

SERIOUS VIOLENCE PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

Creating safer futures in
Devon, Cornwall and the
Isles of Scilly



We must break the cycle of violent crime

Devon and Cornwall is a safe place to live, in fact recorded crime rates indicate that most of us are less likely to be a victim of a violent crime in this force area than the vast majority of other parts of the country.

Sadly this is not true for everyone. Some in our society are at increased risk of being a victim of violence, either in the home by an intimate partner or in a public place. Young people are more likely than most to be victims.

Those who go on to perpetrate crime in later life have been exposed to a range of adversities. They are more likely to have been known to children's social care, to have been excluded from school and to have witnessed domestic abuse as a child.

Much of our violence occurs behind closed doors, but while violence in the home might not be the most visible of crimes, the repercussions are felt by us all. Violence against the person offences are notably higher as a proportion of total crime in Devon and Cornwall compared to other police force areas in the South West.



The effects on our economy, mental health and future are unquestionable. The opportunities to prevent harm are vast.

Last year we established the first Serious Violence Prevention Partnership for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The NHS, national and local government and policing all have a role to play if we are to take a long-term prevention first approach to change.

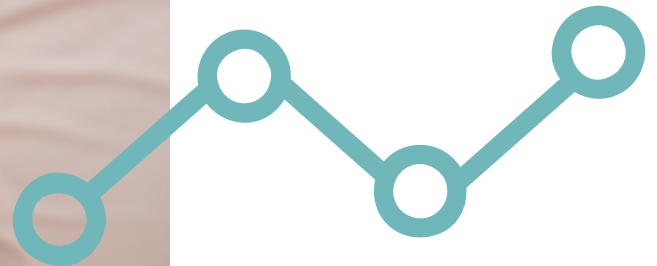
Together though we believe not only that we can break the cycle of violence and offer a brighter future for so many of our residents - we must.

Police and Crime Commissioner [Alison Hernandez](#) **and Chief Constable** [Shaun Sawyer](#)

OUR VISION

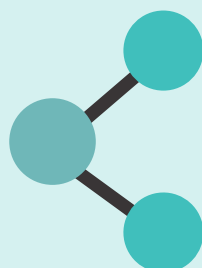
Violence is not inevitable. The Serious Violence Partnership will focus on breaking the cycle of violence in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

9 things we're doing right now to prevent violent crime



1 UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM: You cannot tackle a problem like serious violence without a thorough understanding of its causes. **Crest Advisory**, a leading crime and justice consultancy, was commissioned to assess the types of violence most prevalent across Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly. The team also helped develop the programme's strategy and worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to analyse homicide and safeguarding reviews and to identify opportunities for improvements across the peninsula.

STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS:



- Reported violence with injury has increased 43% since 2015, despite a very slight decrease in 2019
- The most prevalent violent offence is assault without injury, followed by assault with injury
- There were 16 homicides and 23 attempted murders in 2019/20, around a quarter of which involved a knife
- Robbery offences have increased year on year, with 20% of these offences in the last year involving a knife



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CHALLENGING AND INSPIRING CHILDREN: The Commissioner and Chief Constable have invested £39,892 in a programme to provide preventative and aspirational youth work for vulnerable young people on the verge of, or beginning to be involved in, disruptive and harmful anti-social behaviour. The six-week **U+ Programme** works with young people referred from secondary schools in Cornwall to provide them with a range of preventative and aspirational experiences and support. The pilot programme will reach 108 young people and will soon expand its support to include young people from pupil referral units and alternative provision. The project is being delivered by the **Dracaena Centre**, a community hub in Falmouth, in partnership with local water sports provider **Elemental UK**.

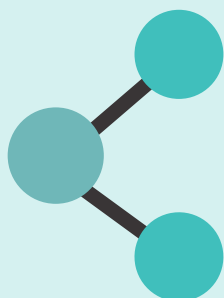


The Commissioner and Chief Constable visit the Dracaena Centre



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HELPING THE HARMED AND THE HARMER TO RECOVER: Restorative justice gives victims the chance to meet or communicate with their offenders to explain the real impact of the crime – it empowers victims by giving them a voice. Government studies show it delivers a significant reduction in the frequency of reoffending and helps victims of crime to recover more quickly from traumatic incidents. In Devon and Cornwall restorative justice is delivered by the charity **Shekinah** via its **Make Amends** service. The Serious Violence Prevention Programme has funded two Restorative Justice Family Workers who joined the Make Amends team to work within restorative principles using a family group conference with families who want things to change and where the harm is acknowledged, and responsibility accepted. These practitioners will be in place for four years and are co-located with partners across the Police and Youth Offending Teams, working with at least 40 families a year.



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE - THE FACTS:

- Government studies show that restorative justice can reduce reoffending rates by between 14% and 21%
- For every £1 spent on an RJ face-to-face meeting, £8 is saved through reductions in reoffending
- Research shows that 85% of victims who take part in restorative justice found the experience useful and were satisfied with the outcome

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GIVING CHILDREN A SECOND CHANCE: Out of court disposals can be used for children who have admitted an offence when it is not in the public interest to prosecute. The Serious Violence Prevention Programme has provided £60,000 to be shared between local authority youth offending teams across Devon and Cornwall. This funding will enable youth offending team boards to improve the use of court disposals by at least 10% and lead to better outcomes for young people. It will do this by reducing the number of decisions made by a single agency, meaning more opportunities to identify and solve problems will be explored.



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GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE BACK ON TRACK: Pathfinder is a solution for offenders which reduces harm and reoffending while holding offenders to account for their actions. The programme holds offenders to account for their behaviour whilst addressing needs that are directly linked to their offending. The Pathfinder manager, keyworkers and support officers work across Devon and Cornwall and in partnership with a wide range of agencies and organisations to tackle the root causes of offending. Pathfinder provides an alternative route from prosecution but is not a soft option. The offender must comply with the contract and the conditions set. The Serious Violence Prevention Programme is funding an expansion of the programme to 18-25 year olds with an extended period of engagement for care leavers across Devon and Cornwall.

6 INVESTING IN SPEAKING SKILLS: Speech, language and communication needs are often called the invisible or hidden disabilities because they are often not visible or obvious. As a result, their significance is often overlooked. Plymouth's youth offending team will receive extra funding from the Serious Violence Prevention Programme to increase its **Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)** provision.

The funding will also enable the youth offending service to update their communication materials so it can speak to its average youth offender. These offenders have the average reading age of a nine year old. The Police and Crime Commissioner is also providing funding to support an academic evaluation by Plymouth University which can serve as a model for best practice for youth offending teams across the country.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN - the challenges experienced by some of our young people:

- Difficulty understanding spoken words and using language to communicate
- Difficulties remembering and recalling information accurately
- Difficulty understanding commonly used legal vocabulary, for example; liable, remorse, reparation, threatening or victim. These difficulties have prevented effective access to the legal and court system
- Difficulties in listening and understanding
- Difficulties sequencing information to tell a story
- Difficulty using abstract language (e.g. idioms, metaphors).
- Difficulties staying on topic
- Understanding non-verbal communication and relating to others in socially acceptable ways
- Difficulty expressing feelings and emotions in an appropriate way, for example they may use aggressive behaviour, instead of words, to express themselves

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PREVENTING CRIMINALS EXPLOITING AT RISK CHILDREN: Stopping young people from getting involved in criminality, and offering constructive alternatives, offers a huge opportunity to break the cycle of violent crime. The **Turning Corners** project is a tried and tested approach involving local authorities, the police, youth workers and parents that will stop young people in Devon becoming involved in violence, anti-social behaviour and crime through early intervention and prevention. The programme, covering Teignbridge and South Hams Districts, will run for four years and will reach over 80 families each year.



TURNING CORNERS WORKS HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE EDGE OF VIOLENCE THROUGH:

- **Working in partnership with parents:** Where there are concerns about a child at risk of offending behaviour, Turning Corners invites parents to be partners in youth crime prevention by attending support groups. Over 10 weeks parents will work with peers who face similar challenges to identify solutions, needs and where necessary additional one to one specialist support.
- **Smoothing the transition from primary to secondary school:** Changing schools is hard for many children, particularly those already vulnerable and known to social care, police and inclusion teams. Using a screening tool to identify children who face adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), each child in their first three weeks of secondary school will get daily one to one support sessions and support with attendance and behavioural issues until the end of their second year seven term.
- **Meeting young people where they are:** Space Youth Services operates a youth work programme using partner intelligence to engage young people in public spaces. Through building trusted relationships, Space supports young people through signposting to youth centres, council and other quality support, ensuring they access safe spaces. Each year young people come together to reflect and learn on their experiences through an annual residential trip.

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NURTURING TEAMWORK THROUGH SPORTING

SESSIONS: Plymouth **Street Games** provides free or low-cost sports sessions across the city, opening up a world of vibrant and engaging activities to young people aged from 11 to 25. Young people are identified and referred by a wide range of sport activities from skateboarding to street dance and are able to practice and learn new sports. The project funded through the Serious Violence Prevention Programme places particular emphasis on youth leadership, enabling participants to thrive in an environment focussed on fun, enjoyment and social interaction.



Next steps

Serious Violence Duty

Complimentary to the efforts of the Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly approach, the Serious Violence Duty compels a wide range of partners to work together to tackle serious violence and its causes through a public health approach. Expected to formally commence in July 2022, the duty compels a wide range of partners to work together to tackle serious violence and its causes through taking a public health approach. To help prepare the partnership for the duty the Serious Violence Programme has set up a working group with local authorities to coordinate collective action and activities. The working group will meet at least every quarter.

Executive Leaders Launch Event

The Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner will bring together the partners from across the peninsula to an in-person event in January 2022. The event will prepare senior leaders on the impact of the Serious Violence Duty, formally launch the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Programme and enable discussion on how to work better together to prevent serious violence in all its forms.

Local Partnership Grants

In the spring, Community Safety Partnerships and Local Authorities will be provided with guidance of grant funding available to support partners to deliver against their serious violence responsibilities and the peninsula strategy. Funding will be available for 2022-23 and 2023-24.