



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



 JULY 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) are funded by the Home Office to lead and co-ordinate the local response to serious violence, using an evidence-based whole-system or “public health” approach.

VRUs are multi-agency partnerships that include Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), police, local authorities, Youth Offending Teams, the local NHS Integrated Care Board and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

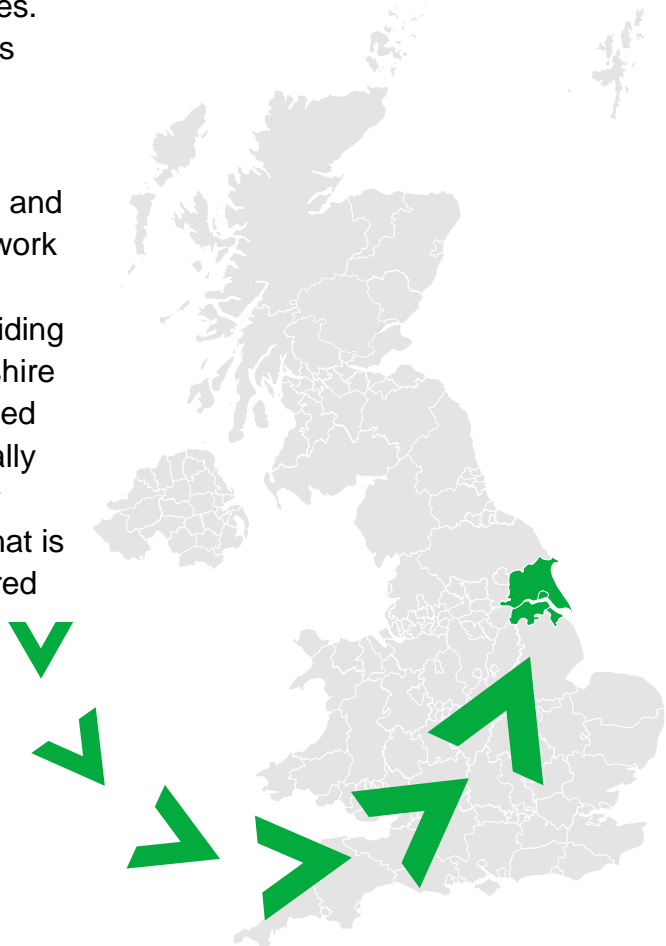
They are provided with a budget to resource some core capacity, commission evidence-based interventions that contribute to reducing serious violence, and improve data sharing between agencies.

They must complete a Strategic Needs Assessment and Response Strategy, amongst other key pieces of work.

18 VRUs were established in England and Wales in 2019/20, building on earlier work in Scotland. From 2022/23, the Humberside police force area (East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire) has been invited to establish a VRU. Funding has initially been allocated by the Home Office for three years. Future funding beyond that is not guaranteed, and the VRU is required to consider its own sustainability.

This document sets out how the VRU in the Humberside area will be governed to deliver its agreed priorities and the Home Office’s requirements.

The VRU will be known as the **Humber Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP)**.



2. PURPOSE AND MEMBERSHIP

Core purpose

The core purpose of the Humber VPP is:

To lead and co-ordinate the local response to preventing and reducing Serious Violence through a public health approach.

In doing this, the VPP will have regard to the key pillars of a public health approach summarised in the Home Office's application guidance for VRUs:

1. A focus on a defined population
2. Designed 'with and for' communities
3. Operating on a multi-agency basis and not being constrained by organisational or professional boundaries
4. Focused on generating long-term as well as short-term solutions
5. Based on data and intelligence to identify the burden to the population
6. Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem

Core Membership

The Home Office specifies the following Core Membership for VRUs:

- PCC
- Chief Constable or representative
- Local authorities
- Integrated Care Board
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
- Youth Offending Teams
- A representative(s) of local educational institutions
- A representative(s) of communities and young people served by the VRU
- A representative of the voluntary sector

For the Humber VPP, the following will also be Core Members:

- Probation Service
- HMP Hull
- HMP Humber
- Humberside Fire and Rescue Service

3. HUMBER VPP BOARD

The Humber VPP Board includes all of the Core Membership of the VPP and is its primary decision-making body.

Purpose

The purpose of the Humber VPP Board is:

To provide strategic direction and oversight of the Humber VPP.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Board are:

1. To lead and co-ordinate the local response to serious violence through a “whole system”, public health approach.
2. To champion the development and use of the VPP’s evidence base, including commissioning and providing final approval of the Strategic Needs Assessment, agreeing the VPP’s local definition of serious violence, and ensuring decisions are evidence-based – whilst identifying opportunities to innovate and build the evidence base through evaluation.
3. To agree the VPP’s priorities through the Response Strategy and Delivery Plan, informed by the Strategic Needs Assessment, evaluations and evidence of “what works”.
4. To monitor implementation of the Delivery Plan and the VPP’s impact, including against the success measures set by the Home Office.
5. To establish effective data sharing agreements and pathways with key partners, and monitor the VPP’s progress in accessing and sharing data.
6. To secure the long-term sustainability of the VRU approach, including by developing a 5-year Sustainability Plan.
7. To set and monitor the VPP’s budget, including the required partner match-funding and in-kind contributions.
8. To ensure the VPP embeds the views and voices of the communities and young people it serves into VRU operations and delivery.
9. To establish and oversee sub-groups and task and finish groups as required to carry out the VPP’s work.
10. To elect the VPP’s Vice Chair and allocate portfolios to Board members.

11. To direct and oversee the work of the VPP's Core Team through the VPP Director.
12. To ensure the VPP acts in accordance with Home Office guidance and grant conditions.
13. To receive other reports and consider other issues and opportunities linked to the VPP's purpose as necessary.

Membership

The Board will consist of one nominated senior representative of each Core Member, who shall have appropriate strategic decision-making authority in their organisation.

Representatives of local educational institutions, communities/young people and the voluntary sector will be identified through a transparent recruitment process and appointed for a term of up to three years. Other Board members will not have fixed terms.

All Board roles are voluntary and will not be additionally remunerated by the VPP.

The Board will be chaired by the PCC, with a Vice Chair to be elected by the members.

In support of the VPP's hub-and-spoke model, the lead officers of the four Humber CSPs will be invited to attend the Board as non-voting members (unless also representing their respective local authority).

The Board will be attended by the VPP Director and other members of staff from the VPP's Core Team as required. The Home Office and the VPP's evaluation partner will have standing invites to attend meetings of the Board unless otherwise agreed by the Chair.

Role of a Board member

The role of a Board member will be:

1. To provide their knowledge, skills and experience to steer the VPP's work and ensure it makes informed decisions in the best interests of the local population.
2. Where applicable, to make commitments and take decisions on behalf of their organisation in the context of a collaborative multi-agency approach.
3. To engage with, and seek to build understanding, of the evidence base supporting the VPP's work, ensuring decisions are evidence-based.
4. To offer their organisation's resources, where appropriate, in support of the VPP's work.

5. To champion multi-agency working and the public health approach.
6. To act as an ambassador for the VPP in their organisation, their networks and the wider community.

Board members may agree to take on leadership portfolios of key thematic or functional areas of the VPP's work, which could mean (for example) leading specific pieces of work or convening groups to explore an issue. This will bolster the VPP's systems leadership capacity as well as provide for greater sustainability beyond the funded period.

The Chair will act as the VPP's primary public spokesperson (supported by the VPP Director and Board members as appropriate). Anyone speaking in a VPP capacity will avoid political statements and seek to convey the consensus view of the membership.

Ways of working

The Board will aim to make decisions by consensus wherever possible. In the event of a vote being required, it will be by simple majority of the Core Membership present and eligible to vote. Where more than one representative of a Core Member is present, only one representative will be entitled to vote.

The Board will seek to influence partners to work collaboratively on the VPP's priorities and members will hold each other to account for progress. The Board remains voluntary and it will not have the ability to make binding decisions on members' own areas of business.

Board members will uphold The Seven Principles of Public Life¹ when taking part in VPP business. This includes declaring any conflicts of interest on decisions.

The Board will remain strategic and utilise task and finish groups/sub-groups to explore issues in depth, with input from nominated representatives of the Core Membership.

The Board will ordinarily meet four times per year. Additional meetings may be requested by the Core Members or the VPP Director, and will be called with the Chair's approval. Meetings will ordinarily be held in-person but may be held online where necessary.

Meetings will not be open to the public or third party organisations due to the nature of the business being discussed.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

Agendas and papers will be prepared by the VPP's Core Team, with contributions from Core Members and other organisations as required, and will generally be circulated a week before the meeting.

Whilst Board decisions will usually be made at a meeting, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. due to urgency or unforeseen events), the Board may take decisions by written procedures.

The quorum for the Board, whether at a meeting or by written procedures, will be one third of the Core Membership.

Where a Core Member's usual representative is unable to attend a meeting (or respond to a decision by written procedures), they are welcome to send a deputy/substitute to act in their place.

4. FINANCE

At the time of writing, the VPP is majority funded by the Home Office via a grant agreement with the PCC, with a match contribution (cash or in-kind) required from the Core Membership.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will be responsible for managing the grant funding in accordance with the Home Office's terms. Other Core Members are signatories to the VRU application but are not required to sign the grant agreement.

As set out in the Terms of Reference, the Board will have responsibility for setting and monitoring the VPP's budget, including match contributions from the Core Membership. The VPP Director will ensure budget monitoring reports are provided to enable this.

The VPP Director will have delegated authority to approve day-to-day expenditure and commissioning processes in order to implement the Delivery Plan approved by the Board. The VPP will follow the relevant parts of the OPCC's Code of Corporate Governance², including financial regulations and contract standing orders, as well as the terms of the Home Office grant.

Commissioning will be undertaken collaboratively with input from the Core Membership throughout the process.

² <https://www.humberside-pcc.gov.uk/Transparency/Policies-and-Procedures.aspx>

5. CORE TEAM

The VPP will be supported by a Core Team, which will include the mandatory roles specified by the Home Office:

- VRU Director, to provide overall leadership and accountability to the Board
- Nominated lead for data sharing
- Nominated lead for evaluation

The Core Team will be hosted by the OPCC on behalf of the VRU. Additional roles may also be hosted by the Core Members.

Any member of staff employed on behalf of the VRU, or seconded to it, must take account of the interests and views of the Core Membership – and not just those of their employer – when carrying out VRU work. They must at all times uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life.

The VRU Director will be accountable to the Board for the Core Team's work and will be empowered to represent the VPP in discussions with Government departments and other stakeholders as necessary, referring matters back to the Board where appropriate.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

The Humber VPP works on a quasi-hub-and-spoke model, to join up work happening at Humber and local authority/CSP levels and seek to maximise impact.

Within this model, the role of the CSP “spokes” in the VPP is to:

1. Be the collective “voice” of their areas in the VPP’s work, ensuring the varying population needs and stakeholder views from across the Humber area are fully understood and represented.
2. Inform and influence the operational delivery of VPP-commissioned interventions in their areas by linking them into local tasking mechanisms and providing insight into local demand and emerging hotspots/issues. Monitor local performance and impact alongside wider local plans.
3. Participate in the development of a shared evidence base for local needs by supporting the identification and sharing of local data, and the production of needs assessments and other analytical products. This will include considering how analytical work to underpin the new Serious Violence Duty could be aligned with VPP work.
4. Support the VPP’s commissioning cycles by contributing to project development and working with partners, including in the voluntary sector, to build delivery capacity. Provide a mechanism for local consultation on commissioning plans.
5. Co-ordinate local engagement with communities and young people in their areas on behalf of the VPP.

CSPs will be supported to deliver these functions by a Violence Prevention Officer, which they will host for their area, working across local and Humber priorities.

The working of the hub-and-spoke arrangement will be reviewed annually.

7. SERIOUS VIOLENCE

DUTY

The Serious Violence Duty commenced on 31 January 2023, requiring specified authorities (all of which are Core Members of the VPP) to work together to share information, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.

As part of this, serious violence was made an explicit priority for CSPs, which must have a strategy in place to tackle serious violence by January 2024.

In the Humber area, the Serious Violence Duty will be delivered jointly through the Humber VPP and CSPs, using the VPP's hub-and-spoke model. This will ensure consistency of the overall approach and avoid duplication, whilst also allowing for responses to be tailored to localised needs.

The responsibilities are as follows:

- The VPP has produced (and will continue to develop) a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA), setting out the drivers and extent of serious violence in the Humber area. CSPs will supplement this with annexes incorporating additional data and drawing out the key conclusions for their areas.
- The VPP's Response Strategy will be the overarching strategy for preventing serious violence. Each CSP will have an associated Delivery Plan consistent with the strategy and will also ensure its wider strategy includes serious violence as a priority.
- Governance of the SNA and Response Strategy will be through the VPP Board, with CSP Boards responsible for governing delivery of their local products.
- New information sharing agreements for the VPP will also include CSPs to ensure they are able to access and use the same data.
- Governance of the Serious Violence Duty "new burdens" funding will be through the VPP Board.
- The VPP team will co-ordinate the PCC's reporting to the Home Office to avoid duplication.