

Walsall Council – Health and Wellbeing Board

12 December 2023

Serious Violence Needs Assessment and Strategy

For Discussion

1. Purpose

This report is a presentation of the Walsall Serious Violence Needs Assessment conducted in 2023 and signed off by Safer Walsall Partnership Board on 25 April 2023 (**Appendix 1**). This is for discussion, with a particular focus on implementation of the recommendations by members of the board. The Serious Violence Strategy is currently being developed, with accountability for delivery sitting with Safer Walsall Partnership Board.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That board members agree to support delivery of the developing Serious Violence strategy and delivery plan for Walsall, with reference to key recommendations made in the needs assessment which involve NHS and wider health and care partners.

3. Report detail

- 3.1. The Walsall Serious Violence Needs assessment outlines a whole-system, lifecourse approach to tackling serious violence, using the WHO definition: *“The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”*
- 3.2. This public health approach requires action to both prevent violence (long-term approach universal approach, as well as targeted approaches) and tackle and reduce violence when it does occur.
- 3.3. The rates of violent crime increased over the course of the pandemic in Walsall and are now reducing back to pre-2020 rates. St Matthew’s Ward in Walsall town centre has the highest violent crime rates in the borough. Hospital admissions due to violence are similar to national and regional averages, and hospital emergency admission rates for violence are also showing a slowly reducing trend both nationally and locally. However, hospital admissions for assault specifically (having reduced during the pandemic) is now increasing again. Further, knife crime among young people is also increasing in the 15-19 year age group.

3.4. A serious violence strategy is in the process of being developed by the Walsall Violence and Harm Prevention subgroup of the Safer Walsall Partnership. This local strategy and delivery plan will sit underneath a wider Serious Violence strategy being developed by West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership. The needs assessment has several strategic and operational recommendations which will be responded to in the strategy, and which cover the following areas:

- Review of governance arrangements – in particular role of Safer Walsall partnership, Walsall Safeguarding partnership, Youth Justice Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, Walsall Together and Education
- Development of an evidence-based commissioning and resource plan for Violence prevention
- Ensuring a full system response to ensure the borough is Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and trauma responsive
- Ensuring appropriate real-time data sharing takes place across partnerships to meet serious violence duty recommendations, including all specified authorities.
- Making a shift to primary prevention (stopping violence before it starts) and secondary prevention (early intervention) and ensuring a focus on co-ordinating support for families from pregnancy, early years, through to adolescence and into adulthood to ensure better connectedness (e.g. child-friendly strategies and policies, increased youth provision and co-ordinated mentoring support)
- Continuing vital work on school inclusion and to create a better understanding of the impact of parental separation
- Using policy levers to build out crime (e.g. through planning, licensing and other opportunities e.g. street safe initiatives)
- Support people who are impacted by violence through community cohesion activities and consider rehabilitation for perpetrators of violence
- Continue work on reducing disproportionality and inequalities but with a wider focus, not just on ethnicity, but on age, gender, deprivation as well as for wider service provision, e.g. mental health services, alcohol and drug services, and other community services, as well as Youth Justice services.

3.5. Further, a senior level partnership collaborative has been established between the chairs of the Safer Walsall Partnership, Youth Justice Partnership, Safeguarding Partnership and representatives of the Health and Wellbeing board. This collaborative is focusing on co-ordination of activities across the partnerships with respect to youth violence in particular. Current activities include commissioning of research into the local context and experiences of our local young people who have been involved in youth violence, and benchmarking ourselves against the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) Youth Violence self-assessment.

Partnership Work

3.6 Partnership work is essential to successful delivery of the strategy emerging from the Serious Violence needs assessment for the borough. Actions pertinent to Health and Wellbeing Board partners include:

- Supporting family hubs work and commissioning of 0-19 services (with the latter being one of our key universal services) and their role in supporting

primary prevention agenda - positive child parent relationships etc. Ensuring link up between family hubs mental wellbeing work and CYP emotional wellbeing strategy also crucial.

- Ensuring all partners, including NHS organisations, are responding appropriately to the serious violence duty, and taking part in multi-agency data sharing processes, look back exercises etc (recommendations in needs assessment.).
- Supporting Youth Violence navigators project within Walsall Healthcare Trust emergency department as a high impact intervention for secondary prevention of youth violence (currently VRP and LA funded).
- Advising on how health-related commissioning boards can contribute to the recommendation around having an adequate commissioning and resource plan to support the strategy (whilst Police and Crime commissioner and Violence Reduction Partnership funding is a focus, NHS/LA commissioned activity also supports several recommendations).
- Supporting activities to map and preserve youth service provision and an emerging youth strategy, which will link with both the Serious Violence Strategy and Childrens 2040 strategy.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

4.1 Financial implications:

No financial implications for the Health and Wellbeing board over and above discussions which will take place during strategy implementation through a range of commissioning for a, including a specific commissioning forum linked to the Community Safety Partnership.

4.2 Legal implications:

No legal implications.

4.3 Other Resource implications:

Partners organisations are asked to collaborate with the Safer Walsall partnership to drive a cohesive and common approach to this work. Further to this, actions will be developed with a range of Health and Wellbeing Board partners, considering what can be delivered within existing resources, or where additional resource may need to be sought.

5. Health and Wellbeing Board Priorities - impact:

- 5.1. HWBB priorities linked to the Serious Violence Needs Assessment and Strategy work include both Mental Wellbeing and Children and Young People.
- 5.2. Mental Wellbeing is both a major contributor to and majorly impacted by serious violence. Prevention of youth violence also requires a whole system and lifecourse approach to be taken to improving the lives of children and families in Walsall.

- 5.3. Those engaged in violence are at extreme risk of exclusion and experience significant inequality.
- 5.4. All 6 Marmot policy objectives will be supported through taking forward this Serious Violence work.
- 5.5. Taking forward recommendations in the Serious Violence Needs Assessment also supports our We are Walsall 2040 ambitions to be a safe borough and the most improved borough in the West Midlands by 2040. Our shared vision for outcomes includes to have reduced all types of crime and be the most improved borough in the region for anti-social behaviour and violent crime rates, as well as having the lowest rate of youth related knife crime in the region.

Background papers

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Walsall Serious Violence Needs Assessment 2023



Walsall-Serious-Viole
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