



WBCSP

Wigan Borough Community Safety Partnership

Serious Violence Duty Strategy - refresh
2025-2027

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Foreword by Councillor Dane Anderton

The Serious Violence Duty, enacted through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, is a significant area of our crime and disorder work that we in Wigan Borough approach with utmost determination. Over the past 12 months we are proud about the work we have collectively driven forward and implemented as a partnership. This, our refreshed comprehensive strategy continues to emphasise the active collaboration of relevant services and community groups, working in unison to proactively prevent and reduce serious violent crime and its impact on families and communities.

Through our refreshed Strategic Needs Assessment, our partnership discussions and continued engagement with professionals, young people, and communities we have identified four priority areas where we think our collective focus and resources will make the biggest impact, they are:

- enhancing our focus on early intervention and prevention,
- developing an approach to managing repeat demand in relation offenders,
- co-producing with communities an approach to managing hotspot areas that are linked with serious organised crime (and that correlate with areas where both reported and under-reported violent crime are a feature.
- Work to address perceptions of safety in the community regarding violent crime with a focus on young people (feelings of safety, carrying knives) and town centre / targeted neighbourhoods' safety / perceptions.

We will of course continue with our current programmes of work that are already contributing to these priorities, but we'll make sure that those most vulnerable or at risk of the negative impact of violent crime, be they individuals, communities or groups of people receive the best and most appropriate interventions we offer. We will make sure we monitor this aspect of the work through our new Violent Crime Action Plan.

We will continue to use the public health approach, prioritising the health, safety, and overall wellbeing of our residents, enhancing this with a focus on environmental and improvements as our Borough continues to re-develop places like out town centres that are a focus of violent crime. This will involve continued collaboration with essential agencies, including health, education, the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, law enforcement, local authorities, criminal justice entities, voluntary and community groups, as well as our local communities. Together, we aim to build a collective front against serious violence, cultivating environments and spaces that promote the prosperity and security of all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dk Anderton'.

Councillor Dane Anderton

**Portfolio lead for Police, Crime and Civil Contingencies
Wigan Council**

Introduction

This is Wigan Borough's revised strategy for the prevention and reduction of serious violence in our Borough, which came out of the National Serious Violence Strategy 2018 and builds on our first year of delivery in 2024.

Our strategy has been reviewed via our 2025 strategic needs assessment that has identified four priority areas to focus on over the next two years. We will continue to improve how data will inform both the implementation and the evaluation regarding our focused action plan which will be in place by April 2025. We remain committed to incorporating community insight and engagement and within our four focus areas co-production with our communities.

Wigan Borough's Serious Violence Strategy adheres to the guiding principles set out by the Government in 2021, which states that we will work within the framework of a public health approach:



What we did in 2024

We are proud of what we achieved in our first 12 months of delivering interventions that address violent crime. We commissioned directly from Violence Reduction Grant funds or connected wider partnership interventions that supported a public health approach to preventing violent crime.

We focused on supporting public sector partners and community groups in addressing the root causes and impact of violent crime, including:

- Supporting the development and implementation a community-based and driven approach to tackle serious organised crime / violent crime in one of our priority neighbourhoods
- Onboarded and supported the BLOCKS programme delivered by the Salford Foundation and that works with primary school age children who may be at risk of knife carrying, intergenerational violence, worsening pupil behaviour (violence and threats of violence) and is a child centred intervention aimed at supporting vulnerable primary school children to successfully transition into a secondary school setting.
- Embedded GMP's School Based Police Officer Programme
- Began to pilot a Mini Blue Lights Programme in one of our primary schools
- Raised awareness of knife crime by delivering the Stop the Bleed programme in St. Mary's Catholic High School in Astley, and Bedford High School Leigh
- GMP and Wigan Warriors delivered knife crime awareness sessions in several primary schools
- Through Children's Services Family Hub programme (which went live in 2024), All Child began onboarding the first cohort of young people on the West London Zone school funding programme that focuses on improved attendance, reduce exclusions and reduce mental health referrals for vulnerable / at risk pupils. At December 2024 the programme had identified and engaged with 244 young people and their families, the scheme will work with 400 young people.
- Continued to deliver the PIED (Prevention Intervention Education Divert) programme which engages young people that have had direct involvement with the Police in the past 7 days, offering multi-agency support them & their families that are at risk of becoming involved in the Youth Justice System. The aim of the meeting is to ensure all children and families are offered support from one of the agencies at the meeting (if not already open to support) to divert them away from offending / youth violence.

We continued to focus on place based / situational interventions and victim / offender focused interventions where violent crime is a known issue including:

- Community Resilience Team continued to deliver a stepped approach regarding addressing anti-social behaviour in the community that reduced the need to use Step 3 interventions (cases resolved at Step 2 increased by 9%)
- Continued to develop Operation Bluefin which targets areas where anti-social behaviour is a problem
- Agreed an implementation plan regarding Amnesty Bins within targeted community settings for roll out across 2025
- Our Purple Flag scheme in Wigan Town Centre was independently inspected and received positive feedback
- Launching our UMay app which provides a safe place network for anyone who may feel at risk in the community, including perceptions of safety regarding violent crime.

- Probation developed a young adult focus through the Stepping Up Programme and developed other interventions that address violent crime / wider offending (Achieve Practitioner Fund, Boxing for Better and IOM for Young Adults programmes)

Definition of serious violence

The Home Office serious violence strategy defines serious violence as specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing.

Wigan Borough's Community Safety Partnership Board continues to undertake consultation with key stakeholders and our needs assessment this time draws on insights from young people from Wigan who took part in the GMCA / Manchester Metropolitan University engagement programme the partnership will consider the key recommendations that this engagement programme identified.

Additionally, and to support a more focused approach within our forthcoming action plan, evidence from both engagement with school safeguarding leaders and partners within Education highlight the need to focus on revising our approach to supporting schools, pupils and families who are at risk of exclusion from education. We will continue to engage with our businesses and wider community groups through continuing to roll out our UMay App in the community. Finally, co-production is at the heart of implementing one of our focus areas regarding Clear Hold Build speaking to businesses, community groups and the relevant and specified authorities to consider the issues prevalent in our local area.

Our continued definition of serious violence is:

“Serious physical violence, including sexual violence (non-domestic related), or the threat of such violence towards another person(s) which often involves the use of a weapon.”

We recognised again in our refreshed Strategic Needs Assessment that domestic abuse is a priority area of focus for the partnership, but as there is already in existence a Domestic Abuse Strategy which is delivered by the Community Safety Partnership and also currently being refreshed this element of our violent crime approach will be embedded here..

We will also ensure that our action plan links effectively to other cross-cutting strategies and partnerships to which this one is aligned:

Wigan's Community Safety Strategy

Wigan Safeguarding Adults Partnership

Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership Business Plan

Wigan's Education Inclusion Strategy

Wigan's Domestic Abuse Strategy- DA strategy

Wigan's Alcohol Strategy

Greater Manchester's Serious Organised Crime Strategy

Greater Manchester's Violence Reduction Strategy

Greater Manchester's Standing Together Strategy

Re-focusing on priority areas

Through our strategic needs assessment process, which includes reviewing our high level data, discussing those findings as a partnership and listening to what our engagement activity tells us what different groups of people tell us about violent crime, we want to continue to deliver a whole system approach, but re-focus and concentrate on those areas that we think will make the most impact, are built on “what works” evidence and tests out new and innovative ways of working.

Our needs assessment highlighted that:

- Overall, both locally, regionally and nationally, our overall reported violent crime levels are showing no significant changes. Whilst we acknowledge that we're only approaching our second year of delivery, we know that violent crime across the various types is under-reported and we should focus on increasing confidence to report, backed up by concentrating on making sure when they are victims are supported, offenders are held to account and we work with communities where the impact of violent and other crime and disorder issues are having the biggest effect.
- We know from local engagement and national evidence that the perception of violent crime, including young people's perception of feeling safe and attitudes to carrying weapons requires a renewed focus. 5% of young people carry weapons or knives according to the latest Youth Endowment Fund engagement on Violent Crime.
- Whilst we have made satisfactory progress on making our town centres safer, we have more work to do to understand the impact of feelings and perceptions of safety relating to our night-time economies.

- Repeat violent crime offending in both adult and youth cohorts of people is contributing to overall levels of violent crime and we have identified that we want to refresh our approach to how we identify, support and manage this cohort.
- Following on from this, and regarding our interventions we understand that we need to improve the way we identify and ensure that the right interventions are targeted on the right individuals to ensure commissioned services are focused on the right people.

The needs assessment was considered by the partnership and has highlighted four key priority areas as set out below:

I. Maintain and enhance focus on early intervention and prevention, particularly in relation to school exclusions and children missing education, whilst ensuring that at-risk cohorts link into wider prevention and diversionary programmes of work and approaches.

The partnership will ensure the action plan has a clear focus on early intervention and prevention opportunities, enhanced by a wider focus on serious youth violence and its context within families, peer groups and communities. It will commission more in-depth analysis / problem profile and tracking of cohorts to identify where in wider young people / young adult management processes and partner data cohorts (and regarding both repeat offenders and victims) individuals are connected to wider familial, peer group, educational and geographic / community risk factors in order to inform where further possible intervention points might exist (or that would better inform current approaches).

A key element of this area of the action plan will incorporate a refreshed approach to how Violent Crime Reduction funds could support a new model / interventions regarding at risk young people who are at risk of educational exclusion. This work will be underpinned by implementing a process to identify those at-risk young people.

II. Implement a “clear, hold and build” approach to tackling Serious Organised Crime issues (and those that relate to violent crime) in communities.

III. Develop a multi-agency approach to managing and supporting repeat offenders.

The partnership will develop and implement a multi-agency approach to managing and supporting repeat offenders that significantly contribute to reported overall violent crime levels. This will create an opportunity to connect other multi agency case management processes that address various aspects of behaviour, risk and support (and will include complex safeguarding, CRT processes, Probation programmes, repeat demand processes, school exclusion etc.). Establishing a violent crime focus within the re-established Reducing Offending Delivery Group will be key as well.

IV. Work to address perceptions of safety in the community regarding violent crime with a focus on young people (feelings of safety, carrying knives) and town centre / targeted neighbourhoods’ safety.

This means that we can underpin our focus on prevention and early intervention, working with and for communities in new and innovative ways, connect our current programmes of support across these focus areas, and by this protect those who we believe to be at risk of

serious violence and its impact across the Wigan Borough. We will implement a full action plan to support this strategy in April 2025.

We will also ensure that this approach will sit alongside and complement a continued focus on improving situational crime prevention measures through such programmes as town centre re-development programmes of work and ensuring key areas of Community Safety Partnership. The needs assessment highlighted further recommendations to support the implementation of these priorities including:

1. Additionally, work is required with colleagues in Public Health to ensure that the refreshed Alcohol Strategy particularly around alcohol availability connect with key issues identified in this needs assessment around violent crime associated with alcohol / town centres. Key processes owned by the WCSP include a refresh of the MALT process, as well as ensuring that TIIG data enhances the partnerships understanding of violent crime within acute health settings.
2. The refresh of the Multi-Agency Licensing Team framework and approach that addresses premises where alcohol related violent crime is an issue is underway.
3. Work is required to build on the initial set of high level KPIs that can meaningfully inform the partnership of trends, risks and achievements. A plan to address current information and intelligence gaps regarding outcomes of interventions is also required
4. The partnership commission a profile (jointly produced with key partner agencies) regarding sexual offences to inform the implementation of actions and interventions within the overall Violent Crime Action Plan.
5. The partnership notes that further work and analysis around Domestic Abuse and those elements of violent crime that fall within this area should be incorporated in standalone needs analysis (under the governance and direction of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board)
6. The WCSP Board formally acknowledge both the contribution of the Wigan young people who took part in the GM Research Project and the recommendations that were produced (the partnership may wish to invite representatives from the Wigan research group to the Board to discuss the research / findings

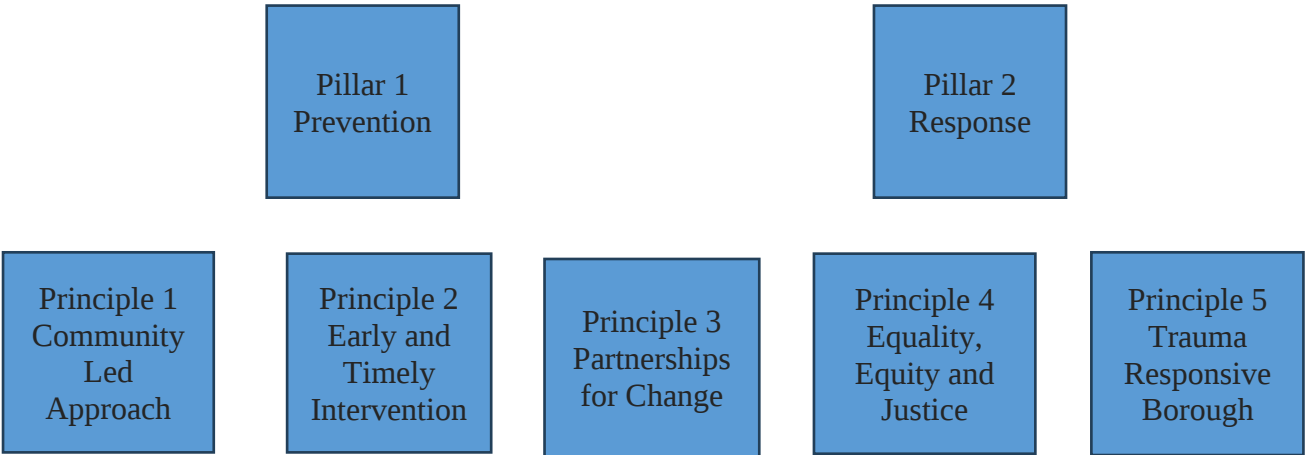
We are aware that not every area within our borough has the same issues, and therefore we do not follow a 'cover all' approach, we focus on equity not equality. We understand that each area or issue has its own circumstances and therefore we allocate our resources dependant on what is required to address the concern.

The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit

The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is a team of subject leads and experts from Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Greater Manchester National Probation Service, Public Health, NHS, Education, Community Voluntary Sector, Victim’s Voice, Youth Justice, and Local Authorities, addressing the underlying causes of violence and working together with communities to prevent it.

The VRU is crucial to assist us embed our public health approach, understanding violence at a local level, support us in establishing evidence-based interventions, and trialling community-led projects.

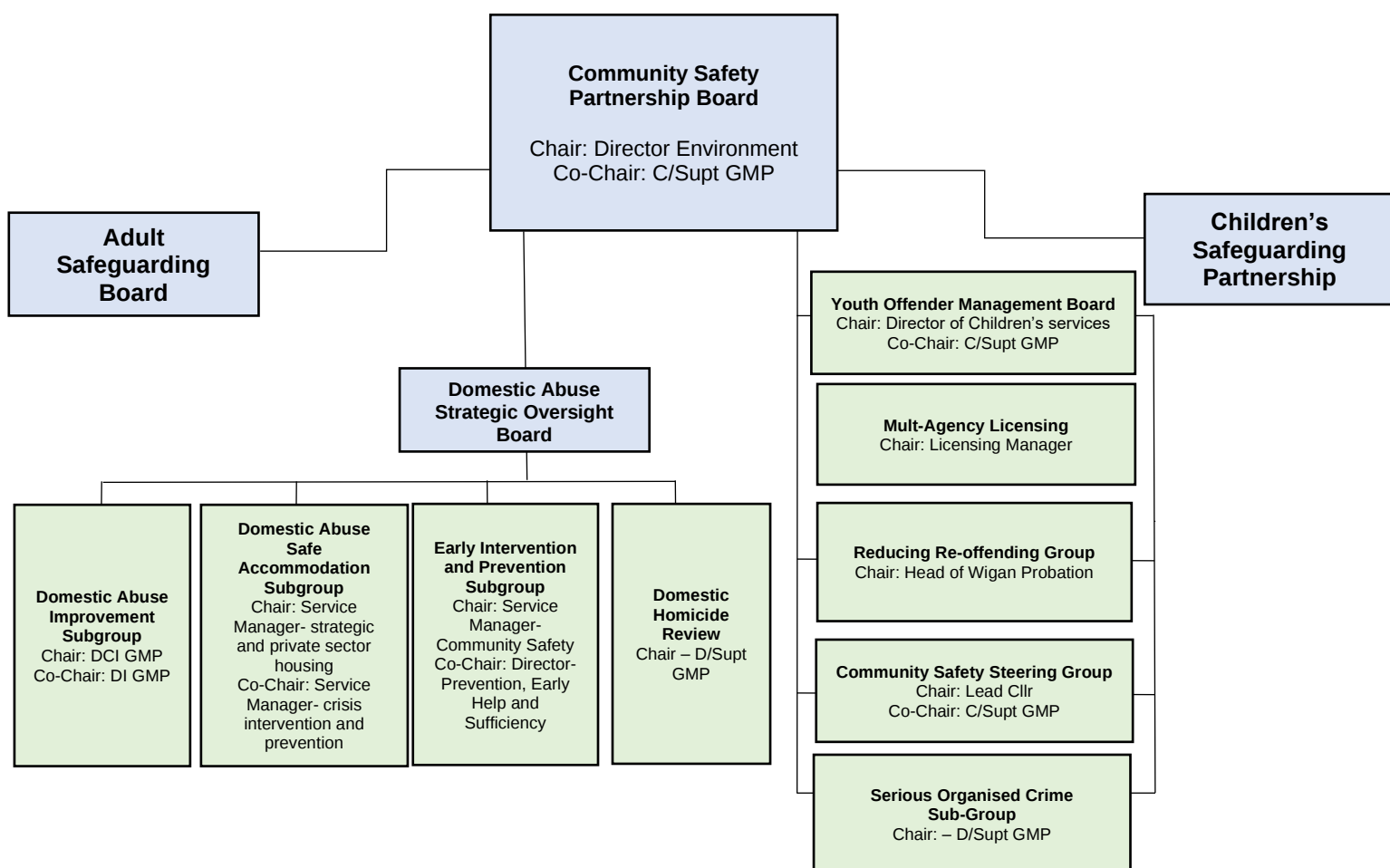
The “Greater Than Violence Strategy” lays out the Greater Manchester response in two pillars, supported by 5 Principles, which we will be using as the foundation of our work in the Wigan Borough.



Governance

Governing a partnership approach to serious violence is essential to the delivery of this strategy, as no organisation can resolve the problem of serious violence on its own.

Wigan Borough’s Community Safety Partnership Board will provide oversight of responses to the Serious Violent Duty and its implementation in the Wigan Borough and will be responsible for ensuring prevention, early intervention and safeguarding are integrated in our responses. The Board will oversee the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty through a public health approach and support partnership working.



Measures of success

Key to the successful implementation of this strategy is ensuring that we connect the strategic priorities and principles with operational staff across the partnership. This will assist in embedding a co-ordinated and effective approach to reduce incidents of serious violence.

To comply with the Serious Violence Duty, this strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis. This will enable us to respond to any emerging trends or patterns relating to serious violence and confirm that our response remains effective.

We will measure the effectiveness of our response by embedding a performance framework focusing on priority areas:

Declaration

This strategy has been co-produced and will be co-delivered by Wigan's specified authorities in partnership with required authority partners and in consultation with the voluntary sector and communities across Wigan.

