client group have been falling, both of which may be a reflection of long-term, entrenched users with multiple and complex needs. The trends in performance data indicate that increasing the rate of individuals recovering from dependency may be difficult.

The Recovery Champion will provide national leadership around key aspects of the recovery agenda. They will support collaboration between different parts of the system and offer advice on how evidence-based practice can be most effectively applied and implemented to enhance elements of the system which are under-developed and in need of additional support.

We will also explore the issue of standards of provision within the drug treatment system by reviewing and identifying good and bad commissioning practices for local authorities to consider. In addition, we will also look at the strength of the links between employment and housing services and treatment services, to make sure that individuals are able to enter drug/ alcohol treatment with the strongest chance of leaving treatment successfully.

## Key actions and commitments:

- Deliver a second phase of activity under our County Lines Action Plan to tackle county lines, to consolidate and build on the work undertaken to date and address new and specific threats and challenges.
- Provide £3.6m funding to support the development of the new National County Lines Co-ordination Centre (NCLCC).
- Continue to work with the CPS and NPCC lead on the prosecution of county lines encouraging the use of Modern Slavery Act offences where appropriate.
- Continue to raise awareness of county lines related exploitation amongst practitioners and update our guidance where relevant.
- Update the Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance to reflect the risks to children of serious violence including the serious risk of harm associated with county lines.
- Undertake nationwide awareness-raising communication activity about the threat of county lines targeted to young and vulnerable people and how to avoid becoming involved and exploited by gangs.
- Provide additional support for young people at risk including £175,000 of funding to build upon Mentor UK's 'Unplugged' feasibility study to deliver support to children in schools as well as excluded children in pupil referral units.
- Provide £500,000 of funding over two years to support delivery of a new round of Heroin and Crack Action Areas.
- Continue to work with the NPCC lead for Drugs to support and encourage the use of drug testing on arrest.
- Support the role of the Recovery Champion in providing leadership and advice on standards of provision for drug treatment.



## Chapter 4

# Early intervention and prevention



We must prevent people from committing serious violence by developing resilience, and supporting positive alternatives and timely interventions. Prevention and early intervention are at the heart of our approach to tackling serious violence and based on the insights and evidence set out in Chapter Two. This chapter proposes universal and targeted (selective and indicated) interventions to intervene and stop people from getting involved in and committing serious violent offences. This includes the introduction of a new Early Intervention Youth Fund to support such action.

A universal intervention builds resilience in young people through supporting positive choices, improving critical thinking skills, providing healthy, stable and supportive frameworks whether in the home or school. Targeted selective interventions build resilience, role models and support for young people who may be at risk of being drawn into crime and provide interventions and support to reduce that risk. Targeted indicated interventions are targeted interventions for those at the highest risk of potential criminal involvement or who may have already been involved in crime. Indicated interventions include programmes that feature the ‘teachable moment’, which is the moment when a young person may be most willing to listen and engage.

## Universal Interventions

### Building resilience, critical thinking and life skills in young people

The Youth Investment Fund, launched by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Big Lottery Fund in September 2017, allocated £40 million to boost local ‘open access’ youth provision in six targeted disadvantaged areas in England (East London, Liverpool City Region, West Midlands, Tees Valley and Sunderland, Bristol and Somerset and Eastern Counties). Over 300,000 young people are expected to benefit from increased access to a range of activities that help them develop their skills

and build positive relationships. This will include young people affected by violence.

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is open to all young people aged 16 to 17, offering residential activities and the chance to lead a social action programme and build skills and confidence. DCMS recently published guidance for local authorities encouraging greater collaboration between services for young people, including those at risk of violence, and NCS local providers. NCS achieves participation from a diverse group of children and young people and evaluation consistently shows that it delivers positive impacts for those who participate.

It was announced in January 2018 that £90 million of dormant accounts money will support disadvantaged and disengaged young people with their transition to work. The programme is being developed by the DCMS, the Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions and the Big Lottery Fund. It will be developed through engagement with young people and the youth, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), education and business sectors to consider how their skills can benefit local communities and businesses.

We understand the importance of providing programmes that help young people build their self-confidence, character and ability to engage positively with society. This will help develop their resilience and enhance the protective factors through positive activities which all help to prevent young people being drawn into crime and violence.

For example, Sport England fund a range of programmes aimed at young people. This includes support through the Primary to Secondary school transition when young people have been shown to be particularly vulnerable to involvement in violence. The programmes are available throughout England. However, a number of these programmes are targeted towards areas with high deprivation and crime rates and where there are challenges of mental health issues within the young male population,

and where there may also be language and communication barriers.

### **Positive alternatives – employment**

Job Centre work coaches across England work with local partners to provide support, tailored to the individual's needs and can include access to work experience opportunities, sector-based work academies and the New Enterprise Allowance.

Looking to the future, those involved in or at risk of being involved in gangs or serious violence will be eligible for early access to the Work and Health Programme. This will provide participants with more intensive, tailored support. It aims to address both work and health barriers and to achieve quality job outcomes.

### **Support for parents, teachers and schools**

The Home Office and the Department for Education will work with other partners to build on models of police-school partnerships that exist in England and work well in building positive relationships between schools and police across the range of crime issues. We will showcase examples of good practice and the benefits of this relationship to help support parents, teachers and schools to feel equipped to identify and tackle serious violence issues that may present themselves within their schools. Such partnerships are an important means for police to work with the senior leadership teams in schools in respect of particular children and to highlight issues of concern in the community, whereas for schools the relationship provides a source of information and support in ensuring the school is a safe place for their pupils and students.

The Home Office will work with the Department for Education and Ofsted to explore what more can be done to support schools in England to respond to potential crime risks in and around their schools that has an impact on their pupils. The Home Office will continue to identify opportunities to engage with parents' groups to support

them, through supporting local community projects and also through our close working with key voluntary and community sector organisations which provide support. The Department for Education will also work with the Home Office, and other stakeholders to update its school security guidance to make clear the risks of carrying knives and provide advice on dealing with this important issue.

## **Targeted (selective) Interventions**

### **Early Intervention Youth Fund**

Building on the evidence set out in Chapter Two and recognising the importance of preventing often hard to reach young people from becoming involved in serious violence, the Home Office will be providing £11 million over the next two years through a new Early Intervention Youth Fund. This is a new fund to which Police and Crime Commissioners with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), or similar equivalent local partnerships (including Serious and Organised Crime Partnerships), in England and Wales will be able to bid for funding for youth and community groups who support early intervention and prevention activity with children and young people.

The Fund will set out criteria to be met when bidding for funding. This is likely to include evidence of cross-sector support and links with other local provision and schemes, and an element of match-funding. We anticipate a range of areas will be interested including areas experiencing problems through county lines related crime and exploitation (e.g. areas that have had a recent review under the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation programme). We want to deliver services to support and prevent young people from getting involved in crime by supporting positive activities.

## Young people and mental health

Mental health issues are more prevalent in individuals involved in violence and gangs than other comparable groups. The mental health issues they face include a range of conditions: conduct disorder, antisocial personality disorder, anxiety, psychosis and drug and alcohol dependence. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 includes a number of provisions to help improve outcomes for people in mental health crisis, including removing the use of police cells as places of safety for under 18s who are detained. Liaison and Diversion services are being rolled out in police stations and courts, and are currently expected to cover 82% of the population by March 2018, and aiming to achieve 100% coverage by 2021. These services identify and assess people arrested for an offence, including young people who may have mental health or substance misuse issues or other vulnerabilities, and aim to divert them into services and/or away from custody where appropriate.

The Department of Health and Social Care's Green Paper, published in December 2017, includes plans to deliver face-to-face support for parents of children with mental health problems and improve early interventions with young people with mental health issues. As part of this work, the Green Paper includes a commitment that trailblazers will examine how the support teams can best support children and young people in England who are not in school or other vulnerable groups such as children in care.

In addition, the Home Office has asked Public Health England to update their guidance to frontline practitioners on the mental health needs of gang-affiliated young people and young adults, originally published in 2015. This update to the guidance is important given that analysis of data from health screening initiatives with young people (10-18 year olds) at the point of arrest, found that almost 40% of those who were gang members (of both sexes) had signs of severe behavioural problems before the age of 12, compared with 13% of general youth justice

entrants. Around a quarter had a suspected mental health diagnosis and over a quarter were suffering sleeping/ eating problems (compared with less than 10% for general entrants). 1 in 3 female and 1 in 10 male gang members were considered at risk of suicide/self harm. The updated guidance will help inform the response of local services and agencies and help the commissioning of future services in England.

## Trusted relationships

Through the Trusted Relationships Fund (England only), the Home Office is providing £13 million over the next four years (years 3 and 4 pending the next Spending Review) to pilot approaches which provide support to young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, gang exploitation and peer abuse. The Fund aims to support interventions which will help young people to build positive and trusted relationships with adults who are there to support them, which may help prevent not only their risk of abuse or exploitation but also involvement in violent offences, for example through child criminal exploitation.

## Troubled Families Programme

The Troubled Families Programme 2015-2020 (England only) is transforming public services by providing high-quality, whole family support, including a designated key worker, to families with complex needs, which could include families where there is serious violence, or an adult or child who is at risk of offending. The Government has committed £920 million to the Troubled Families Programme (2015-2020) which aims to achieve significant and sustained improvement for up to 400,000 families by 2020.

Crime or anti-social behaviour is considered when assessing a family's eligibility for their local programme. The police and criminal justice professionals can recommend families to their local programme, who they feel would benefit from whole family support. The programme emphasises the importance

of strong partnership working in order to deliver integrated support to families, with local authorities engaging with a range of partners including the police. It encourages services to consider the overlapping nature of the problems a family is facing, such as involvement in crime, worklessness, substance misuse, truancy or mental health issues; tackling the root causes rather than simply responding to each problem in isolation.

### **Trauma based policing model**

Evidence highlights that there are a range of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which are significant predictors of at least one form of serious violence. These experiences can be diverse and complex and include childhood neglect, childhood abuse, parental criminality and parental substance misuse. They can be further complicated by their interlinked nature and may require a new approach, underpinned by increased collaboration, to address the full range of factors affecting those who experience them.

Through the Police Transformation Fund, the Home Office is supporting police forces to develop new models for preventative policing. Around £7 million has been awarded to the four police forces in Wales, who in collaboration with Public Health Wales will develop and test a new approach to policing, which prevents and mitigates ACEs. This programme of work will aim to develop a trauma informed and integrated policing model, which will focus on ensuring that the police are better equipped to understand and then address the impact of adverse childhood experiences on both perpetrators and victims of serious violence. The programme will address the lack of early intervention and preventative activity and provide the opportunity to bring partners together to change the way that vulnerable people are supported.

The project will also look to utilise the knowledge of neighbourhood police officers and ensure neighbourhood policing becomes more integrated in a multi-service

early response approach. Neighbourhood and other community based officers are important for building consent in the wider community for actions taken to address violent crime. They are vital partners in developing a whole system approach considering how health, education, policing and others can work more closely together to provide the full range of support individuals often need.

### **Trauma informed youth justice services**

Since 2013 the Youth Justice Board (YJB) has been working with the Welsh Government and All Wales Forensic Adolescent Consultation and Treatment Service (FACTS) and youth offending teams (YOTs) in Wales to develop and test the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach; introducing trauma-informed practice to YOTs. The initial test which took place in three YOTs targeted young people whose offending behaviour was considered prolific with complex needs such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma as interlocking factors. Evaluation suggests that young people experienced a wide range of complex needs.

The most prevalent problems (known or suspected) were drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, physical abuse and self-harm. Improvements in the lives of young people following ECM involvement were noted, such as improved resilience to chaotic family life, improved self-confidence, emotion regulation and resilience. There were also notable improvements for several young people across criminal justice indicators such as breach and re-offending rates. The cohort in the study was small (21) so caution needs to be exercised in generalising the findings further. However, there is a positive indication that the ECM has merit and should be developed and tested further.

A subsequent trial of ECM in response to ACEs is now taking place with the above-mentioned partners, Public Health Wales and the South Wales Police and Crime

Commissioner across South Wales YOTs. A further pilot is also planned with NHS England, Public Health England, the local Clinical Commissioning Group and Exeter University in four YOTs in the South West of England.

Through understanding the impact of ACEs, we know there is increased likelihood of becoming a victim, becoming violent, becoming involved with hard drugs and excess alcohol and ending up in prison.

### **Support for looked after children**

Evidence shows that looked after children are at higher risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. The Department for Education, in partnership with the police and other stakeholders, is developing a new National Protocol on Reducing Criminalisation of Looked after Children and Care Leavers. This will seek to inform social care and policing processes and practice to reduce offending and criminalisation of looked-after children. This includes promoting understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences on young people's behaviour; using restorative practices wherever possible and appropriate as an alternative to a criminal justice response, which can increase likelihood of future offending; and improved partnership and communication between police and residential homes.

The Home Office and the Department for Education will continue to work closely together to consider what further specific actions may be taken to support vulnerable children to reduce any risk of these children being drawn into crime or pathways onto it.

### **Support children excluded from school**

Evidence shows that children excluded from school are overrepresented in young offender populations. They are also overrepresented as victims of serious violence. The Department for Education has published statutory guidance which sets out that schools should consider intervention to avoid the need for exclusion,

particularly for vulnerable pupils. This should include focusing on identifying the causes of disruptive behaviour. In addition to this, DfE has commissioned a review of school exclusions which will explore and evaluate how exclusion is used, with a particular focus on those groups of pupils who are most likely to be excluded from school, and who are often vulnerable children, such as looked after children. The review, which is led by Edward Timpson CBE, was launched in March 2018 and will aim to report by the end of 2018.

Alongside the exclusions review, the Government has published an ambitious programme of reform to alternative provision which will drive improvements in the use, quality and support provided to those teaching in, and attending alternative provision including pupil referral units. The Department for Education's road map for the alternative provision reform programme '*Creating opportunity for all: Our vision for alternative provision*' sets out a clear vision and activity to drive change in the overall system and to identify and share best practice.

The Home Office and the Department for Education will work together on the support and advice offered to children being educated in alternative provision (including those entering alternative provision following exclusion) to reduce the risk of being drawn into crime or on pathways into it. The Alternative Provision Innovation Fund, recently launched by DfE may support positive outcomes in this area given the focus it has on positive post-16 destinations for children.

## **Targeted (indicated) interventions**

### **Intervening at the 'teachable moment' in hospitals**

The Home Office has provided support to the charity, Redthread, to support its work providing youth workers in hospital

emergency departments to intervene with young people and young adults who arrive at hospital with injuries likely to have been inflicted by some form of violence. The intention is to intervene at the teachable moment and help the young person reassess their life choices and give them support. Redthread operates in the Major Trauma Centres in London and it is also looking to develop its services in other London hospitals.

The Home Office is supporting Redthread to expand and pilot its services outside of London. The services are being developed for introduction at the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham from March 2018 and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham from July 2018. We will continue to support the provision of services based in hospital emergency departments that help young people at the teachable moment

### **Preventing young people becoming victims of criminal exploitation**

We know gangs and other criminals often prey on young people and other vulnerable people coercing them to become involved in crime. In particular we have been taking action to help prevent criminal exploitation, especially through county lines drugs gangs.

In addition to training professionals and communities about county lines to increase resilience, the Home Office has funded a pilot service in 2017/18, being undertaken by the charities, St Giles Trust and Missing People, to provide support to young people exploited through county lines in order to divert them from further involvement in crime or gang activity. We will draw and build on the learning from this pilot and consider how this service can be made available to support more victims of county lines and child criminal exploitation across England and Wales.

### **Young People's Advocates and support for gang-affected women and girls**

Since 2012 the Home Office has provided funding for a network of Young People's Advocates (YPAs) in London, Manchester and Birmingham to work directly with gang-affected women and girls, especially if they have been victims, or are at risk, of sexual violence by gangs. The YPAs provide much needed direct support and advice to young people being exploited by gangs and we will be providing funding to continue to support these services until at least 2020.

Young women and girls generally respond better to programmes which are stylistically different to those designed for males. Gender sensitive responses that acknowledge the importance of positive relationships and improved self-esteem as an exit from crime, violence and gangs are key to the YPA programme, and are instrumental to safeguarding this cohort effectively.

In addition to offering intensive 1:1 support to young women and girls experiencing or at significant risk of sexual violence and exploitation, YPAs map vulnerable females across boroughs to support the identification and delivery of services, and they also raise awareness to a variety of multi-agency practitioners alongside this.

We will continue to support existing YPA provision and explore whether the YPA model should be expanded and supported in other areas.

### **Missing children and return home interviews**

Young people and vulnerable adults caught up in county lines activity frequently go missing from home and school so linking with action being taken to address missing persons is often a critical factor in identifying and supporting those involved in county lines. Our guidance on county lines makes clear that going missing should be considered as a key indicator of potential gang or county lines exploitation. We know from the specialist voluntary sector

organisations we fund, who conduct Return Home Interviews, how important these are, not only in building engagement with a young person to work with them to change their life, but also in providing valuable intelligence for law enforcement and we will continue to support and encourage local authorities and PCCs to invest in these valuable services.

The Government is committed to ensuring that missing people and their families receive the right support from Government, statutory agencies and the voluntary sector. We are clear that tackling this issue requires a multi-agency response and co-ordination across a range of policies and operational partners including the police, local authorities and the health sector. That is why we are refreshing our Missing Strategy, originally published in 2011 and, for the first time, we will be publishing this alongside an implementation plan setting out the action we are taking across Government to improve our response.

### **National Referral Mechanism and county lines victims**

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) provides an important route for capturing intelligence on those trafficked and providing support for victims including those trafficked for county lines exploitation and abuse. In 2017 we announced a range of reforms to the NRM and we are considering how it can provide additional support for child trafficking victims (including those trafficked under county lines). We will continue to increase awareness and identification of children involved in county lines activity as victims of modern slavery and ensure that any future support reflects the needs of these children.

Through the £2.2 million funding granted as part of the Child Trafficking Protection Fund, we will continue to test new and innovative ways of supporting trafficked children to ensure the needs of all child victims are being met regardless of whether they have been trafficked within the UK or overseas.

### **Support for young adults at the 'teachable moment' - DIVERT**

DIVERT is a Metropolitan Police custody programme, designed to divert 18-25 year olds away from offending and into employment, training and education. The concept was introduced in Brixton Police Custody in April 2015 in order to fill a gap in statutory provision for young adults. This was initially coordinated by Metropolitan Police staff and volunteers who would engage directly with young adults in police custody and refer them onto effective employment partners. Since October 2016 the engagement role has been undertaken by the Milestone Foundation.

DIVERT seeks to engage with 18-25 year old entrants in custody. The programme provides young adults with support from volunteers while they are in detention. The police team approaches the young adults who have been identified prior to entering custody, and asks them if they wish to speak with volunteers working on DIVERT. If the young adult agrees, they are taken out of the cell and spoken to about their lifestyle. DIVERT volunteers will then advise the young adult about a number of agencies that they can be referred into. If the young adult wishes to engage, they will be referred and their details will be passed to that agency. Following the young adult's release, the team will make a follow up call to the partner to see if the young adult has engaged, and what outcomes have occurred.

DIVERT has successfully engaged gang nominals, adults in possession of weapons, young women and repeat offenders into employment. Over 280 young adults were approached, 181 of these engaged with the team, and 76 of these are now either employed or enrolled (maintaining attendance) on a course or development course. The re-offending rate for the 181 young adults who engaged is 8%, which is 21% less than the average for re-offending rate for adults in general in Lambeth. Out of the 76 employed only 6 have since re-

offended. The DIVERT team are working to expand their model, the programme is currently delivered within Brixton and Bethnal Green custody suites, with further roll out planned for Croydon, Wood Green, Camden and Lewisham. We will provide support to the Metropolitan Police as it rolls out the model and work of the DIVERT team.

### Focused support for young offenders

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are the statutory multi-partnership agencies responsible for delivering youth justice services locally and accountable to local authorities. Statutory membership of the YOT includes the local authority, police, probation services and health. They are well placed to develop sustainable relationships with young people under 18 in their role to assess and supervise young people, compile reports for the courts and provide diversion and rehabilitative programmes.

Effective sentencing, offender management and support in the community to address the needs of young people who offend and reasons for offending has the potential to reduce further offending. It will also reduce the number of young people entering the secure estate and the numbers transitioning into the adult estate or going on to become adult offenders. Where these interventions are targeted to the individual, and supplemented by voluntary action, they can provide long lasting change to a young person's life chances. To help share good practice, the YJB hosts the Youth Justice Resource Hub, a site where the youth justice community can disseminate effective interventions to support young people away from criminality.

### Working with young people in youth custody and adults in the prison estate

As a result of the risk of violence within our secure establishments, the safety of young people in custody is a priority. Ministry of Justice will be investing in the workforce to reduce violence, improve outcomes for children and young people and ensure that a career in youth justice continues to be a respected and rewarding profession. This

includes expanding frontline staff capacity in public-sector Young Offender Institutions by approximately 20% (around 100 new recruits) and introducing a new youth justice specialist role. We regularly review interventions available to young people in the youth secure estate with the aim of improving support to young people to improve their outcomes on release.

Given the complex needs demonstrated by young people in custody, Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service have developed a model of support (the HMPPS Young People Estate Behaviour Management Strategy) which aims to address risks and needs of young people at the lowest possible level through early intervention and an initial universal approach. This provides increasing levels of intensity and specialisation based on individual need to prevent further deterioration in behaviour. Interventions and support include:

- **Public Sector Prisons (PSP) Psychology Services Model:** this provides specialist assessment, intervention, consultancy and evaluation to aid effective risk reduction and management, reintegration or redirection.
- **Promoting Risk Intervention by Situational Management (PRISM):** PRISM is an evidence-based process that highlights characteristics of the situational environment that have a bearing on violence and risk reduction within that environment (such as staff training, morale and experience, and management and interventions).
- **Custody Support Plan (CuSP):** this is an evidence-based care planning approach for all young people in custody. It provides each young person with a personalised officer to work with on a weekly basis in order to build trust and consistency. It is based around the 'hierarchy of needs', namely meeting physical needs (warmth, shelter, food etc.), building trust and safety, work on relationships, self-esteem and achievement; and self-actualisation.

- **Conflict Resolution Strategy:** applies restorative justice principles to resolve conflict between young people, and staff are being trained as Restorative Justice Facilitators. The aim is to have all public-sector youth establishments awarded a Restorative Justice Quality Standards Mark.
- **Enhanced Support Units (ESUs):** are being rolled out for young people with extremely complex and challenging needs, which will enable the delivery of more intensive rehabilitation work in a therapeutic environment for those who pose significant risk, require specialist input, and for whom mainstream behaviour management approaches are not working and not likely to be effective. The Enhanced Support Team provides in-reach services to the ESUs. This is a specialist and multi-disciplinary team who work together to ensure co-ordinated services. The first ESU opened at Feltham YOI in November 2017.

## Key actions and commitments:

- Home Office will provide £11 million over the next two years through a new Early Intervention Youth Fund to work with Police and Crime Commissioners and Community Safety Partnerships (or equivalent) to provide joined up support to youth groups and communities to support early intervention and prevention with young people.
- Provide young people involved in or at risk of being involved in gangs and serious violence with more intensive, tailored support through early access to the DWP Work and Health Programme.
- Explore and build on models of partnerships that exist and work well in building positive relationships between schools and police in England.
- Home Office will work with the Department for Education and Ofsted to explore what more can be done to support schools in England to respond to potential crime risks.
- The Department for Education will also work with the Home Office and other stakeholders to update its school security guidance to make clear the risks of carrying knives and provide advice on dealing with this important issue.
- Rolling out Liaison and Diversion services in police stations and courts to help improve outcomes for people with vulnerabilities including drug and alcohol problems and mental ill health.
- Providing face-to-face support for parents of children with mental health problems and improving early interventions on young people with mental health issues.
- Public Health England to refresh its guidance for frontline practitioners on the mental health needs of gang affiliated young people and young adults.
- Providing £13m over the next four years (years 3 and 4 pending the next Spending Review) through the Trusted Relationships Fund to pilot approaches which provide support to at risk young people to build positive and trusted relationships with adults who are there to support them.
- Providing high-quality, whole family support to those with multiple and complex needs, including where there are family members involved in, or at risk from, crime or anti-social behaviour, through the Troubled Families Programme in England (2015-2020).
- Providing £7m to develop a trauma led policing model across four Welsh police forces focused on ensuring the police can better understand and address the impact of adverse childhood experiences on both perpetrators and victims of serious violence.
- Consider the support for pupils at risk of exclusion and the support offered to children following exclusion to reduce the risk of them being drawn into crime or on pathways onto it.

- Supporting Redthread to expand and pilot its Youth Violence Intervention Programme outside London, starting with Nottingham and Birmingham, and to develop its service in London hospitals.
- Consider the outcome of the pilot service for victims of county lines, run by St Giles Trust and Missing People.
- Continue to support and fund Young People’s Advocates working with gang-affected young women and girls, and explore whether the model should be expanded to other areas.
- Refresh the Missing Strategy and publish an implementation plan to reflect those who go missing in the context of county lines criminality.
- Support the expansion of the DIVERT model based on intervention with young adults in police custody.
- Support the rollout of Enhanced Support Units within the youth secure estate, for young people with extremely complex and challenging needs.
- Support rollout of Custody Support Plans as part of the wider youth custody reforms programme.

## Chapter 5

# Supporting communities and local partnerships



Tackling serious violence requires a multiple strand approach involving a range of partners across different sectors and communities and local partnerships are at the heart of this. It is also crucial that this issue is understood and owned locally so that all the relevant partners can play their full part. Taking effective action means local communities and the relevant partners must see tackling serious violence as their problem that they must do something to prevent. There are already a number of local partnerships, particularly Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), who can provide leadership locally and bring people together. We want such partnerships to put tackling serious violence at the heart of their agenda and actively consider how best they can prevent and disrupt such crime, and in particular, how early intervention and prevention can help and be applied locally.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) also have a vital leadership role to play through working with and across local CSPs, and other local partnerships that can play an important role, and providing the strategic focus needed. The Early Intervention Youth Fund, set out in Chapter Four, will have a part to play in this. The Home Office will provide support through bringing CSPs and other relevant partnerships together to share best practice and ensure strategic links are made. This chapter sets out measures to raise awareness of the key issues and how best to respond, building on the insights from Chapter Two about risk factors and the impacts of prevention and early intervention programmes. It outlines how we help prepare communities to respond to serious violence, and the exploitation that can be associated with it, through developing resilience. It also sets out the important work we are taking forward in partnership with retailers to tackle this crime.

## Working to build resilience to violence in local communities

### Anti-knife crime Community Fund

It is essential we help local communities to tackle knife crime. In particular it is very important that we work with young people so they are made aware of the positive alternatives open to them and are not tempted to carry a knife with the risk of inflicting serious injury or even loss of life.

The Home Office has therefore set up a Community Fund to provide support for local initiatives to tackle knife crime in England and Wales. We launched the Community Fund in October 2017 and received 367 bids. The Home Office has supported 47 of the bids. We initially announced that £500,000 was allocated to the bids, but in view of the high quality of the bids received, we increased the amount awarded to over £760,000.

The local initiatives supported through the Community Fund include projects that take an education and early intervention approach, and others that focus on diversionary schemes for young people at risk of knife crime. For example, we have provided funding to support workshops to groups of parents and carers concerned about knife crime, and who need additional support to talk to their children more effectively about the issue. Funding for other projects includes providing targeted outreach to go into schools, youth clubs, places of worship and others to explain the risk factors that lead to carrying knives.

A number of projects focus on targeted engagement with young people to involve them in positive programmes to gain an understanding of the dangers of carrying knives and increase their self-esteem to make a positive contribution to their communities. Many of the young people targeted may be those who have committed offences and those who have been identified as being on the cusp of being criminally exploited. Another example of a funded

project includes Lives not Knives in Croydon which uses the organisation's experience and knowledge to train youth workers, teachers and volunteers to deliver similar programmes through a series of road shows in communities.

Other projects are designed to provide intensive support alongside sports and performing arts workshops as tried and tested diversionary activities. Sessions of this kind also include targeted harm reduction and personal safety programmes, and others include activities led by trusted positive role models and youth workers who can offer mentoring, practical support and diversionary activities to lift them out of a lifestyle of offending.

The Home Office will hold further rounds of the Community Fund in 2018/19 and 2019/20 of up to £1 million each year to support local communities. The Community Fund for 2018/19 was announced in March 2018 and will be launched later in Spring 2018.

### **Serious Violence and Community Safety Partnerships**

Effective local partnerships and local multi-agency working are at the very heart of a successful approach to tackle serious violence issues. It is very important that CSPs (or local equivalent) take a far greater role in tackling serious violence locally and provide leadership locally. The role of health, social services, youth offending and educational partners in early intervention and prevention is vital to tackling serious violence and only through a multiple-strand approach will local partnerships be able to effectively identify, understand and tackle the serious violence challenges within their communities.

There are a range of local multi-agency structures already in place that can all play a valuable role in bringing together the range of partners needed to tackle serious violence. Whilst we recognise there is no one size fits all approach, we will support and promote the effective use of CSPs (and local equivalents) to deliver local multi-

agency plans to tackle serious violence in communities. Through national and regional events, the Home Office will help identify, support and promote the spread of best practice in relation to multi-agency models to bring health and education partners into closer partnership with the police to ensure we maximise the multi-agency response and approach to tackling serious violence. We will also support local partnerships if necessary to develop their response through identifying tailored support.

### **Role of Police and Crime Commissioners in tackling serious violence in communities**

Police and Crime Commissioners have a leading role to play in galvanising the local response to serious violence. We want to work with PCCs to ensure that they are reflecting in their police and crime plans, the serious violence issues that are blighting their communities. The Home Office will also explore how local communities have easily accessible information to hold their PCCs to account for action on serious violence locally.

We will also explore the role of the Strategic Policing Requirement in driving a focus on tackling serious violence where this is linked with a national threat, for example posed by organised crime, such as county lines related drug dealing, violence and exploitation.

The new Early Intervention Youth Fund will mean that CSPs will play a leading part with PCCs in supporting youth and community groups providing intervention programmes in England and Wales. The criteria for bidding will be fully in line with the leadership role played by PCCs working in partnership with local partners.

## Police and Crime Commissioners and Public Health

There are strong links between policing and public health, particularly with regards to drug and alcohol treatment and prevention services. It is imperative that those links are as strong as possible, and that PCCs and Directors of Public Health work as closely together as possible. Those links must also take account of the emerging picture with regards to the devolution settlements across England and the creation of mayors, some of whom are also PCCs.

These developments, and publication of this strategy, provide a useful opportunity to test the strength of the relationships between public health and PCCs, and look at how those links can be strengthened and how and whether the role of PCCs can be expanded so that they play more of a role in discussions about public health.

### EGVE local reviews and strategic reviews

It has been a key part of the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE) programme since 2016 for the Home Office to provide match funded support for local authorities, police forces or PCCs in England and Wales who would like a review undertaken to check their resilience and local capability to respond to gang related crime. The review is undertaken by external experts in a range of areas such as education, youth justice and safeguarding. Through interviews and focus groups with frontline practitioners, these experts gather information, knowledge and perception to build a qualitative picture of the key issues and drivers. This provides a report with insights and recommendations for action in respect of the risk of violence and how best to respond to the linked exploitation and safeguarding issues. This programme builds on Home Office work and reviews undertaken since 2012 in the earlier Ending Gang and Youth Violence programme.

In 2016/17 there were 13 local reviews undertaken in areas where agencies anticipated and welcomed advice as part of the EGVE programme in order to prepare in case of violence and the associated exploitation, often linked to the risk of county lines drug dealing. In 2017/18 we supported 15 local reviews and widened the support to include follow-up training and advice. In London we have worked closely with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and we are pleased it has supported reviews on a similar match-funded basis with London boroughs and continues to do so. To date it has supported 16 reviews since 2016.

The Home Office is also providing match-funding for regional strategic reviews to identify a common framework that the police, PCC and partners across the region can take to effectively tackle the threat posed by county lines gangs and in developing safeguarding measures. This builds on the work in 2017 commissioned by the PCCs in Essex, and there have been two regional reviews in 2017/18 in Thames Valley and Bedfordshire.

This support offer covers:

- identification of young people and vulnerable adults being exploited, or at risk of exploitation, by gangs to commit criminal acts;
- ability to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent young people and young adults getting caught up in gang activity and the associated violence in the first place;
- appropriate sharing of information on gang nominals and those at risk of gang involvement to enable swifter enforcement activities;
- violence reduction e.g. inter-gang and intra-gang violence, knife crime, gun crime;
- criminal activity e.g. CSE, acquisitive crime, drug supply/taking/dealing, anti-social behaviour.

The Home Office will continue to provide match-funded support for local and regional reviews in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and will enhance the package through training and follow-up advice for areas from the team of experts.

### **EGVE Forum – supporting practitioners and supporting communities**

It is very important that we encourage, support and learn from frontline professionals who in turn support communities. The EGVE programme is supported by an EGVE Forum which is a network of partners and professionals in England and Wales. The Forum meets quarterly and currently has over 200 members. The membership is made up of local practitioners including the police, local authority staff, and the voluntary sector.

The Forum supports early warning and real time feedback on serious violence challenges by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of frontline staff and provides an opportunity for Forum members to share best practice of working in their communities, for example on emerging challenges and innovative approaches to tackle them. As a result of the Forum, stronger relationships have been fostered between local areas. We will continue to support the EGVE Forum and ensure we use this critical network to reach out to and engage communities in England and Wales.

### **EGVE Fund – supporting community initiatives**

The Home Office has set up an EGVE Fund to provide funding to local community based initiatives in England and Wales as part of the EGVE programme.

In 2016/17, 11 schemes were supported including:

- preventative education through targeted schools interventions in e.g. Basildon (Basildon Council), Southwark (Growing Against Violence), Enfield (St Giles Trust) and Derby (The Enthusiasm Trust);
- specialist support for gang-affected young women and girls in Hackney (Safer London) and Devon and Cornwall (The Harbour Centre);
- intervention and community support work within A&E services (Oasis Community Hub, St Giles Trust); and
- wider support for parents and communities in tackling gangs and related violence (Race Equality Foundation, Crying Sons).

In 2017/18, the Home Office increased the available funding to nearly £300,000, and 16 local initiatives were awarded funding with a particular emphasis on tackling county lines gangs and supporting schemes that promoted early intervention. A number of projects are working with young people in programmes that combine mentoring and one-to-one support work with sport, music or other activities.

The Home Office has also funded interventions such as piloting a whole-school restorative practice approach in Lewisham and pop-up drop-ins for young people in 'hotspot' areas in Birmingham. Other projects build on the training and awareness raising work about gangs and related issues to reach wider audiences, e.g. The Harbour Centre in Plymouth is targeting 2000 participants including professionals and public through awareness raising activities including conferences and communication campaigns. In London, Crying Sons are delivering specialist training on county lines and gangs to foster carers and vulnerable parents.

The Home Office will continue with further rounds of the EGVE Fund so that we can continue to support local community schemes.

## Supporting local initiatives to share information between hospitals and local police to tackle violence

Evidence has shown that a substantial proportion of assault cases treated in hospital emergency departments are unknown to the police, and so the Home Office, the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England worked together to support the Information Sharing to Tackle Violence (ISTV) initiative in England. This provides information to support action by the police and others to prevent and reduce violent incidents. This includes adjusting routes of police patrols, reallocating police from the suburbs to the town or city centre at certain times of the day and week, targeting problematic licensed premises, informing deployment of CCTV, pedestrianising certain streets and introducing plastic drinking glasses.

ISTV is underpinned by a published information sharing standard which sets out the minimum level of data that emergency departments are required to collect and share with the police and CSPs. This dataset has also been included in the Emergency Care Dataset (ECDS) which went live in all Type 1 (major) emergency departments in October 2017. The key pieces of data are: the date and time of the injury, where it happened, the weapon used and whether the injury was intentional.

Since 2012, the Government has been actively supporting and leading ISTV including funding a network of Violence Reduction Nurses to develop data collection and information sharing. It is now important that CSPs or similar local partnerships work with hospitals as part of their greater leading role and strengthen local links and use of this important information.

We consider that ISTV works most effectively when it is built into local arrangements and supported locally and where CSPs (or equivalent) take a leadership role. As part of their greater role in tackling serious violence,

PCCs working with CSPs should consider how the effective use of this information can reduce violence in communities. For example, MOPAC has developed an effective model for London, and although this specific model is unlikely to be adopted directly elsewhere in the country as it was designed to support the large number of CSPs operating within London, it shows what local leadership can do to bring about effective partnership work and information sharing. Other areas should actively consider how they can take similar action.

## Working together to raise awareness and tackle crime

### Raising awareness of the risks of carrying knives

We are working to change the attitudes and behaviours of young people and young adults who are prepared to carry and use knives. We know that a number of young people carry knives because they are worried that other people carry knives and think that they should do so too. Other young people carry a knife to portray themselves as fearless and to convey a 'hard' image. We need to work with partners to address both of these motivations for carrying knives, as there is clearly an increased risk of the person either being stabbed or stabbing someone if they are carrying a knife.

On 23 March 2018 the Home Office launched a major new media advertising campaign about the risks of carrying knives called #knifefree. This campaign has been informed by previous qualitative and quantitative research which indicates that adverts should seek to change attitudes and behaviour by challenging the perception that carrying a knife is normal. In particular, the advertising campaign is informed by research on the motivations of young people and the perception amongst too many young people that knife carrying is normal.

The digital first campaign will be aimed at 10-21 year olds. Adverts will direct young

people to a website where they can find out more information about coping strategies to support them to stop carrying knives, as well as highlighting alternative positive activities to help young people understand the options that are available to them.

### **Working in partnership with retailers to encourage the responsible sales of knives**

The Government is working closely with retailers to prevent young people under 18 years of age from being sold knives. It is already against the law for someone under 18 to be sold a knife but we were concerned about how effectively this has been complied with by some retailers.

Preventing young people from buying knives is an important way to disrupt the use of knives in violent crime. We know that domestic knives from the home are often used in crime but we also know that many other knives are bought especially for violent crime, often because of their intimidating appearance or the so-called status that they give to those who carry them. Such knives are kept out of sight in the home but are also often left hidden in places such as parks or other public places where they can be picked up or left until they are needed.

In March 2016 the Home Office agreed a set of commitments with major retailers to prevent the underage sales of knives in their stores and/or online. As of March 2018, 18 major retailers have committed to: having robust measures in place to ensure age verification; appropriate display, packaging and access to knives in stores; taking action to ensure customers and staff are reminded that knives are age restricted products; and ensuring that staff receive regular training on restrictions and safeguards around the sale of knives.

Tesco, eBay UK, Lidl UK, Amazon UK, Wilko, Argos, Asda, Poundland, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, John Lewis, Waitrose, Boots, Co-op, B&Q, Aldi UK, TKMaxx and Debenhams have all signed up to the principles. As a leading UK marketplace, Ebay UK has committed to take appropriate

steps in this area, and Amazon UK has also made a commitment to enforce age restricted sales through their marketplace.

Since 2016 the Home Office has been in regular contact with the major retailers to advise them how their stores have fared during test purchase operations aimed at under-age sales of knives. We welcome the improvements and measures introduced by retailers to reduce the risk of knives being sold to under 18s. However, we know that more needs to be done as around 1 in 5 shops still fail test purchase checks.

### **Working in partnership with retailers on corrosive substances**

In January 2018, the Home Office announced a voluntary agreement with a number of major retailers in which they made commitments about the responsible sales of corrosive substances including not selling products containing the most harmful substances to under 18s. The agreement was developed with the British Retail Consortium and also tested with the Association of Convenience Stores and the British Independent Retailers Association to ensure that the commitments were proportionate and worked in the retail environment. The major retailers who have signed up to the commitments as of March 2018 are: Wickes, Screwfix, B&Q, Wilko, Waitrose, John Lewis, Tesco, the Co-op, Morrisons, Aldi UK, Lakeland, Asda and Homebase.

The Home Office is working with the British Independent Retailers Association to encourage smaller independent retailers to join the voluntary agreement. It is also very important that we work with online market places on what action they can take to restrict access to products which contain the most harmful corrosive substances. The voluntary agreement was introduced in advance of new legislation as it is important that retailers take action as soon as possible because of ongoing public concern about access to products containing harmful corrosive substances and their use in violent attacks.

There are controls in the Poisons Act 1972 on corrosive substances that can be used as poisons or as explosives precursors. Although this legislation is not designed to limit access to corrosive substances used to assault people, its impact is to restrict access to some of the most harmful substances of concern. The Government has laid a statutory instrument which will make sulphuric acid a regulated explosives precursor above a concentration level of 15%. The effect of this will mean that members of the public will require a licence to be able to import, acquire, possess or use sulphuric acid.

### **Support for communities and victims of corrosive substances**

Attacks on people involving acids or other corrosives are a serious matter that can result in huge distress and life changing injuries, which is why victims and survivors are at the heart of our response to attacks using corrosive substances. The Home Office is leading work with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, the police, MoJ and the CPS to ensure that there is appropriate support available to victims, from the initial medical response and beyond. The National Police Chiefs' Council Lead has issued guidance and training for police officers on how to respond and treat a victim of an attack at the scene.

NHS England, in partnership with the British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons, have also provided advice to the public on what to do in the event of being caught up in an acid or corrosive attack ('Report, Remove, Rinse'). This first aid guidance was issued in August 2017 to help ensure victims of acid attacks get the right help fast including new online guidance and support to victims as well as friends or family of people affected by burns.

We want to ensure that victims feel confident in coming forward to report these crimes. This includes ensuring effective support through the Criminal Justice System so that the perpetrators of these horrific crimes are

brought to justice. To enable victims and survivors to give their best evidence in court, we must ensure that police and prosecutors are actively considering the potential need for special measures and of the use of victim personal statements and community impact statements to ensure the court is fully aware of the impact of these offences on individuals and communities.

The Home Office has also commissioned the University of Leicester to conduct research to understand better the range of motivations of those who carry out and use acid and corrosives and how they obtain them. The research team are working with a number of police forces to identify cases from which they will develop a sample of offenders to interview. The interviews will explore the motivations and decision making process of the offender on why they chose this as a weapon. The team will also engage with a range of experts to gain their view on the drivers for these types of crimes. The findings from the research will help shape prevention, early intervention and enforcement responses.

## Key actions and commitments are:

- Continue support for local initiatives to tackle knife crime through further rounds of the Community Fund in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- Launched a major new media advertising campaign aimed at young people and young adults raising awareness about the risks of carrying knives called #knifefree.
- Give Community Safety Partnerships (or equivalent) a mission to develop plans to respond to serious violence in their local area and we will support them by hosting conferences to bring partnerships together to share best practice and innovation.
- Work with Police and Crime Commissioners to prioritise and identify what action they are taking against serious violence, including knife crime, in their annual Police and Crime Plan.
- Explore how the Strategic Policing Requirement can support greater focus on serious violence and county lines and deliver a pilot on serious violence as part of our programme to empower local people to hold PCCs to account for the priority they provide to tackling serious violence within their communities.
- Strengthen the links between PCCs and Public Health and look for opportunities to expand the role of PCCs in relation to public health.
- Continue to provide match-funded support for local and regional reviews in England and Wales to respond to county lines and gang related problems in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and enhance the package through training and follow-up advice for areas from the team of experts.
- Continue to support the EGVE Forum with frontline practitioners to share good practice and ensure we reach out to communities in England and Wales.
- Continue to support local voluntary sector and community schemes through further rounds of the EGVE Fund.
- Encourage Police and Crime Commissioners with CSPs (or local equivalents) to take a leading role in strengthening local links to best make use of the information gathered through the Information Sharing to Tackle Violence Initiative.
- Work with the British Independent Retailers Association to encourage smaller independent retailers to join the voluntary agreement on the responsible sales of corrosive substances, including not selling products containing the most harmful substances to under 18s.
- Add sulphuric acid to the list of substances subject to the Poisons Act 1972, thereby restricting access and making it subject to more stringent controls.
- Seek to better understand the range of motivations of those who carry and use acid and corrosives and how they obtain them, through commissioning research from the University of Leicester.



## Chapter 6

# Law enforcement and criminal justice response



In this chapter we explain how we must ensure that we pursue, disrupt and prosecute those who commit serious violent crimes, ensuring an effective policing and criminal justice system response, especially for victims. This strategy's message is that a multiple strand approach is essential to tackling and reducing serious violence, but a robust response from law enforcement remains an absolutely critical strand within this approach.

This chapter outlines how we are supporting and facilitating effective police action; the new legislative measures we consulted on and are planning to introduce; ensuring firearms continue to be subject to rigorous controls; and supporting and challenging police capability. It also sets out the very important action being taken within the criminal justice system to support victims and witnesses.

## Supporting and facilitating effective action

### Taking action against social media encouraging serious violence

Social media has a substantial role in facilitating gang activity by intensifying, amplifying, and moving it to a space that is perceived by gang members to be impenetrable by the authorities, such as the police. Consequently, threats of violence, gang recruitment and drug dealing are glamorised and promoted in this seemingly secluded space, and gangs often post videos online that seek to incite violence or glamorise criminality to influence young people. The instant nature of social media also means that plans develop rapidly and disputes can escalate very quickly.

It is already an offence to incite, assist or encourage violence online. We will continue to work with the police to support proactive action to address and take action against illegal material hosted and offences perpetrated online. For example, the Metropolitan Police has been leading action through Operation Domain which started in September 2015 to take action against gang related videos encouraging violence.

The Government, voluntary sector and other partners are working with social media companies to ensure voluntary measures to deliver real results and raise the level of online safety for users. We are clear that internet companies must go further and faster to tackle illegal content online. We have also set out our plans to consider the legal liability that social media companies have for the content shared on their sites. We are clear that the status quo cannot continue: these platforms are no longer just passive hosts. We are already working with our European and international partners, as well as the businesses themselves, to understand how we can make the existing frameworks and definitions work better.

The Government has been at the forefront of the drive for companies to take a more proactive approach to terrorist, extremist and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) content on their platforms. We already do significant work to improve the way that Communication Service Providers respond to illegal content, and continue to push them to do more, such as:

- Home Office has specific, tailored, and discrete programmes of work with Communication Service Providers including working with the Internet Watch Foundation to support Communication Service Providers to identify and remove indecent images of children.
- The Home Office invested £600,000 in Project Arachnid, software that can be deployed across websites, forums, chat services and newsgroups to instantaneously detect illegal content.
- We have been working with Communication Service Providers on a voluntary basis on removing terrorist and CSE content on their platforms. Good progress has been made – for example the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) is a positive step forward with industry taking more responsibility for terrorist content.

We will be focused towards building further on the progress and relationships made with social media providers to identify where we can take action relevant to tackling serious violence, including implementing more preventative measures within the online video platforms. This includes the promotion of “trusted flaggers” within community groups, allowing a platform like YouTube to receive flags of harmful content that breach their guidelines from those trusted groups. This would lead to a faster response to assessing those videos for potential removal.

### **Tackling knife crime through co-ordinated policing action**

Since February 2016, the Government has supported national weeks of action against knife crime by police forces under the banner of Operation Sceptre. This started as a Metropolitan Police initiative but it was agreed with the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs’ Council that Operation Sceptre would also be used to support weeks of action by other police forces. Under Operation Sceptre, police forces have a choice of taking all or selecting specific actions from targeted stop and search activity against those suspected of carrying weapons, weapon sweeps of areas of suspected knife activity, educational activities in schools or youth groups, test purchases of knives from retailers, and encouraging the use of surrender bins for knives to be dropped into.

During a single week of action in July 2017, 32 police forces took part in Operation Sceptre and the outcome was:

- 221 test purchase operations carried out against retailers. Of these, there were 180 passes. 41 resulted in retail outlets failing the test purchase;
- 1281 stop and searches were carried out, 694 arrests were made, and 2654 weapons were seized;
- 25 weapon sweep operations were conducted and 877 knives were placed in amnesty bins;
- 333 education events were held.

Every police force in England and Wales, together with the British Transport Police, took part in a national week of action in February 2018 which saw coordinated activity to tackle knife crime across England and Wales. We will continue to support police forces to take action against knife crime under Operation Sceptre. The Government would like all police forces to continue to take part in the weeks of action. We will work with Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure they prioritise this so they identify what action they are taking against serious violence, including knife crime, including participating in weeks of action against knife crime.

### **Prosecution Fund: Trading Standards and underage sales of knives**

Test purchases undertaken by Trading Standards, with support from police forces, are a very important part of Operation Sceptre. This has focused on shops and stores rather than online retailers, and the actions taken against retailers who fail the test purchase has been mainly to warn them that they have broken the law and to take action to avoid such a test purchase failure happening again. This approach will continue. However, it is also important that prosecution of retailers is considered in relevant cases, especially if there is a repeat test purchase failure. Similarly, it is also important that online retailers are subject to the same level of law enforcement, especially in view of the poor track record to date by many online retailers when online test purchases have been carried out.

We will be encouraging Trading Standards to consider including online retailers in test purchasing as part of future work in Operation Sceptre. The Home Office will also be supporting Trading Standards if they decide to prosecute a case in court through developing a specific prosecution fund to support this activity. The Home Office will provide a fund for two years to support targeted prosecution activity against online and in store retailers in breach of the laws in relation to the underage sales of knives.

## **Policing and prosecution response to violent attacks with corrosive substances**

The NPCC Lead for corrosive attacks has developed a national policing strategy for tackling acid and other corrosive substance attacks. As part of the strategy, the NPCC lead has produced first responder advice for police officers and this has been circulated to all police forces in England and Wales in autumn 2017. This provides important information to officers on how to respond and provide the most appropriate support to a victim at the scene of an attack. A training package has also been developed for all officers that covers the initial response to a corrosive attack. This has been sent out to all forces to disseminate to police officers to complete.

The NPCC Lead has developed a tri-service agreement with the police, fire and rescue service and ambulance service on responding to an attack. The agreement means that the control room has an agreed check list to provide advice and ensure that there is a consistent response from all emergency services. This was originally trialled in London in 2017 and has been rolled out nationally.

Specialist investigative guidance has also been produced to help officers understand how to safely recover and handle any evidence at the scene of attacks, and the evidence required when building a case for prosecution. This will ensure a consistent approach nationally across all forces and is supported by the publication of refreshed CPS guidance on offensive weapons in January 2018.

The Home Office has also commissioned the Centre for Applied Science and Technology to examine new methods to support the police in undertaking street based testing for corrosive substances. This will support the police if they suspect an individual is carrying corrosive substances in public.

## **Tackling gun crime through co-ordinated police action and better intelligence**

Tackling the use of firearms in crime increasingly requires co-ordinated police action and improved intelligence. Operation Dragonroot was a joint multi-agency operation which ran from 31 October to 2 December 2016. Led by the NCA and Counter Terrorism policing, it brought national level coordination and operational support to the Regional Organised Crime Units, the Metropolitan Police, the National Offender Management Service, Border Force, the National Ballistics Intelligence Service and the military to test collective intelligence processes and operational response to the threat posed by illegal and legally held firearms in the UK.

The operation highlighted a number of vulnerabilities including the risk from lost and stolen firearms and lawful to unlawful diversion. The Operation identified that ongoing, closer cooperation and coordination between agencies was required, particularly in relation to national intelligence collection and coordination.

To take this forward, the National Firearms Threat Centre has been established jointly by the NCA and CT Policing to coordinate law enforcement activity to disrupt the supply of illegal firearms and improve our understanding of the terrorist and organised crime threat from firearms both in the UK and internationally.

## Working together to reduce serious violence in prisons

Harmful group behaviour, gangs and serious and organised crime has a negative impact on prisons as well as the wider community. Similarly, drug use and the related debts are significant factors contributing to violence and exploitation in prisons. We will take forward work across Government Departments and other partners to tackle the problems caused by gangs and drugs in prisons. By sharing intelligence about crime groups, we can identify prisoners who are gang members or those prisoners who are susceptible to becoming a victim of gang related violence.

We aim to develop a more collaborative approach to sharing information about whether an individual has behaved violently in the past, either in the community or within prison. We could achieve improved risk-information sharing by improving implementation of the existing joint statement between the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Home Office, the Department of Health and Social Care and their relevant agencies. This existing statement was published by the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) to promote greater sharing of information across criminal justice agencies while at the same time ensuring compliance with the relevant law.

In order to help support the management of violent prisoners, MoJ and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) have introduced a case management system known as the Challenge Support Intervention Plan (CSIP). The CSIP model draws on existing practice and resource to set out a standard and consistent approach to managing violent individuals, including prisoners involved in the most serious violent incidents, or those who pose a raised risk of being violent. By adopting the CSIP model, prisons have the capability to address and manage prisoners who perpetrate serious violence in prisons.

## Consulting on new legislation

The Government consulted on new legislation on offensive and dangerous weapons from October to December 2017. The proposed new offences on knives, firearms and corrosive substances are based on operational concerns about strengthening the current legal framework. These measures are currently being considered for new legislation, subject to Parliamentary time.

We consulted on taking action to make it easier to prove the offence of threatening with a knife as well as placing restrictions on the online sale of knives; and creating a new offence of possession of certain weapons in a private place. We are also extending the offence of an offensive weapon in schools to include other education institutions and updating other legislation.

We have also reviewed existing legislation covering the use of acid and other corrosive substances being used in violent attacks or to threaten a violent attack. Legislation is in place already which provides strict controls regarding the sale of poisons and explosives precursors, including a number of different acid types. Anyone using acid or other corrosive substances in an attack has committed a serious offence of assault and, depending on the severity of the injuries, can be subject to a substantial custodial sentence on conviction, including life imprisonment.

However, we have identified that we need to go further to reduce the opportunities for potential perpetrators, so we have brought forward proposals to make it an offence to possess a corrosive substance in a public place without good reason and a new offence to sell products containing the most harmful corrosive substances to under-18s.

We also consulted on taking action to add two specific types of firearms to the list of prohibited weapons under section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968.

## **Restricting access to the most harmful corrosive substances**

We consulted on taking action to make it a new offence to sell the most harmful corrosive substances to someone under 18 years of age. Such corrosive substances are often found in household items such as drain cleaners and other cleaning products and so we have listed the types of substances (and types of products in which they are found) where we want action to be taken to restrict access to them. At present there is no legal control restricting sales of such products on the basis of age. We believe this should change because of the substantial proportion of attacks using corrosive substances which are perpetrated by under 18s (based on the analysis of cases reported to the police undertaken by the National Police Chiefs Council in 2017). This legislation would be based on the voluntary agreement with retailers that restricts access to products containing the most harmful corrosive substances.

## **Action on online sales of knives to under 18s**

Since legislation on restricting sales of knives on the basis of age was passed over 20 years ago we have seen the growth of the internet and retailers are increasingly selling online. This poses challenges for online sales of age restricted goods such as knives. It is very difficult for an online retailer to be certain that they have not sold a knife to a person under 18 as they do not see the person making the purchase. There are software packages available that can be used by online retailers to support age verification, but such software packages are not being used by many retailers and the effectiveness of them varies.

Evidence from online test purchase operations conducted since the last decade, when online shopping became increasingly common, show that the majority of online retailers sampled failed to have effective age verification procedures. The failure rate for test online purchases of knives

has improved little compared with the first documented online test purchase operation. Trading Standards conducted two online test purchase operations in 2008 and 2009, which showed that 80% of the retailers sampled (58 of 72) would sell to a person under 18. A test purchase operation undertaken in 2014 showed that 69% of the retailers (18 of out of 26 retailers tested) failed the test. This was a slight improvement on the exercise five years previously but still showed that the large majority of online test purchases failed and retailers were breaking the law.

A further test purchase operation was carried out in December 2016. Trading Standards, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Police, conducted a test purchase operation to test whether online retailers would sell a knife to someone under 18. The results showed that 72% of retailers tested (15 out of 21 retailers) failed to verify the age of the purchaser at the point of accepting the order, and only 19% (4) went on to require further evidence of age and refused the sale when the evidence was not produced.

Every time an online test purchase operation is undertaken, the large majority of online retailers tested break the law on sales of knives. This contrasts with test purchases carried out in shops where the large majority of sales of knives comply with the law. In the national police week of action against knives under Operation Sceptre in July 2017, for example, there were 221 test purchases of knives in shops undertaken. 81% (180) passed and 19% (41) failed. While the number of failures is still worrying and further work needs to be done, it is much better than the level of failures on online test purchases.

We are planning to introduce new legislation to take additional steps to prevent online retailers selling knives to young people under 18 years old.

## Working to strengthen controls on legally owned firearms

### Improving legislation and practice on the ownership and licensing of firearms

We are actively strengthening controls on legally owned firearms to mitigate the risk of them coming into someone's possession illegally and used for criminal purposes. The lawful possession and ownership of firearms is regulated and the law allows for some firearms and shotguns to be licensed and held on a certificate issued by the police while other, more dangerous firearms are prohibited for civilian ownership and use. As of 31 March 2017, there were nearly 155,000 firearms certificates on issue in England and Wales and around 561,000 shotgun certificates.

It is clearly very important that the controls are as robust as possible to prevent firearms getting into the hands of criminals, including serious and organised crime groups and terrorists and that any firearms licensing vulnerabilities are addressed. Our actions include: greater regulation of antique firearms; statutory guidance to be issued to the police on firearms and shotgun licensing; improving the arrangements on the use of medical information in licensing decisions; and new offences on unlawfully converting imitation firearms and defectively deactivated firearms.

### Improving the controls and practice on registered firearms dealers

The Home Office will address the risks that have been identified in respect of the framework in which Registered Firearms Dealers currently operate. The vast majority of Registered Firearms Dealers are law abiding and comply with the legal framework in which they are expected to operate, but there are a minority who have exposed vulnerabilities in the current framework and have enabled firearms to be used for criminal purposes. Most Registered Firearms Dealers supply civilian firearms and shotguns but a smaller number are permitted by the Secretary of State to deal in firearms

prohibited for civilian ownership under section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968.

“Section 5” Registered Firearms Dealers are permitted to import and handle some of the most dangerous firearms such as fully automatic weapons and handguns. They range from large businesses, for example supplying police forces and the military with firearms and ammunition, through to much smaller and more specialist manufacturers and dealers who may, for example, be permitted to possess only one or two firearms at any given time. In view of the vulnerabilities that have been identified around the role of Registered Firearms Dealers, the Home Office will be taking action to introduce tighter controls, higher standards, greater transparency, and more rigorous inspections.

## Supporting and challenging police capability

### Sharing best practice of ‘what works’: hotspot policing

The College of Policing has a key role in ensuring good practice is identified and shared. This makes good economic sense as well as directly helping the communities affected by violent crime and society more broadly. We know that violent crime tends to be concentrated in small areas, usually urban, and by focusing resources and activities on these ‘hotspots’, evidence shows that crime is reduced not only in these specific areas but potentially also in the wider geographic area. The College of Policing will be establishing a new Vulnerability Coordinating Centre with a focus on evaluating interventions and pushing out evidence on ‘what works’ to support policing. Given the importance of serious violence interventions within this context the College will prioritise evaluation of serious violence interventions within this work ensuring that best practice and evidence is identified and shared over the lifetime of this work in 2018/19. Hotspot policing has been found to be particularly effective for offences involving violent crime,

especially when used in conjunction with problem-oriented policing approaches.

### **Role of inspection – HMICFRS**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) have a key role in examining and promoting forces' adherence to strategies like hot-spot policing that have been proven to be effective. The Home Office is working closely with HMICFRS to ensure their PEEL inspections provide a focus on serious violence which challenges and supports forces in tackling knife crime, gangs, gun crime and other serious violence issues.

In particular, HMICFRS will deliver a thematic inspection of county lines in 2018-19 which will test our understanding of police forces ability to identify, respond and disrupt county lines related criminality and abuse. This will support essential learning for the future as the policing response develops.

The thematic inspection of police forces will complement the planned Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) 'deep dive' on the theme of child sexual exploitation, children associated with gangs and at risk of exploitation and children missing from home, care or education. These are joint inspections carried out by HMICFRS, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. All JTAs include an evaluation of the multi-agency 'front door' for child protection, when children at risk of harm first become known to local services and this thematic will encompass consideration of the safeguarding response to those young people involved in county lines.

### **Expanding use of data analytics and improving analysis**

The analysis and sharing of data held is already critical to understanding and addressing serious violence. New technologies and techniques have the potential to significantly improve efforts to tackle and prevent a range of serious crime threats. In particular the proportionate and controlled sharing of data between the police

and partners at local, regional and national level has the potential to transform our understanding and impact.

All forces cite analytical capacity and capability as limiting factors in exploiting their own data and a desire to work locally with partners in addressing the threat. The Home Office, through the Police Transformation Fund, is supporting a number of police led programmes to improve their analytical capabilities. This includes funding an Avon and Somerset pilot to create a Multi-Agency Integrated Services Analytics Hub which aims to create a model for the controlled collation of multi-agency data and applying analytical techniques to better inform professional decision making. The Home Office is also working with the West Midlands Police to develop the capability to analyse local data to improve the police's and other local agencies' ability to respond to threats.

To complement these investments the Home Office will work with the police to better analyse police and other data sources, improving our understanding of the threat of serious violence, informing policy and testing innovative solutions to the challenge. In the medium-term the National Law Enforcement Data Programme will provide law enforcement and other agencies, on demand and at the point of need, with current and joined up policing information from a new Law Enforcement Data Service facilitating the operational use of police data. It will also facilitate much better strategic use of data, plugging gaps in our evidence base on victims and offenders and allowing us to test interventions faster and at much more local levels of granularity.

### **Improving police data at source**

We are also providing funding to improve police data at source. Crimes are currently recorded via a coding system. Burglary has a code. Robbery has a code. But certain types of crime are flagged rather than having a code. Knife crime is one example. A robbery with a knife is classed as a robbery. Robbery is the offence, not knife crime. The fact that

it was carried out with a knife has to be flagged separately. In practice, this doesn't always happen perfectly, for good reasons. Flagging crimes requires police resource that could be spent instead on preventing or catching offenders. However, technology now exists to improve this process. That is why we are trialling 'machine-reading' technology with the police, to automatically record crimes as knife crimes where a knife is mentioned, rather than requiring an individual to read through and determine this. If successful, this would be a service we offer to all forces.

## Work to support victims and witnesses

### Victims Strategy and Code

The Government's Victims Strategy will be launched later in 2018 and will emphasise the importance of a joined-up approach across Government Departments and agencies in helping victims cope and recover. The strategy will explore how to encourage and support victims to effectively and confidently engage with the justice system.

The Victims Code sets out enhanced entitlements for victims of the most serious crimes including for those who are a close relative bereaved by a criminal offence, or a victim of terrorism, attempted murder, or wounding or causing grievous bodily harm with intent. These enhanced entitlements include being entitled to make a victim personal statement irrespective of whether they have provided a witness statement.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England have collaborated on a framework describing the respective roles and relationships between trauma normalisation support, often provided by the third sector and funded by MoJ for victims of crime, and the NHS. This pathway applies in relation to terrorism and other major traumatic incidents which can involve incidents of serious violence. MoJ will work with the NHS and DHSC to look to expand these pathways to support victims of different types of crime.

### Support for victims in court

Victims and witnesses of serious violence will often be intimidated, and may need extra support to give their best evidence. Victim Personal Statements should be used and special measures considered and applied for when appropriate. Pre-recorded cross-examination, or section 28, is the last special measure in relation to witnesses other than the accused to be implemented. S.28 has been available in three courts since December 2013 for child witnesses under 16 or witnesses vulnerable due to physical or mental disability. The Ministry of Justice are rolling it out for vulnerable witnesses in all Crown Court centres in England and Wales. S.28 will also be tested for intimidated witnesses who are victims of sexual offences and modern slavery offences in three Crown Court centres. The measure aims to reduce the stress of court and make sure vulnerable and intimidated witnesses can give their best evidence.

## Key actions and commitments:

- Work with the NPCC lead to implement preventative measures in respect of online video platforms encouraging gang related violence and take action against illegal material posted online.
- Continue to support police forces to take action against knife crime with co-ordinated national weeks of action under Operation Sceptre.
- Supporting Trading Standards to undertake prosecutions of retailers who sell knives to under-18s through developing a specific prosecution fund to support this activity.
- Ensure that police and prosecutors are considering the need for special measures and of the use of victim personal statements and community impact statements to ensure courts are fully aware of the impact of corrosive attacks on individuals and communities.
- Ensure that there is appropriate support available to victims of attacks with acid and other corrosive substances from the initial medical response and beyond.
- Following the consultation in late 2017, consider tightening up legislation on knives, corrosive substances and firearms, including action in relation to online sale of knives.
- Commission the Centre for Applied Science and Technology to ensure that the police have the capability to undertake street testing to enable them to take action against individuals suspected of carrying corrosive substances in public.
- Tighten the legal framework within which Registered Firearms Dealers operate.
- Strengthening controls on legally owned firearms to mitigate the risk of them coming into someone's possession illegally and used for criminal purposes.
- Providing funding to Avon and Somerset Police to create a Multi-Agency Integrated Services Analytics Hub to create a model for collating multi-agency data and applying predictive analytics.
- Work with HMICFRS to ensure their PEEL inspections provide a focus on serious violence.
- Work with HMICFRS to support a thematic inspection of county lines in 2018-19.
- Developing the Victims Strategy recognising the importance of, and need for, a joined-up approach across Government in supporting victims.
- Continuing with the roll-out of pre-recorded cross-examination for vulnerable witnesses to help reduce the trauma of giving evidence.

## Chapter 7

# Conclusion: delivering impact and next steps



This strategy has set out our approach and ambition to tackle serious violence. We have been clear that local partnerships, communities and Police and Crime Commissioners in particular have a lead role to play in addressing this issue. We have also detailed the ways in which Government will support this agenda through continued focus and additional measures to support early intervention and prevention, local partnerships and by providing tools to support the law enforcement and criminal justice response.

Our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but as we have explained in this strategy it depends also on partnerships across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, victim services and others. In particular it needs the support of communities, especially with young people and young adults involved in positive activities. Our overarching message is that tackling serious violence is not a law enforcement issue alone and it requires a multiple strand approach involving a range of partners across different sectors.

We will ensure there is a framework in place to support delivery of the strategy and its aims.

### **Inter-Ministerial Group on the Serious Violence Strategy**

At a national level we will establish a new Inter-Ministerial Group on the Serious Violence Strategy in order to oversee and drive delivery of this strategy. This will be chaired by the Home Office and will meet on a quarterly basis. Membership will include Ministers from the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Work and Pensions, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Ministry of Justice, the Wales Office, and the Attorney General's Office, as well as the relevant NPCC Lead and senior representation from the NCA.

### **Serious Violence Taskforce**

The Home Office will also establish a new cross-sector Serious Violence Taskforce which will include key representatives from national and local government, police and crime commissioners and key delivery partners including representatives from health, education and industry. The Taskforce will be chaired by the Home Office, and will oversee delivery of the strategy programme of work and provide a route for challenge and support on local progress in tackling serious violence. It will report to the Inter-Ministerial Group.

### **International Violent Crime Symposium**

Chapter One demonstrated that serious violence trends have been similar across many developed nations, suggesting a global component to the trend. The Home Secretary will therefore be holding an International Violent Crime Symposium in autumn 2018 to bring together leading international academics and other key stakeholders to understand what is known about trends in drivers of violent crime and what works in terms of effective interventions in different parts of the world. This will help ensure our approaches and interventions are informed by the best practice of what is known around the world.

### **Test and evaluate interventions**

Chapter Two showed that there is good evidence for early interventions that prevent violence. But this evidence is largely based on a select group of small US studies because the cost of following up a sample of people from childhood through to adulthood is very high.

We are aiming to support data linkage projects that will allow interventions to be tested faster, at less cost and at scale. By linking administrative data systems it becomes possible to innovate and test interventions in England and Wales at far larger scale. The aim here is not to examine effects on any one individual. It is to study the bigger data patterns within thousands

or hundreds of thousands of people to constantly monitor and improve interventions aimed at reducing both victimisation and perpetration of serious violence.

### **National events with key sectors**

The Home Office will hold a range of national events with key sectors to help inform our continued understanding of the threat, the impact of our strategy and the challenges to tackling serious violence.

We will engage with key partners including Police and Crime Commissioners, Community Safety Partnerships, police, local authority and health professionals and we will involve academics and industry for example through a further summit on corrosive attacks later in 2018 and the International Violent Crime Symposium.

### **Key actions and commitments:**

- The current Inter-Ministerial Group on Gangs will be refocused to an Inter-Ministerial Group on the Serious Violence Strategy in order to oversee and drive delivery of the strategy.
- Establish a new cross sector Serious Violence Taskforce with key representatives from a range of national, local and delivery partner agencies to oversee delivery of the Serious Violence Strategy.
- Hold an International Violent Crime Symposium in autumn 2018 to bring together the international academic community to understand the trends in serious violence in different parts of the world.
- Test and evaluate interventions to identify effectiveness in preventing both victimisation and perpetration of serious violence.
- Deliver a series of national and regional events with key sectors to assess changes in the nature and threat of serious violence and to challenge impact.



Annex A

# County lines action plan



# County Lines Working Group action plan summaries

## Action Plan 1

Action	Status
Raising awareness in forces and promoting cross-border operations e.g. action on gangs linked to Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham involved in county lines.	<b>Action delivered.</b> Forces outside London similarly aware of county lines and related exploitation leading to increased police disruption, arrests and more cases to courts.
Securing and implementing vulnerability marker on the Police National Computer for county lines to allow police to identify vulnerable individuals for safeguarding action.	<b>Action delivered.</b> New marker/ equivalent has been identified and a successful pilot of approach has been delivered as part of Project Denver. This has improved police intelligence leading to better identification, disruption and arrests.
Building an intelligence picture of how county lines enterprises operate and exploit. National Crime Agency (NCA) to undertake a further (third) annual assessment of county lines in 2017.	<b>Action delivered.</b> The NCA report was published in November 2017 based on information returns from all 43 forces plus BTP.
Develop legislation (Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restriction Orders (DDTRO) Regulations) to compel phone operators to close down mobile phone lines used to facilitate drug dealing, including county lines operations.	<b>Action delivered.</b> The DDTRO regulations have been debated and agreed by both Houses of Parliament. The power came into force on 7 December 2017 and enables police/NCA to disrupt phone lines and impede the county lines operating model.
Publish guidance for prosecutors that underlines the modern slavery angle in respect of county lines and adding trafficking/slavery charges to the indictment in these cases, to increase awareness of the range of legislation to be considered when prosecuting 'county lines' offending.	<b>Action delivered.</b> Crown Prosecution Service published their county lines typology in November 2017.
Develop guidance for frontline practitioners to help them identify and appropriately refer county lines victims.	<b>Action delivered.</b> Home Office worked with key stakeholders to develop guidance which was published in July 2017. It is available on <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a> as well as being actively disseminated to the practitioner community.
Raise awareness of county lines across key sectors of health, housing, education, social care and youth offending in order that staff working in these frontline settings are able to identify and refer county lines affected individuals and help prevent exploitation.	<b>Action delivered.</b> Information about county lines disseminated through a variety of channels, including targeted workshops and conferences with the police, health sector, children's social care and housing. Sector bulletins and newsletters issued and training packages developed e.g. for work coaches and professional bodies engaged on county lines.

## Action Plan 2

### Pursue: prosecuting the criminality

Action	Impact	Milestones	Delivery Partner
<p><b>ACTION 1:</b> Implementation of Drug Dealing Telecommunication Restriction Orders (DDTROs).</p>	<p>Disruption of deal lines to disrupt county lines drug dealing and associated exploitation.</p>	<p>First successful use of DDTRO <b>January 2018</b>.</p> <p>Wider police use of DDTRO powers from <b>February 2018</b> onwards.</p> <p><b>April 2018</b> – review process of DDTRO applications and use of powers</p>	<p><b>Police (including regional forces, PSNI and Police Scotland) and National Crime Agency (NCA)</b></p>
<p><b>ACTION 2:</b> Ensure prosecution guidance reflects best practice on approach.</p>	<p>Successful use of full range of legislative powers available in prosecuting county lines criminality to disrupt county lines dealing and associated exploitation.</p>	<p>First cases of county lines-related trafficking brought under Modern Slavery Act (MSA) were heard in December. Review of typology in <b>June 2018</b>.</p>	<p><b>CPS</b></p>
<p><b>ACTION 3:</b> Use of vulnerability assessment 'tracker' tool to better identify the vulnerabilities of those exploited through county lines activity.</p>	<p>Improved identification leading to increased disruption and arrests. Greater numbers of victims identified and safeguarding activity developed.</p>	<p>Tracker fully rolled out in Metropolitan Police Service and is increasingly being used by police forces in Modern Slavery Act and county lines projects and collecting intelligence on those affected.</p>	<p><b>NPCC</b></p>
<p><b>ACTION 4:</b> National County Lines Co-ordination Centre.</p>	<p>Co-ordination of police activities against county lines in order to deliver a co-ordinated and joined up approach across local, regional and national policing and in line with 4P approach.</p>	<p>Initial activity began in <b>January 2018</b> to provide central intelligence point, including deconfliction of DDTRO applications.</p>	<p><b>NCA/NPCC</b></p>

## Protect: building resilience

Action	Impact	Milestones	Delivery Partner
<p><b>ACTION 5:</b> Nationwide awareness-raising communication activity about the threat of county lines</p>	<p>Overarching communications strategy to raise awareness with multiple audiences, including statutory, non-statutory, public and victims; in order to safeguard victims.</p>	<p>Delivery of materials and messages to statutory audiences, plus evaluation completed by <b>February 2018</b>. Delivery to non-statutory audiences to start <b>Spring 2018</b> onwards.</p>	<p>HO</p>
<p><b>ACTION 6:</b> Crimestoppers campaign delivered in partnership with forces (both importing and exporting ends of identified lines)</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the issue so that police receive further intelligence through people reporting concerns to Crimestoppers.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing:</b> Crimestoppers working with local forces to run campaigns running in force areas, including NW and Cheshire.</p>	<p>NPCC</p>
<p><b>ACTION 7:</b> Second national police conference on county lines</p>	<p>Ensure baseline awareness levels of county lines and in particular the associated exploitation across forces.</p>	<p>Second conference to update forces on the county lines threat and promote new tools in <b>April 2018</b>.</p>	<p>NPCC</p>
<p><b>ACTION 8:</b> Develop guidance on safeguarding public spaces</p>	<p>Protect vulnerable locations to help prevent children and vulnerable people being groomed for county lines exploitation.</p>	<p>Work with multi-agency partners to identify good practice case studies by <b>April 2018</b>.</p>	<p>HO</p>
<p><b>ACTION 9:</b> Reflect county lines in the 'Together we can tackle child abuse' campaign</p>	<p>Encouraging audience to re-assess adolescent behaviour, which may be a sign of abuse/neglect.</p>	<p>Third wave of the Child Abuse campaign goes live in <b>April 2018</b>.</p>	<p>DfE</p>
<p><b>ACTION 10:</b> Embedding county lines as part of core safeguarding / MASH processes.</p>	<p>Improved sharing of information between early intervention and safeguarding partners with support from <b>LGA</b>, particularly cross-region, in order to develop fuller understanding of those at risk / exploited.</p>	<p><b>2018/19:</b> JTAI deep dive on theme of: CSE, children associated with gangs and at risk of exploitation, and missing children.  Publication of revised Working Together guidance.</p>	<p>HO/DfE/DH/MHCLG</p>

Action	Impact	Milestones	Delivery Partner
<p><b>ACTION 11:</b> Guidance for YOTs and HMPPS on how to work with partners</p>	<p>Drive a more co-ordinated approach with wider services involved in the response to county lines through developing a protocol for YOTs and HMPPS that sets out the roles of local area partners including other statutory agencies, setting out roles and responsibilities in tackling county lines</p>	<p><b>Summer 2018:</b> publication of guidance</p>	<p>MoJ</p>

### Prepare: support for those affected

Action	Impact	Milestones	Delivery Partner
<p><b>ACTION 12:</b> Delivery of St Giles Trust / Missing People support services pilot for victims of county lines</p>	<p>Those young people caught up in county lines as runners are often unwitting victims of exploitation, and their particular circumstances and associated risks mean that existing gang-related support services do not meet their needs.</p>	<p><b>April 2018:</b> Final evaluation of the support services pilot.</p>	<p>HO</p>
<p><b>ACTION 13:</b> Support for Girls and Young Women affected by gangs, including county lines</p>	<p>Women and girls are at high risk of CSE and sexual violence once involved in county lines operations. Young People's Advocates (YPAs) provide support to help them exit this lifestyle.</p>	<p><b>March 2018:</b> HO funding for the 13 YPA posts in FY18/19 confirmed.</p> <p><b>Summer 2018:</b> YPA event to share learning and establish YPA network.</p>	<p>HO</p>
<p><b>ACTION 14:</b> Support for children and young people exploited to transport drugs and money</p>	<p>Children trafficked as part of county lines are appropriately supported by national programmes for child victims of trafficking reported through the NRM mechanism.</p>	<p><b>Spring 2018:</b> Evaluation of Independent Child Trafficking Advocate pilot scheme.</p>	<p>HO</p>

Action	Impact	Milestones	Delivery Partner
<b>ACTION 15:</b> Explore potential for Police Transformation Fund (PTF) funded projects to address county lines	Support the integration of county lines exploitation into wider safeguarding agency by ensuring its inclusion in relevant projects.	<b>Spring:</b> identification of relevant projects and initial scoping of activity on county lines.	HO
<b>ACTION 16:</b> Interventions to support young people involved in county lines from Greater London	Interventions to support children and young people affiliated to county line activity to exit the lifestyle.	<b>October 2017:</b> MOPAC have recommissioned London Gang Exit (LGE) to run until September 2019.	MOPAC

### Prevent: intelligence to inform response

Action	Impact	Milestones	Delivery Partner
<b>ACTION 17:</b> Diversion: 'Prevent' projects to include targeting young people 'at risk' of being drawn in to county lines activity.	Appropriate diversion and support for those involved or at risk of involvement in county lines.	<b>April 2018:</b> evaluation of reach and effectiveness of projects.	HO
<b>ACTION 18:</b> Drug demand information available and accessible to agencies and police.	Fuller intelligence assessment providing greater insight on trends and emerging threat areas. Related data can help identify: i) changes in service provision which will create / change demand hotspots and hence markets; ii) changes in demand profiles including emerging trends.	<b>September 2017:</b> publication of prevalence estimates	HO / Public Health England
<b>ACTION 19:</b> Annual threat assessment on county lines	Updated intelligence assessment providing greater and fuller understanding of the problem and current nature of threat.	<b>June 2018:</b> commissioning of 2018 national threat assessment  <b>November 2018:</b> publication of 2018 assessment	NCA
<b>ACTION 20:</b> Profiling of those associated with gangs (victims and perpetrators).	Improved intelligence leading to better identification, disruption and arrests plus that the necessary support is in place for victims.	<b>May 18:</b> pathways report published	HO

Annex B

# Endnotes



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- 1 ONS. (2018). *Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2017*. Appendix Table A4. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixables> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 2 The Office for National Statistics is clear that the Crime Survey provides the best picture of long term trends for the crime types it covers. The most recent Crime Survey data (up to year ending September 2017) show a downward trend in overall crime, see ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales appendix tables A1 and A2. This is not to say that there may be some other low-volume categories of crime that may be genuinely rising.
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- 3 There are several ways to show this. Firstly HMICFRS audits of police recording practice in 2014 showed that around a third of violence incidents were not recorded correctly. More recent inspections have shown an improvement in crime recording, which will cause a rise in recorded offences, though there are still further improvements by the police to be made. Secondly, it has been possible to compare calls for service to the police and the number of crimes recorded in some forces. These data show that trends in calls for service have stayed relatively flat or increased at a much slower pace than the increase in police recorded crime, suggesting improvements in crime recording. For further details on both of these see Crime in England Wales. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>
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- 4 This is reflected by the steep increase in historical offences recorded over the last five years, although that has lessened slightly more recently (ONS, 2018).
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- 5 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) figures available at: ONS. (2018). *Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2017*. Appendix Table A8. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixables> [accessed 26/02/2018]
- Hospital statistics available at: NHS Digital. (2017). *Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2012-13: External causes*. Retrieved from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/media/23598/Hospital-Episode-Statistics-Admitted-Patient-Care-England-2012-13-External-causes/Any/hosp-epis-stat-admi-ext-caus-2012-13-tab> [accessed 26/02/2018]
- Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2016-17: External causes*. Retrieved from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/media/32932/Hospital-Admitted-Patient-Care-Activity-2016-17-External-causes/default/hosp-epis-stat-admi-ext-caus-2016-17-tab> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 6 These figures do not include possession offences. Knife crime data available at: ONS. (2017). *Focus on violent crime and sexual offences, England and Wales: year ending March 2016*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2016> [accessed 26/02/2018]
- Knife crime open data available at: Home Office. (2018). *Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 7 NHS Digital. (2017). *Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2016-17: External causes*. Retrieved from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/media/32932/Hospital-Admitted-Patient-Care-Activity-2016-17-External-causes/default/hosp-epis-stat-admi-ext-caus-2016-17-tab> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 8 There are two elements to the better recording of firearms offences. The first relates to inclusion of offences involving low powered weapons such as BB guns, which previously may not have been recorded. The second reflects an increase in possession of a firearm with intent offences, which previously may have been recorded as simple possession offences, which are not included in this collection.

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- 9 ONS. (2018). *Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2017*. Appendix Table A4. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 10 West Midlands and Sussex police forces included unbroken bottle and glass offences in their knife crime returns prior to year ending March 2011 but have excluded these offences in line with other forces since year ending March 2011. As such, they have been excluded from this graph to enable comparison with those from earlier years.
- The homicide data exclude 172 homicides attributed to Harold Shipman (from 2002/03), 52 homicide victims of the 7 July London bombings (from 2005/06), 96 homicide victims of Hillsborough (from 2016/17) and 22 homicide victims of the Manchester Arena bombing and 13 homicide victims of the London Bridge/Borough Market and Westminster attacks (from year to September 2017). Corporate manslaughter offence have been included.
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- 11 See endnote above.
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- 12 This is the peak when Shipman homicides are removed. The peak is 2002/03 if these are included.
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- 13 ONS. (2018). *Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2017*. Appendix Table A4. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 14 ONS. (2017). *Focus on violent crime and sexual offences, England and Wales: year ending March 2016* Table 2.0. Retrieved from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2016> [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 15 The UK rate for 2011 was 1.0 per 100,000 population (see Table 8.1 of the Global Study on Homicide). The global and European rates were 6.2 and 3.0 respectively (see figure 1.2 of the Global Study on Homicide, based on 2012 or latest year available). United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2013). *Global Study on Homicide* (p. 23, 131). Retrieved from: <https://www.unodc.org/mwg-internal/de5fs23hu73ds/progress?id=cx0000MkV404WIEIAvnqQrChv8KO5Ws8aVgCe63ckxM>, [accessed 26/02/2018]
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- 16 In his study, Eisner's historical reference period for a sample of European countries starts in 1840 and runs up to the mid-2000s. Eisner, M. (2008). Modernity strikes back? A historical perspective on the latest increase in interpersonal violence (1960–1990). *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 2(2), 289–316.
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- 17 Eisner, M. (2008). Modernity strikes back? A historical perspective on the latest increase in interpersonal violence (1960–1990). *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 2(2), 289–316.
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- 18 While they are more comparable than other crime types, there are issues surrounding the comparability of international homicide data. Different definitions of homicide exist in different countries and there may be inconsistencies in the point in criminal justice systems at which homicides are recorded. Where definitions are made clear in national figures, and disaggregated data have been available, efforts have been made to standardise figures to reflect a consistent definition of homicide as completed murder and manslaughter.

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Durand, E., Chevignard, M., Ruet, A., Dereix, A., Jourdan, C., and Pradat-Diehl, P. (2017). History of traumatic brain injury in prison populations: A systematic review, *Annals of physical and rehabilitation medicine*, 60, 95-101. *This study found that TBI prevalence rates in prison populations ranged from 9.7% to 100% (average of 46%).*

Farrer, T.J. and Hedges, D.W (2011). Prevalence of traumatic brain injury in incarcerated groups compared to the general population: a meta-analysis, *Progress in Neuro-Psychopathology & Biological Psychiatry*, 35, 390–394. *This study found that with a mean prevalence of 41.2%, the rate of TBI among prison populations was significantly higher than the general population. Note that this study was also captured in the systematic review by Durand et al. (2017).*

Hughes, N., Williams, W. H., Chitsabesan, P., Walesby, R. C., Mounce, L. T., and Clasby, B. (2015). The prevalence of traumatic brain injury among young offenders in custody: a systematic review. *The Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 30(2), 94-105. *This study found that TBI prevalence rates among young offenders ranged from 16.5% to 72.1%. Note that this study was also captured in the systematic review by Durand et al. (2017).*

Shiroma, E.J., Ferguson, P.L., and Pickelsimer, E.E (2010). Prevalence of traumatic brain injury in an offender population: a meta-analysis, *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 16, 147–59. *This analysis found a TBI prevalence rate of 60.25% among the offender population. Note that this study was also captured in the systematic review by Durand et al. (2017).*

Please note that several limitations were reported in these studies, such as the lack of control groups or comparisons made with the general population, and the lack of data on the possible impact of severity of injuries (e.g. Durand et al., 2017).

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