

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	20 FEBRUARY 2023
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Subject	SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper is to update members on the progress of the Serious Violence Duty ('the Duty') which was introduced by the Government in May 2021 to ensure relevant services including Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence together.

The Home Office are planning to launch Serious Violence Duty measures in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (Chapter 1 of Part 2) on the 31 January 2023. This is when the requirement for specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence will begin. This programme of work is broken down into two core parts 1) assessing readiness and 2) providing support to areas for implementation. Partnerships will then need to prepare a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and local strategy and implement this strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. Strategies will need to be published by the 31 of January 2024.

It will also ensure relevant services including Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence together. Ongoing support and guidance is also provided by the NFCC on how FRS can assist.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the contents of the report.

CONTENTS

Main Report
Appendix A Statutory Guidance December 2022

BACKGROUND

1. Serious violence has a major impact on victims and their families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. For example, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 84 percent between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020.
2. The Introduction of a new serious violence duty requires the police, fire and rescue authorities, councils, youth offending teams, specified Clinical Commissioning groups, Integrated Care Systems, and probation services to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence as part of core service provision.
3. This new undertaking by FRSs will include the need to prepare and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence in local neighbourhoods, having consulted with education authorities, prison services and youth custody authorities in their area. It will require FRSs to work together with these agencies and others to identify and publish what actions they need to take collectively to reduce violent crime.
4. The legislation will grant FRSs and other authorities the power to share data and information with each other for the purpose of preventing and reducing serious violence. Emphasis on early intervention with young people is central to complying with the duty. There is a clear requirement in the duty to work with partners to formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. Prisons, youth custody agencies and educational authorities may also need to work with these core partners.

The impact of the Duty on Fire and Rescue Services

5. As stated, the Duty applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas, including Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners, metropolitan Mayors in their capacity as fire and rescue authorities and in the exercise of those functions. The Fire and Rescue Authority may wish to identify a representative, which may be the operational FRS lead for the area, as this may be the body that will have the greatest local knowledge, however the Authority as the duty holder will remain responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Duty. The Authority should therefore, ensure that any suitable representative has responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with the partnership arrangements.
6. Emergency Services are already subject to a statutory duty to collaborate with one another, and FRS have a key role in these partnerships, often occupying a very trusted position by community groups. Collaboration with partners can aid early identification and diversion from involvement in serious violence, which are both crucial in reversing the increase in harm, which may be caused by and against young people in the local community.
7. The duty will ensure that serious violence is made a focus within existing multi-agency arrangements, such as multi-agency safeguarding arrangements or Community Safety Partnerships and will allow for collaboration between a much wider set of partners. This duty will also introduce a requirement for local partnerships to establish their local problem profile and produce a local strategy specifically aimed at preventing and reducing serious violence.

8. The primary role for FRS in the Duty centres on well-established work that FRS have undertaken with Children and Young People (CYP) to support early intervention to keep young people safe and away from violence. There is a clear role for FRS to support this work and this should be explored nationally and locally. Fire plays a big role here and is probably better established than most agencies, increased trust of FRSs should be used more widely through local partnerships.

The role of FRS in supporting the Duty

9. The following section of this report sets out in greater detail the potential reach of FRS and the NFCC in supporting the Serious Violence Duty as part of local delivery partnership but also through the NFCC role as sector leader to support and promote an evidence-based approach to developing the prevention, protection, and response functions of FRS.

Children and Young People (CYP)

10. FRSs have a tradition of engaging with local communities to promote fire safety as well as wider models of community and individual engagement to support citizenship, community cohesion and direct support to vulnerable individuals and communities. FRS work with CYP is well established as a model to work with partners to use intelligence to identify CYP who are at higher risk of serious violence and engage them in interventions, activities and education which will reduce their likelihood of becoming involved with serious violence and associated anti-social behaviour.
11. FRSs have the capability to deliver trauma informed interventions, engagement activities and safety education to targeted CYP which supports the personal development and social and emotional learning of the child to reduce their vulnerability and increase their resilience in line with current practice and evidence of what works to reduce serious violence. Leading to the development of engagement activities and safety education which will develop life skills and inspire CYP to make positive choices about their futures. By engaging CYP early with professional, evidence-based interventions, FRS can enhance CYP life chances and resilience, to lead productive lives, improving their outcomes and creating stronger, safer, and more cohesive communities now and in the future.

Safeguarding

12. There is a clear expectation that FRSs develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse. Safeguarding within the fire sector is one that is wholly immersed in collaborative approaches with the majority of FRS represented at Local Authority Safeguarding Children and Local Authority Safeguarding Adult Boards.

Deliberate Fires

13. FRSs are often able to identify the early stages of anti-social behaviour associated with deliberate fire setting. Data sharing and working across boundaries with partners can help to recognise, assess, and tackle anti-social behaviour and some of the underlying causes. FRS often hold a trusted position within partnerships and communities and can take a joined up, problem solving approach to find a solution to the core problems caused by anti-social behaviour. While FRS hold no anti-social related powers, working in partnership with other agencies to target harden locations can help to reduce the impact the behaviour is having and can ensure the victim is put first.

14. The trusted and dependable reputation that Services hold within communities can be used to provide educational programmes that encourage young people and adult Firesetters away from behaviours that can lead to anti-social behaviour. While partnerships with educational establishments and community groups can ensure that interventions are delivered at the earliest opportunity, working with probation services also provides the opportunity for children and adults to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by some of their actions.

Actions and next steps

15. Area Manager Service Improvement to be SPOC (single point of contact) for SYFR and NFCC contact. Further to the Initial Serious Violence Duty meeting, held 25/01/2023 work will begin with Crest Advisory: Readiness Assessment (Serious Violence Duty).
16. Crest Advisory has been commissioned by the Home Office to reach out and work with the organisations specified in the Serious Violence (SV) Duty (police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, youth offending teams, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and probation services) and their local partners, to both enable and assess readiness nationally and to provide tailored support to specific local areas to develop readiness and compliance in line with the requirements of the Duty. Throughout 2023, and until the duty is established, Crest Advisory will be working to embed the SV duty and establish local engagement on behalf of the Home Office.
17. CREST will conduct an initial review, including sending over relevant documentation to partners. Conduct 1:1 interviews at a leadership level and at a practitioner survey and focus groups. Provide a Readiness scale: Crest Advisory propose to assess local areas with a view of placing them on a five-point scale, ranging from 'not ready' to 'mature, best practice'. This is to inform support - there will be no further indexing between local areas.
18. Crest Advisory will also be running a series of four online workshops over the next three months to help local areas understand their obligations under the Duty and gain the most from implementing the readiness assessment.

Understanding the Duty

19. This workshop will set out what the Serious Violence Duty is and how it can help prevent violence, as well as explaining the public health approach. It will also cover how the Duty can be met within the context of existing local partnership arrangements.

Evaluation and Data

20. Workshop two looks at building an evidence base to inform a local response to serious violence, including how to gather evidence and share data across agencies to inform a strategic needs assessment.

Developing Strategies

21. Workshop three will cover how to develop a strategic response in a local area based on the evidence, including developing a theory of change and performance framework. It will also discuss when and how to evaluate interventions.

Sharing Good Practice

22. The final workshop will be an opportunity to reflect on the findings of the joint readiness assessments at a ROCU (Regional Organised Crime Unit) level, and for areas to share examples of good practice that they have developed. Existing toolkits of interventions will also be shared

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- ☒ **Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- ☒ **Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- ☒ **Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR will work closely with SYP, Criminal Justice system, Integrated Care Board, the four Local Authority's and other groups who are required to co-operate with Specified Authorities when needed.

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

23. SYFR need to ensure they have the capacity and capability to implement any recommendations that arise from the Serious Violence Duty process.

EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- ☒ No
☐ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

If required, an equality impact assessment has been / will be completed for the agreed recommendations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- ☐ Yes
☒ No
☐ N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

If required, a health and safety risk assessment has been/ will be completed for the agreed recommendations

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

24. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

IMPLICATIONS

25. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
Report Author:	Name:	AM Matt Gillatt, Head of Service Improvement
	e-mail:	mgillatt@syfire.gov.uk
	Tel no:	07917307711