

Violence and vulnerability –

Strategic framework briefing note

Strategic Framework to reduce violence and vulnerability - briefing note and summary

Increasingly, crime is being committed in private spaces, rather than the public sphere, and this type of crime often involves the criminal exploitation of children and adults on a physical, sexual or financial basis. For most forces, this is becoming a major concern as gang activity based around criminal exploitation is impacting heavily in a number of areas and leading to increasing reports of serious violence.

The VVU's strategic review for force areas focuses on the threat to violence levels, safeguarding and public health that county lines, gangs, violence and vulnerability pose to forces and partners. It will aim to outline a framework that facilitates and enables a consistent approach across the force and partner agencies as to how county lines are understood and tackled.

Tackling this threat has to be everybody's business.

This proposed framework is based around 5 themes and looks to establish force wide common principles and activity based around the 4 P's –

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| • data/intelligence, | Prepare |
| • governance/community, | Prepare |
| • enforcement/cross-border working, | Pursue |
| • prevention, | Prevent |
| • safeguarding | Protect |

Suggested Week 1 – a peer review of strategic leaders across the force area. This will be directed at senior leaders within -

- Police
- Community Safety Partnerships (including prisons and the secure estate)
- Safeguarding Boards
- Public Health, CCGs and Hospitals
- Children's Services
- YOS and Probation
- Social Housing providers

We will concentrate on five main areas of enquiry –

- 1/ How is criminal exploitation currently tackled across the force area? How are partners involved? Is the process consistent? How are vulnerable people and risky offenders identified and managed in the various districts and counties? What are the governance arrangements?
- 2/ How is the problem currently understood? Is there a needs assessment / profile that outlines the current risk and threat regarding the drug market, the public health implications, violence and exploitation of vulnerable people? What sort of data would be required and by whom?
- 3/ What is currently done to safeguard vulnerable children and adults affected by county lines activity across the force area? How do the various safeguarding boards link with this work? What are the implications of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 that propose to dissolve LSCB and replace them with a requirement for three key partners – the police, local government and health services – to work together to agree the necessary strategic decisions to underpin effective practice?
- 4/ What enforcement/disruption tactics are currently utilised? How effective are these? How are partners involved in this work? How are links with ROCUs and external boroughs managed?
- 5/ How is this work linked to partnerships to tackle modern slavery and children criminal exploitation across the force area?

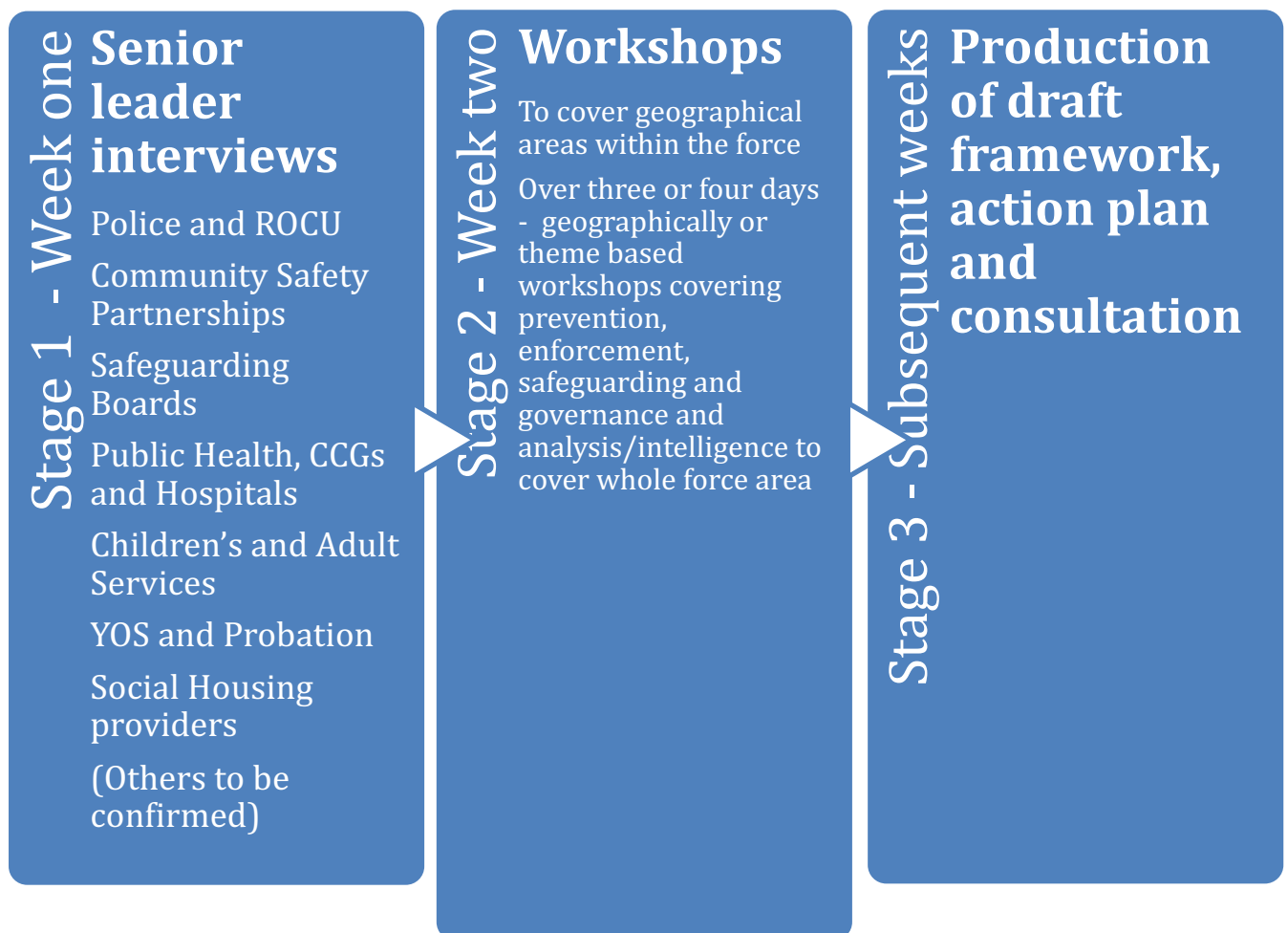
We will set out transparently the views, insights and current positions of those interviewed at a senior level with regards to these questions, how they currently understand the problem, who they see as responsible for tackling it currently, and what they believe is possible in terms of a common approach across the force area.

We will require a named sponsor at a very senior level who will champion and drive this work. The meetings and workshops proposed for stage 1 and 2 will need to be very tightly scheduled, taking place across a couple of weeks.

Week 2 - We will hold county based focus groups and workshops with practitioners from a range of agencies, facilitated by ourselves and a mix of peer reviewers experienced in dealing with senior managers. The process is based on the Home Office's proven and highly regarded peer review process. We will test out assumptions and views outlined in the stage 1 interviews and look to establish key principles and good practice in order to layout a force wide approach to county lines, gangs, violence and vulnerability. The workshops will consider the following areas -

- Enforcement
- Safeguarding
- Prevention
- Data/intelligence

We will end up with an understanding of what's possible, what's realistic and what's achievable across the county through the eyes of practitioners.



Stage 3 - the draft strategic framework and action plan

Based on the previous interviews and workshops, we will produce a strategic framework and action plan for tackling criminal exploitation that sets out key principles and recommendations for activity and action around the five workstreams of -

Data/intelligence - understanding the nature of the threat posed by gangs around violence and vulnerability is the key to partnerships being in a position to effectively tackle the problem. Such understanding is crucial to drawing in partners who may not initially see the issue as something they should be involved with.

Governance - This covers all aspects of the work, and is about leadership, vision, partnerships, performance management and target monitoring. The problem of gangs, violence and vulnerability is cross cutting, meaning leadership and governance in a county and regional context (that also involves partners from outside the county) is absolutely crucial.

Enforcement / cross border working - With a national increase in county lines activity, regions and partnerships previously unaffected by gangs have found themselves having to review procedures and activities, and the rise of county lines has led to the need for tools and powers that reflect the rise in exploitation and close links to trafficking and modern slavery. In addition, the need for regions to link both strategically and operationally with large urban areas who are exporting the gang issue is crucial.

Prevention - Preventing young people from becoming involved with gangs, violence and vulnerability is crucial if the cycle of gang violence is to be broken.

Safeguarding - This work is also about safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people, who are being exploited by gangs/groups. We know that harm is often hidden, and it is not until the full circumstances surrounding a vulnerable person is understood and the potential for harm is identified that an effective intervention can be put in place.

Costs and logistics

This work is match funded by the Home Office and will cost the client **£12500 plus VAT**. The interviews and focus groups will take place over two weeks with another week to collate the findings and produce the framework and subsequent action plan.

The client will need to book rooms for the interviews and invite participants. The VVU can supply a list of suggested invitees, and a draft letter requesting the attendance of interviewee/focus groups.