

MAYOR OF LONDON

Violence Reduction Unit

The Serious Violence Duty

THE SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

- Introduced by government through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
- Commencing “in early” 2023. Partnership will have 12 months to finalise strategy and SNA
- Home Office guidance on duty implementation is high level to allow for the breadth of arrangements across England and Wales
- Whilst understandable nationally, it in effect leaves implementation to all 32 London Boroughs, with the loose guidance risking a significantly different and inconsistent approach across London.
- **The Duty presents an opportunity for consistent focus to reduce violence but the guidance with it presents a risk of inconsistency and taking us back to where we were in 2019**
- Funding- the Home Office are yet to confirm any funding arrangements

THE RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES

In the Serious Violence Duty will be:

- The Police
- Fire and Rescue authorities
- Justice Organisations (youth offending teams and probation services)
- Health bodies (clinical commissioning groups)
- Local Authorities

Educational institutions, prisons and youth custodial institutions will be under a separate duty to co-operate but they are not “duty holders”.

The Duty does not specify a ‘lead’ organisation or person to coordinate activity or prescribe a structure within which specified authorities are expected to work. It is for the specified authorities to come together to decide on the appropriate lead and structure of collaboration for their area.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE DUTY

- Data sharing
- Analysis
- Develop a Strategic Needs Assessment
- Produce a Strategy

The guidance is broad and for London we risk different approaches to strategy and analysis; SNA's that are in different formats, risks of key aspects missing or inconsistent, Strategy documents that are in different formats, with risks of some critical aspects missing.

THE PLAN FOR LONDON

- The VRU will lead in co-ordinating a consistent approach for London
- Form Task and Finish Groups for delivery of draft London Guidance by end of October:
- T&F group that looks at the strategy
 - led by the VRU- to agree consistent partnership arrangement to lead on all 32 boroughs, agree a single definition of Serious Violence for London, agree a single structure for the Strategy Document and associated actions (through V&V Plans)
- T&F group that looks at the data and SNA
 - led by London Partnership Analysts Network and GLA intel unit to agree single process for analysis, and single format for SNA document
- **Task and Finish Groups will include membership from Health, MPS, London Heads of Community Safety, Association of Directors of Children's Services, Probation Service, MOPAC, GLA intel and local analysts**

THE LEAD PARTNERSHIP

- Having consulted with a range of Heads of Community Safety and partners through task and finish and focus groups, the consensus was that **Community Safety Partnerships** were the most appropriate partnership to lead and hold statutory responsibility to deliver the Serious Violence Duty in each London borough.
- Community Safety Partnerships have all the “duty holder” agencies within their statutory membership and there are not encumbered by restrictions that are age related.
- The local Violence and Vulnerability action plans already set out the importance of all the strategic boards working collaboratively, which ensures that they all should be cognisant of the New Duty, even if not leading on it.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE

There is no actual definition of Serious Violence but the guidance says it should include:

- Domestic abuse, sexual offences, violence against property and threats of violence but does not include terrorism
- Serious violence as defined for the purposes of the Government's Serious Violence Strategy and include a focus on issues such as public space youth violence
- When agreeing the definition for Serious Violence, it is important to note that this is what Partners will be accountable for under the Duty. There is nothing to stop local partners focussing on violence outside of the definition, it just won't be subject of a statutory duty.

DEFINITION FOR LONDON

Not yet confirmed, however we suggest that *Serious Violence* for the purposes of the SVD in London is:

Violence and exploitation affecting young people under the age of 25, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Within the context of these types of violence, it encompasses homicide, grievous bodily harm, actual bodily harm, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, personal robbery, threats to kill and violence against property caused during the course of the commission of one of these offences.

It will include any of the above offences where a knife, section one firearm or corrosive substance is used, threatened or intimidated.

Domestic abuse is as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Notes

Within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if— (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive. (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following— (a) physical or sexual abuse; (b) violent or threatening behaviour; (c) controlling or coercive behaviour; (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4)); (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

(4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to — (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or (b) obtain goods or services.

(5) For the purposes of this Act, A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

(6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section. (7) For the meaning of “personally connected”,

It should be noted that in Chapter 3 of the Statutory Guidance of the act, it recognises that domestic abuse can encompass a range of behaviours, including abuse that is physical, violent or threatening behaviour, sexual abuse, controlling & coercive behaviour, harassment or stalking, economic abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, verbal abuse, technology-facilitated based, abuse relating to faith, ‘honour’-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

THE STRATEGY

The strategy should comprise a range of new and existing actions that the partnership will take forward to prevent and reduce the serious violence issues and drivers that have been identified in the SNA.

The strategy could usefully include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A high level (non-sensitive) summary of the strategic needs assessment
- How the chosen partnership will work to discharge its duties under the legislation to prevent and reduce serious violence
- Date for review/annual review mechanism
- Where applicable the annual assessment of the partnership's performance against the previous years' strategy

ACCESSIBLE DATA

Open data sources, accessible to all; other sources may be available locally

Relevant SafeStats Datasets

London Ambulance Service -
British Transport Police
Hospital Emergency Departments
Metropolitan Police Service
Transport for London

Dashboards

MPS Dashboards: Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse, Knife Crime, Gun Crime, Sexual Offences, Homicide

MOPAC Dashboards: Weapon-enabled Crime , Domestic and Sexual Violence ,Hate Crime, Public Voice (victim satisfaction, public perception)

Wider Data Sources

London Datastore - Greater London Authority
Hospital Episode Statistics - NHS Digital
Fingertips Public Health Profiles - OHID
LG Inform - Local Government Association
Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Education statistics - Department for Education
NOMIS - ONS
Greater London Crime and Safety Statistics | CrimeRate
Police.uk (www.police.uk)
Local Authority Data- Children social care, Youth Offending Teams, ASB, Housing
TTCG briefing slides
<https://opendatacommunities.org/def/concept/general-concepts/imd/crime>

NEXT STEPS

- Looking at a tiered approach to SNA to take into consideration local resourcing- Haringey Analyst is supporting with this through the London Partnership Analysts Group. Haringey's investment in analysis has been recognised by the VRU as effective practice and how the borough is helping to shape the analytical processes for London.
- Finalise draft guidance document for London by end of October which will be discussed at further Task and Finish Groups