

Cheshire PCCs Response to His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

Title of Inspection	An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence	
Date Inspection Published	8 March 2023	
Type of Inspection	Thematic	
	Cheshire Specific	No
	Cheshire Quoted	No
Recommendations	National	Yes
	Local	

Report Summary

In 2018, the Home Office published its Serious Violence Strategy, setting out its response to increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide. It stated its approach wasn’t focused on law enforcement alone, but “depends on partnerships across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services and victim services”.

The report examines how the police work with violence reduction units and partner organisations to reduce serious youth violence, as well as considering how well do police use their powers of enforcement, and is there an understanding of racial disproportionality. It assesses how the police work with partner organisations to take a public health approach to serious youth violence.

Recommendations:

By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.

Frontline officers and staff have received outcomes training from the Force Crime Registrar’s team which includes the use of outcome 22. The Constabulary has appointed a Detective Superintendent to improve our outcome performance in 2021 and established an outcomes board to track and monitor the improvements being made, including outcome 22.

In addition to any outcome 22 work within the Constabulary, the Serious Violence Duty involves the completion of a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) for Cheshire. Part of this work encompasses a mapping process of all interventions across Cheshire to identify gaps in service provision relating to diversionary, educational or intention activity. Home Office grant funding will be spent based on needs and is highly likely to focus on deterrent and educational activity with clear pathways for referrals for both officers and partners.

Further options are being explored under the Serious Violence Duty for sporting provision with North West professional football clubs who can offer diversionary activities for young people likely to become engaged in Serious Violence and would support in the delivery of outcome 22.

The SNA is likely to be complete by August 2023, however interventions to support the delivery of outcome 22 are anticipated to be commissioned in the coming months ahead of the final SNA. The Strategy for Serious Violence is not due to be published until January 2024.

A dip sample of serious youth violence crimes will be undertaken to identify the quality of investigations and takes the opportunity of use to ensure compliance with outcome 22 policy. This will provide a Cheshire baseline in current performance in this area.

By 31 March 2021, chief constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.

In addition to the work ongoing within the Constabulary on the Police Race Action Plan, a Detective Inspector has been seconded to work on the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty as a project lead and will ensure that compliance with the duty is embedded into practices within the Constabulary.

The SNA for Cheshire that is currently underway will collate data across all organisations including Probation and Youth Justice. The Constabulary is providing data that includes ethnicity and age groupings as a prerequisite, which will inform the Constabulary and also the Strategic Partnership Group of any racial disproportionality across the serious violence crime types including serious youth violence. Any racial disproportionality identified will be addressed by the Serious Violence Partnership.

The Serious Violence Group is committed to a long term health based strategy to serious violence which will help to explore and respond to the drivers of any racial disproportionality in Serious Youth Violence.

Commissioner's Response:

I welcome the report 'An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence' published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in March 2023. Serious violence encompasses crimes that can have devastating consequences for both victims and offenders. Comparatively, Cheshire has one of the lowest rates of knife crime and other violent offences in the country, but we must not lose sight of the tragic murder of Brianna Ghey who lost her young life in Warrington to an unprovoked and violent assault earlier this year.

My Police and Crime Plan gives priority to preventing and tackling crime, in particular violent crime. One of my first priorities when I returned to office in 2021 was to increase investment into the Major Investigation Team. I use my scrutiny process to monitor homicide and other serious offences and how officers are using use of stop and search. The Constabulary has recently produced a revised knife crime strategy which I will ensure is effectively implemented.

Using my Police Innovation Fund and Community Cashback Fund, I have commissioned interventions which support the recommendations around the use of outcome 22. My office has worked tirelessly to identify and support schemes and interventions to divert young people from criminal activity, which include initiatives such as Get Away N Get Safe. This project delivers early intervention aimed at young people to challenge and change their attitudes around gang culture, knife carrying and social responsibility.

I have commissioned a youth violence pilot project in Halton and Warrington developed by Queensberry. They will deliver an intervention in the Halton and Warrington area to address the needs of local young people who are on the periphery or indeed involved in serious violence and associated criminality such as county lines drug supply and those who have been victims of Childhood Exploitation.

The Sandiway Ormiston Academy provides workshops for young people aged between 11-16 on keeping themselves safe, providing education around risky behaviours and conscious decision making, all linked to county lines activity, knife crime and violence reduction. Livewire Warrington 'Back on track' deliver a sports one to one mentoring scheme and personal development project targeted at young people at risk of becoming involved in crime particularly serious violence and county lines.

Warrington Youth Zone engage a cohort of fifteen disadvantaged young people in sporting and development activities, offering a diversion from ASB, crime and violence in partnership with Warrington Youth Engagement.

My office is currently in the process of sourcing diversionary projects using football (Liverpool Football Club) as an incentive to attend to address ASB and youth violence alongside a more intensive mentoring programme in schools.

The Cheshire Youth Commission focuses on giving young people a stronger voice in raising policing and crime issues in their local communities. I value the insight given to me by this group and will continue to respond to their feedback to inform the work of my office and the Constabulary.

This week I will be attending the launch of the Knife Angel. The Knife Angel initiative provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness around knife crime and serious violence and deliver important preventative work to reduce incidents involving knives. I

remain committed to making Cheshire an even safer place to both live and work and will continue to exploit all opportunities available to me to ensure this happens.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Dwyer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and a stylized 'D'.

John Dwyer

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire