

Manchester's Community Safety Partnership

SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY
2022-2025

Manchester
Community
Safety
Partnership

Our Manchester

Working together to keep Manchester safe

[Contents]

Foreword by Councillor Luthfur Rahman	4
Introduction	5
Definition of serious violence	6
Greater Manchester Serious Violence Reduction Unit	7
Governance	8
Serious violence in Manchester	9
What have our local communities told us about serious violence?	11
What has been done so far in Manchester? Our approach	13
Learning from reviews, research and activity	17
Key priorities and actions	18
Measures of success	21
Declaration	22



[Foreword]

by Councillor Luthfur Rahman

Tackling serious violence is of huge importance to our communities in Manchester and they have told us that we need to focus our resources upstream to tackle the root causes. This is something we must do together, and it remains a key priority for our Community Safety Partnership.

We are committed to working with children, young people and our communities as well as statutory agencies and the voluntary sector, through a trauma-informed and whole-family approach, to bring about a positive change where violence is not inevitable but preventable.

Our key priority is to stop serious violence through prevention and early intervention. By approaching violence in our communities as a public health challenge we will achieve sustainable reductions in violence, improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life for everyone living, visiting and working in Manchester.

In order to achieve long-term solutions through our public health approach it is essential to understand violence at a local level, identifying risk factors to inform our response for those at risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of serious violence.

In order to embed our public health approach, it will be vital for us to work in partnership with key agencies across the city, including Health, Education, Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, the police, local authorities, criminal justice agencies, voluntary and community groups, and our local communities, whose voice is at the forefront of this strategy. It is only with the joint effort and dedication from the partnership and our communities that we can make a real difference for the citizens of Manchester.

**Councillor Luthfur Rahman, OBE,
Deputy Leader Manchester City Council**

[Introduction]

In April 2018 the Government published its National Serious Violence Strategy in response to increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide in almost all police forces across England. The strategy represented a step change in how partners should think and respond to serious violence, establishing a new balance between prevention and law enforcement. It declares a call to action for partners from across different sectors to come together and adopt an end-to-end, whole-system multi-agency approach to preventing and responding to serious violence at a local level.

In 2019, as part of the National Serious Violence Strategy, funding was identified to set up 18 Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) across the country. The primary focus of VRUs is to ensure collaboration between the police, local authority community safety, education, health professionals, community leaders, and the voluntary and community sector to understand the root cause of serious violence at a local level taking a public health approach. Manchester's Serious Violence Strategy has been developed in partnership with Greater Manchester's Violence Reduction Unit and is designed to complement the Greater Manchester Serious Violence Action Plan.

In 2021 the Government released guidance in relation to the implementation of a Serious Violence Duty. The duty brings with it several commitments and responsibilities for both Central and Local Government, as well as named partners, including the police, justice (Youth Justice and Probation), health, education and fire and rescue. The new Duty requires the specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. In doing so, local areas are encouraged to work within the framework of a public health approach:

- Focused on a defined population
- With and for communities
- Not constrained by organisational or professional boundaries
- Focused on generating long-term as well as short-term solutions
- Based on data and intelligence to identify the burden on the population, including any inequalities
- Rooted in evidence of effectiveness to tackle the problem.

Manchester's Serious Violence Strategy adheres to these fundamental principles. We acknowledge that greater law enforcement alone will not achieve the required long-term solutions to serious violence and that we must continue to focus on prevention and early intervention, while offering support to and protecting those who we believe to be at risk of serious violence within our communities.

This strategy aims to outline how we understand and aim to deliver interventions with our communities to both prevent and respond to incidents of serious violence in Manchester.

Definition of serious violence

Manchester's Serious Violence Board has defined serious violence as "Serious physical violence or the threat of such violence towards another person(s), which often involves the use of a weapon". It has been agreed that the following crime types should be included in the definition of serious violence: homicide (excluding domestic homicide), serious violent assaults (including those linked to the street community and night-time economy), weapon-related crime, firearms discharges, personal robbery, arson and antisocial behaviour.

It is recognised that the Serious Violence Duty encourages us to include both domestic abuse and sexual assault within our Serious Violence Strategy. There is already in existence a recent (2021) Domestic Abuse Strategy delivered by the Community Safety Partnership and local voluntary and community groups, which can be found here: [file:///mcc.local/users\\$/005/southernj/Downloads/102514_DomesticAbuseStrategy2021_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](file:///mcc.local/users$/005/southernj/Downloads/102514_DomesticAbuseStrategy2021_FINAL%20(1).pdf)

This strategy dovetails with the ambition contained within the Domestic Abuse Strategy without losing the shared focus this needs. Manchester's Community Safety Partnership is also currently undertaking activity to increase our understanding in relation to sexual violence and co-ordinate an action plan in response to the Government's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

This strategy acknowledges the influence of further key elements on serious violence, including, but not limited to, organised crime, criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and complex safeguarding. Links to other cross-cutting strategies to which this one is aligned can be found below:

Manchester Community Safety Strategy

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6107/community_safety_strategy

Manchester's Complex Safeguarding Strategy

<https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-05-27-MSP-Complex-Safeguarding-Strategy-FINAL.pdf>

Greater Manchester Serious Organised Crime Strategy

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/6125/serious-organised-crime-strategy.pdf>

Education Inclusion Strategy

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7154/manchester_inclusion_strategy_november_2019_%E2%80%93_july_2022

[Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit]



The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit is crucial to assisting us in embedding our public health approach, understanding violence at a local level, supporting us in establishing evidence-based interventions, and trialling community-led projects.

The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction action plan is closely aligned with this strategy. The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Action Plan outlines key priorities for serious violence across the region:

- Support an improved criminal justice response to all forms of serious violence
- Support community and voluntary organisations to deliver activities and interventions in the areas of highest need
- Ensure that families and communities affected by serious violence are supported through a place-based offer

- Ensure that victims of violent crime receive appropriate and timely support
- Create a dedicated Violence Reduction Unit for Greater Manchester
- Work with Community Safety Partnerships and Local Safeguarding Boards to implement a place-based approach to tackling serious violence
- Collaborate with schools, colleagues and alternative provision to tackle serious violence.

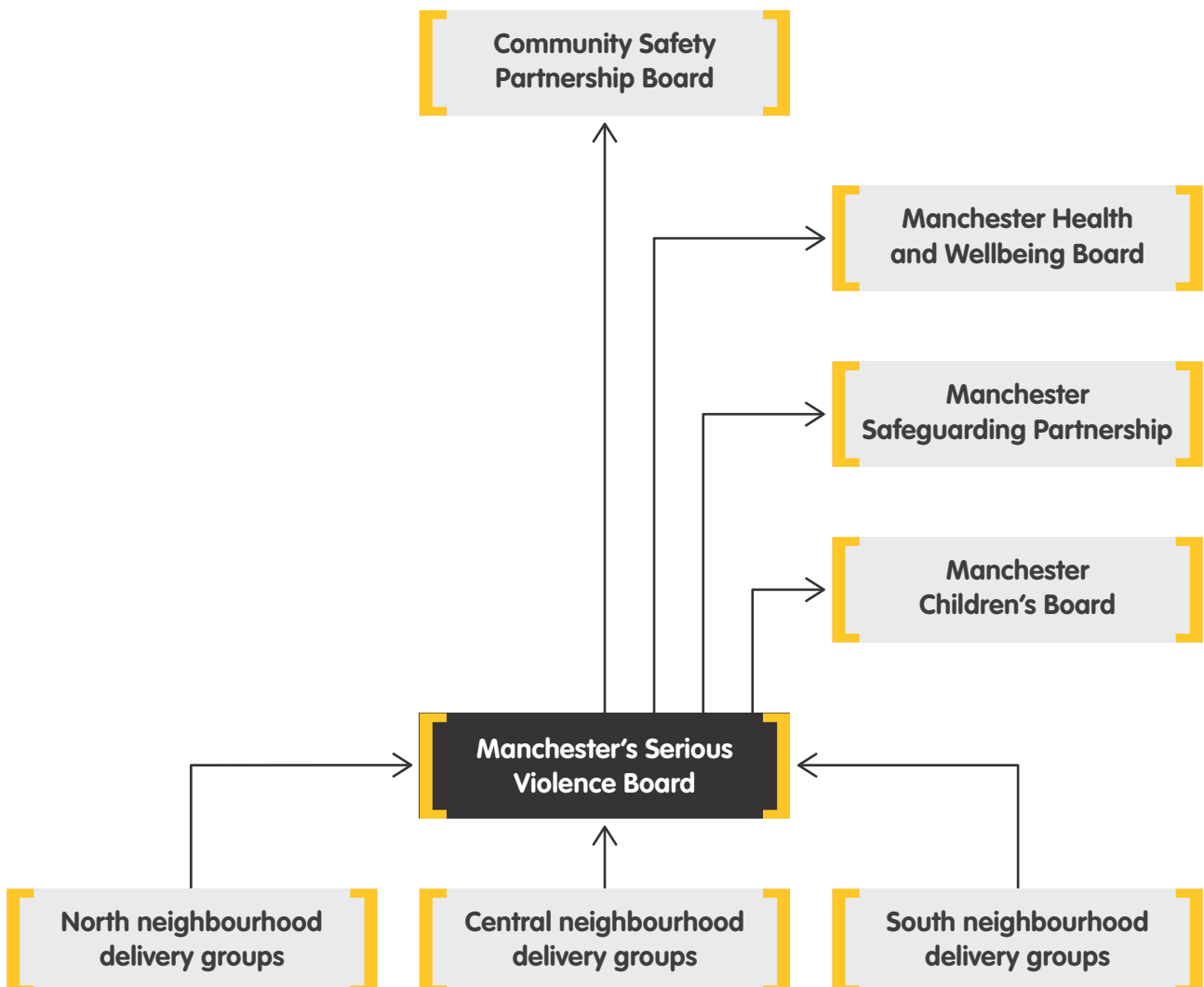
The full action plan can be viewed here: [Violence Reduction Unit – Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/violence-reduction-unit)

[Governance]

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

Manchester's Serious Violence Board will ensure effective oversight of responses to serious violent crime and the implementation (ensuring prevention, early intervention and safeguarding are integrated to our responses) in the city of Manchester. The Board will oversee the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty through a public health approach and drive to support partnership working to ensure visibility for overlapping areas such as safeguarding.

The Serious Violence Board will be overseen by the Community Safety Partnership Board and will also feed into Manchester's Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's Board and Safeguarding Partnership.



[Serious violence in Manchester]

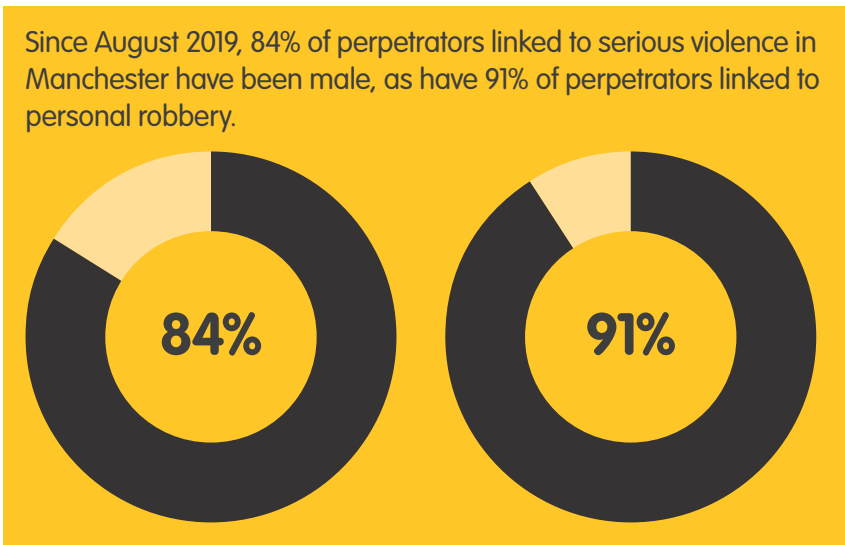
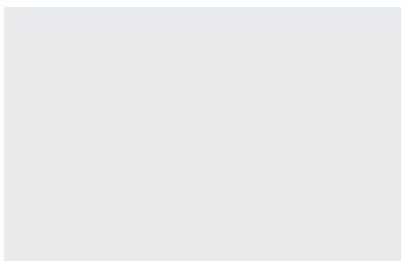
Manchester's Community Safety Partnership recognises that in order to effectively embed a public health approach to serious violence we need to ensure that we have a robust understanding of the presenting issues and driving factors at a local level. It is essential that we understand the picture of serious violence in Manchester in order to ensure that we can respond to trends and drivers efficiently and effectively.

Outlined below is what we know about serious violence in Manchester so far. The information comes from a variety of anonymised data sources, including Greater Manchester Police, Youth Justice, Education and A&E departments.

Between August 2019 and December 2021, a quarter of all Greater Manchester's homicides and serious assaults happened in the city of Manchester.

Manchester's disproportionate share of serious violence in Greater Manchester is driven by several different factors, but of significance is:

- Manchester city centre's status as an entertainment, retail, business, and transport hub
- High levels of deprivation in some neighbourhoods outside the city centre.



Victims

The age profile of victims of serious violence in Manchester is relatively young

- Victims of serious violence in Manchester (homicides and wounding) are most likely to be in their 20s or early 30s; victims of personal robbery are more likely to be aged between 15 and 23.

A number of perpetrators and victims of serious violence are from outside the city but commit offences in Manchester

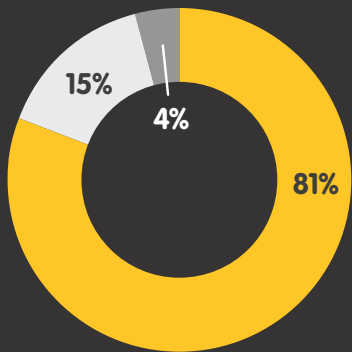
- A third of robbery victims in Manchester have home addresses outside the city, compared with approximately one quarter in other Greater Manchester boroughs.

Deprivation

In Manchester there are strong correlations between deprivation and levels of serious violence.

Serious youth violence

144 young people were charged with 305 serious youth violence offences between December 2018 and December 2021.

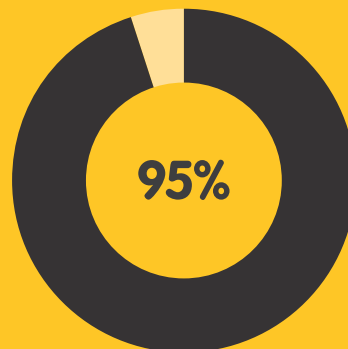


- Robbery
- Violence against the person
- Related to drugs offences

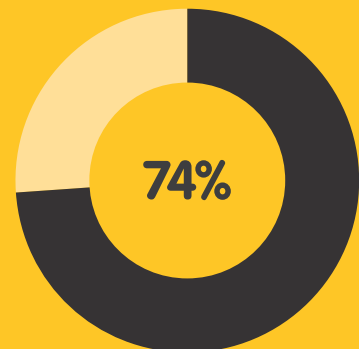
- 99% of the cohort were male.
- The average age of the cohort was 15.8 years old.

Education data

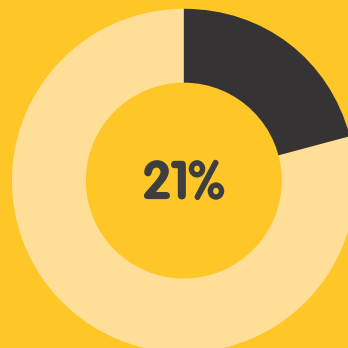
Data sources, including Greater Manchester Police, Youth Justice, Children’s Social Care, and Education SAFE Taskforce research, identified 344 young people in Manchester who were within their definition of being involved in serious youth violence. Other factors present for this group were:



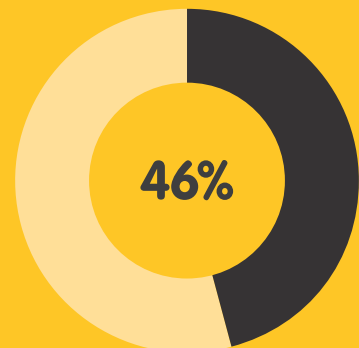
Boys



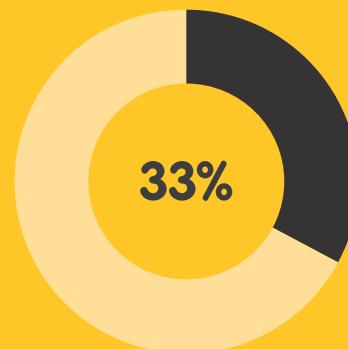
Received a suspension from school



Received a permanent exclusion



Spent time in an alternative education provision



Have 6–10 indicators of ACEs

What have our local communities told us about serious violence?

By listening to our communities, we can understand their concerns, local priorities and how we can work together to improve our responses, on a local level, to the challenges and complexities that serious violence presents.

We have carried out a wide variety of consultations within our local communities, including with young people, and they have told us:

The Community Safety Strategy Consultation

- 90% of people consulted in the Community Safety Strategy consultation in 2021 identified serious violence as a priority for action in their local area.

In focus groups, partners and residents told us that they wanted to see:

- Earlier intervention for young people
- Work in schools to support young people and prevent them being drawn into crime
- Better communication between partner agencies
- Action to address inequalities and disproportionality
- Action to address domestic abuse and the cycle of violence.

Listening to the experts - what young people have told us

The Community Safety Partnership commissioned Reclaim to undertake analysis with young people to understand what young people want and need to stay safe from violent crime. The results are detailed in this [report](#).

Young people revealed their hopes for the future to be:

- To feel safe
- To be respected and understood
- To have hope for a positive future
- To feel supported and listened to.

The report details that young people wanted our responses to move away from the presenting issues of serious violence and tackle some of the underlying causes that affect young people.

Negative influences such as fear, isolation, sensationalist media, and a lack of understanding by professionals, as well as inadequate opportunities, investment and support, frustrated these hopes.

The report contains several recommendations:

- A youth-centred approach to be taken by services, commissioners, and policy makers, listening to young people non-judgmentally, focusing first on understanding, and working alongside young people to create solutions, being more inclusive of adults from similar backgrounds.
- Shift from interventions that undermine support, respect and hope, to approaches that build upon young people's strengths, and create relationships of trust that make them feel safe.
- Adopt new approaches and continue the dialogue in order to close the gaps between young people and professionals.

Community-led approaches

Community-led projects to address serious youth violence have commenced in Moss Side, Hulme, Rusholme and Cheetham. These projects have developed responses to serious violence with their local communities, initially listening to communities identify their local priorities and then working with communities to deliver community-based services in response to those needs.

Communities told us that they were concerned about:

- Negative perception of the local area driven by detrimental press coverage
- Lack of employment and opportunity
- Systemic racism
- Normalisation of weapons and violence.

They wanted to see:

- Space and positive activities for young people
- Support for families
- Peer mentoring.

[What has been done so far in Manchester? Our approach]

The work already undertaken by Manchester's Community Safety Partnership in response to serious violence focuses on three main areas:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Support and protect
- Disrupt, divert and enforce.

In April 2022 the Serious Violence Board undertook a mapping exercise of services working to reduce serious violence across the city. This has enabled us to understand what is currently on offer across the partnership under each of the workstreams and to ensure better co-ordination.

Prevention and early intervention

Early intervention panels

Engage panels are well-established multi-agency panels across the city chaired by GMP. The panels identify children and young people at risk of becoming involved in serious violence or other crimes. Partners in attendance include Greater Manchester Police, Health, Education, Early Help, Youth Justice, the Antisocial Behaviour Action Team, and voluntary community sector organisations. This is a consent-based approach which focuses on the voice of the child to identify the most appropriate agencies to offer support.

Contextual safeguarding pilot

A pilot project initiated by the Early Help Inclusion Team is seeking to test a contextual safeguarding response and more holistic and integrated approach to families where antisocial behaviour or criminality has been identified. This work is part of a wider initiative by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to develop a contextual safeguarding approach across the ten local authorities. The aim is to embed a contextual safeguarding approach at an individual casework level in order to intervene early and prevent behaviours escalating. A multi-agency steering group and subgroup have been established, co-ordinated by the Early Help service. These build agencies' understanding of contextual safeguarding, ensure there is a partnership response to the needs of young people, and identify contexts/areas of concern, while also ensuring the project is connected to other work across the city.

Community-led work

Peace Together Alliance is a collaboration of several local voluntary and community groups working with people aged 10–25 in Moss Side, Hulme and Rusholme. The alliance has been provided with funding from the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit to run projects across the three locality areas to address the underlying reasons of violence, while building aspiration and opportunities for young people.

The Youth Endowment Fund has agreed to support a five-year investment plan in the Cheetham area of the city to develop a community-led strategy to reduce serious youth violence in the locality. Work has been commissioned to undertake consultation with a diverse group of young people from the area to understand what their thoughts are about serious violence and the area they live in.

Work in schools

The Manchester Community Safety Partnership recognises that engagement in full-time, good-quality education is a strong protective factor against young people being drawn into serious violence.

The effects of permanent exclusion for a child can be long-lasting and life-limiting.

Exclusion from school has been found to be a key factor in the stigmatisation of a young person, resulting in reduced life chances, limited opportunities for self-development and inhibited engagement in wider society. From a public health approach, the label of having been excluded can socially shape the actions of a child through to adulthood, often resulting in a cyclical reproduction of that stigma.

Education providers are well placed to identify those at risk of serious violence and deliver interventions through their trusted relationships with children and young people.

Inclusion Strategy

The Inclusion Strategy focused on Manchester Early Years' settings, schools, post-16 providers, parents/carers, local authority services, Health services, voluntary and community sector services, Greater Manchester Police and many other partners that are all committed to promoting the inclusion of and preventing the exclusion of Manchester's children and young people.

The full Inclusion Strategy can be found at https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7154/manchester_inclusion_strategy_november_2019_%E2%80%93_july_2022

SAFE Taskforce

Manchester was invited to set up a SAFE Taskforce with the Department for Education. This works with schools across a local authority area, with multi-agency structures and local experts, to commission evidence-based interventions that support young people at risk of serious violence and re-engage them in their education.

The taskforce was launched in March 2022 to invest in and commission school-focused interventions to reduce involvement in serious violence, improve attendance at school, improve behaviour in school and within the community, and improve social and emotional regulation and wellbeing.

In January 2023 phase one of the project commenced, which placed two mentors in each of six identified high schools across Manchester. In September 2023 phase two of the project will commence, which will see mentors placed in an additional eight high schools across the city.

Alternative Provision Taskforce

The Alternative Provision Taskforce has been set up within the Manchester Pupil Referral Units (PRU) to support young people in alternative provision settings. The aim of the taskforce is to utilise specialised key workers from Youth Justice, Remedi, Complex Safeguarding, Mental Health and Education to reduce truancy, not in education, employment and training (NEET) rates, the risk of involvement in serious violence, and to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Feedback from young people working with one of the providers in the PRU taskforce is outlined below:

"It was a positive thing to do because I've got better now. I was a little bad kid before and now I can actually stay in class. I learnt to keep calmer and learnt about the crimes, like if I fight someone and the punishment I could get."

"I like the sessions and I think they're helping me with my issues in and out of school."

"Reyanne helped me see a different perspective of things and that violence isn't always the answer."

Support and protect

Complex safeguarding

The link between exploitation and serious violence is recognised in Manchester. The city's Complex Safeguarding Hub supports young people at risk of being exploited, and delivers bespoke interventions based on principles of trusted relationships and trauma-informed interventions. The team works closely with multi-agency partners to develop effective, joined-up safety plans for young people and to support young people to realise their aspirations and achieve positive outcomes.

<https://www.manchestersafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-05-27-MSP-Complex-Safeguarding-Strategy-FINAL.pdf>

Serious Violence Crime Hub

The Serious Violence Crime Hub is based within the City Centre Neighbourhood Policing Team. Through proactive policing operations in the city centre they can identify people who may be drawn into serious violence or other criminality and require additional support. Owing to the nature of the city centre, this can include adults and young people alike. Where a police officer identifies vulnerability, they will make a referral to the Serious Violence Hub, where specialist officers will review the circumstances and make appropriate requests for support to the relevant local authorities.

Oasis navigators

The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit Navigator Project has commissioned Oasis to deliver youth intervention services in four hospitals across the region. The Manchester Royal Infirmary and Children's Hospital are both taking part in this pilot. The Hospital Navigator model places a youth worker at the A&E departments during peak times. The team identify young people aged 10–25 presenting at A&E with a possible serious violence-related injury, helping them to cope and recover from their experience, and assisting with access to local support networks to prevent the potential of further violence.

Because of the success of the project, it has now been extended to take referrals from any person who lives in or is educated in Greater Manchester.

Disrupt, divert and enforce

While the focus of this strategy is early intervention and prevention, the Manchester Community Safety Partnership remains committed to swift, visible justice for those who commit serious violence offences and exploit others into doing so.

There are currently several ongoing high-visibility operations led by GMP that contribute to the reduction of serious violence across the city. These police-led operations are complemented by other enforcement activities (utilising antisocial behaviour and licensing legislation) undertaken by Manchester City Council's Community Safety, Compliance and Enforcement Services.

Learning from reviews, research and activity

Child safeguarding reviews

Sadly, there continue to be serious incidents in the city and beyond where children are killed or seriously hurt as a result of serious violence. Reviews have been undertaken in response to some of these incidents and the learning from these reviews and research is key to improving our approach to serious violence in the city. Some of the key areas for improvement include:

- Developing a better understanding of how strategic plans will drive improvement in front-line delivery
- Treating encounters with under-18s as 'children first' always considering vulnerability and exploitation
- Involving the family in assessments, especially fathers
- Continuing to develop a trauma-informed approach in practice across all agencies
- Improving joined-up work across services, eg. complex safeguarding, Youth Justice, and local teams
- Recognising the importance of transitions
- Focusing on equality and disproportionality
- Understanding the importance of work in schools and education, particularly in reducing the impact and incidence of exclusion from education
- Adopting a more consistent approach and way of working across local authority boundaries.



Youth justice research at Manchester Metropolitan University

In 2020 research was commissioned by Manchester City Council's Youth Justice Service and funded through the Youth Justice Board's Reducing Serious Youth Violence fund to develop understanding of the drivers of serious youth violence. The research brings together key areas of practice: serious youth violence, ACEs, trauma-informed practice, and youth participation, to investigate the complex relationship between serious youth violence and ACEs. This is detailed in the report published in 2021, which includes a number of recommendations on trauma-informed practice that can be found at the link below.

<https://www.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/mcys/Serious-Youth-Violence-Report---MCYS.pdf>

We will continue to learn from further research and our communities, embedding this learning into our key priorities and interventions to reduce serious violence across Manchester.



[Key priorities and actions]

In response to what children and young people have told us, what our local communities say about serious violence, and our learning so far, we will continue with our current priorities:

- Early intervention and prevention
- Support and protect
- Disrupt, divert and enforce.

We will develop these approaches along with evidence-based interventions with a strong focus on early intervention and prevention.



Early intervention and prevention

- We will develop prevention and early intervention panels in both the central and north areas of the city following the successful Engage pilot in the south of the city. These panels will allow statutory agencies and the local voluntary and community groups to identify children and young people at risk of serious violence at the earliest opportunity. They will also offer them support and a variety of interventions to divert them away from serious violence.
- We will continue to develop the SAFE taskforce, with support from the Department for Education, to work with schools across the local authority area. The taskforce will utilise multi-agency structures and local experts to commission evidence-based interventions to support young people at risk of serious violence and re-engage them in their education.

- We will continue to identify and challenge disproportionality in our systems and practices, including the criminal justice system.
- We will embed a trauma-informed approach across Manchester's Community Safety Partnership. This will include delivering trauma-informed training to staff and amending policies and practices to improve our approach to working with people who have experienced trauma.

Support and protect

- We will develop a multi-agency panel to respond to concerns of serious youth violence where prevention and early intervention are not appropriate. We will include both statutory and voluntary and community groups to provide key workers who will be able to deliver consistent and bespoke support and interventions to divert children and young people away from serious violence.
- We will work with our partners to develop the 'think family' model to ensure that support can be offered to families and support networks of those identified being at risk from serious violence. This will include but is not limited to: support for parents/carers/guardians, support for siblings, and support for peer groups.
- We will improve support offers for those who are vulnerable and require extra support when transitioning from childhood to adulthood.
- We will improve information and intelligence-sharing between prisons and community services to ensure that we are able to better support individuals upon their release from prison to reduce reoffending.
- We will develop a serious youth violence model to provide support for those children and young people for whom prevention and early intervention is not appropriate.

Disrupt, divert and enforce

- We will maximise enforcement opportunities for those identified as persistent offenders of serious violence through effective partnership work across the community safety and criminal justice.
- We will ensure that there is always an offer of support available to those who are identified as perpetrators of serious violence, to ensure they can divert away from serious violence even when enforcement action has commenced.

Principles for delivery

Data analysis

- We will continue to review data from a variety of sources to ensure we understand serious violence at a local level and where possible work to identify risk factors and underlying drivers of serious violence.
- We will continue to work with the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit and our voluntary and community sector partners to develop our community-led approach and develop evidence-based interventions.

Listening to our communities

- We will continue to engage with our communities at a local level to understand their views and concerns about serious violence.
- We will work with voluntary and community representatives to support them to deliver interventions in the areas of highest need.
- We will work in partnership to continue to support victims of serious violence, their families, their peers and their communities in a timely and effective manner.

Partnership

- We will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders, including Health, Education, the police, Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, Safeguarding, criminal justice services, voluntary and community groups, and communities to reduce serious violence and develop an attitudinal change where violence is not acceptable.
- We will develop our partnership with prisons to improve information-sharing and intelligence to support perpetrators of serious violence while in custody and upon their release back into the community.
- We will work with our partners in Children's and Adult Social Care to improve support for those transitioning from childhood to adulthood, to ensure existing support networks do not disappear.

Trauma-informed approach

- We will continue to develop a trauma-informed workforce across the partnership, increasing awareness and improving our responses to individuals who have suffered adverse childhood experiences.
- We will work with perpetrators and victims of serious violence, taking a whole-family approach to ensure that we provide support for the families of those affected by serious violence.

[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.

In order 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 the following areas:

- Harm reduction – we will monitor data related to rates of serious violent offences and homicides.
- Communities – we will consistently seek the views of young people to understand how safe, supported, respected and hopeful they feel in our communities.
- Safety perception – we will continue to seek people’s views of how safe they feel through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority’s Safety Perceptions Survey.
- Delivery of our commitments – we will review and report back on how we have delivered our commitments contained within this strategy.

[Declaration]

This strategy has been co-produced and will be co-delivered by Manchester's specified authorities in partnership with required authority partners.



GREATER MANCHESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



