



# **Developing a Serious Violence Strategy for Avon and Somerset**

---

Report and recommendations, September 2019

# Contents

---

Foreword from the PCC	4
Executive Summary	5
Summary of recommendations	7
Introduction	8
Background	8
Methodology	10
A framework for serious violence prevention in Avon and Somerset	12
1.Create the Conditions	13
2.Diagnose the Problem	18
3.Develop and evaluate responses	32
Next steps	38
Appendices	39



# Foreword from the PCC

---

I have been working with the Constabulary on our approach to tackle Serious Violence for some time. Concerns have quite rightly been growing across the country as we hear of more tragic instances of lives being lost and in particular, young people both committing and coming to harm. In response, last year the government published its Serious Violence Strategy, which set out how it aimed for agencies to take a public health approach to tackling serious violence and challenging us all to deliver this strategy locally.

Since then, I have been clear that it is important for us to fully understand what serious violence looks like in Avon and Somerset so that we may address it effectively. We live and work in a diverse force area which is very different to, for example, London. While I am undeniably keen to take swift action, I have also been determined to ensure our activity is evidence based and collaborative to give us the best opportunity to make a real difference in Avon and Somerset. It also important that as a range of agencies we come to a common understanding about what a public health approach might look like in Avon and Somerset before tailoring our work to meet the needs of local people. As such I am delighted to now share the findings of this report commissioned by my office and funded by the Home Office.

While we may take some comfort in the findings that show that overall levels of serious violence have largely remained stable, when looking at specific areas, issues and cohorts this report should be a serious call to action for a range of agencies and communities. There are people that need our help and models that have been proven to work that we can learn from. This analysis from the Behavioural Insights Team will now allow us to capitalise on these opportunities to identify vulnerability and intervene early to prevent the harm that violence causes to individuals, communities and society as a whole.

As the foundation for my office's work with Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Constabulary, voluntary sector and many more to establish Violence Reduction Units in Avon and Somerset, this report signifies an important step forward in our journey to building safer and stronger communities.

**Sue Mountstevens**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset

August 2019

# Executive Summary

---

Serious violence destroys lives. Its repercussions span beyond those immediately affected to subsequent generations. For example, research suggests that having a parent in prison increases the likelihood of future involvement in crime;<sup>1</sup> and that being exposed to violence in childhood can cause young people to develop aggressive responses that may lead them to become involved in violence in adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

Tackling serious violence is a priority for the Government. To facilitate effective local multi-agency responses to serious violence, the Government has allocated £35 million to PCCs in 18 local areas, including Avon and Somerset, to set up Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) to help coordinate local responses to serious violence.

By drawing on lessons and evidence from other areas; carrying out thorough analysis to understand serious violence; and leveraging the additional investment from central Government, there is an opportunity to develop a coordinated response to serious violence, to the great benefit of the citizens of Avon and Somerset. This report has been commissioned to help the PCC and partners to capture that opportunity.

This report is the culmination of a rapid, three-month research project in which we sought to assist the VRUs understand violence in the local area and respond effectively. In it, we present a simple three-step framework for agencies in Avon and Somerset to work together to prevent serious violence.

- ◆ **Step 1: create the conditions** to make prevention, multi-agency working and evaluation possible. This requires three things: access to rich data; analytical capabilities to interrogate this data; and effective working across agency boundaries
- ◆ **Step 2: diagnose the serious violence problem.** The next step is to diagnose the serious violence problem, in order to understand where it is happening, to whom, and what the underlying drivers are.
- ◆ **Step 3: develop and evaluate responses to serious violence.** Lastly, agencies should work to develop and implement solutions and, importantly, evaluate and monitor these to establish their impact and cost-effectiveness.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, a study exploiting changes in sentencing policy in Denmark found that the policy, which reduced the likelihood that fathers were incarcerated significantly reduced the likelihood that male children were charged with crime by the time they were 28: Wildeman, C., & Andersen, S. H. (2017). Paternal incarceration and children's risk of being charged by early adulthood: Evidence from a Danish policy shock. *Criminology*, 55(1), 32-58.

<sup>2</sup> Calvete, E., & Orue, I. (2011). The impact of violence exposure on aggressive behavior through social information processing in adolescents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 81(1), 38.

Based on interviews with practitioners and experts across the force area, analysis of police recorded crime data and a rapid review of the evidence from other approaches to violence prevention, we set out 18 specific recommendations for the VRUs to develop effective responses to violence in their first year and beyond. These are summarised overleaf.

We would like to thank the Avon and Somerset PCC; her team; officers and staff in Avon and Somerset Constabulary; and practitioners in different agencies across the force area for commissioning and facilitating this research.

## Summary of recommendations

### Step 1: create the conditions

- 1.1 Introduce Information Sharing to Tackle Violence (ISTV) and use ISTV data
- 1.2 Facilitate pooling and use of wider data sets
- 1.3 Ensure the VRUs have access to analytical capability
- 1.4 Build partnerships with universities and research organisations
- 1.5 Focus multi-agency groups on vulnerability and risk, rather than offence types
- 1.6 Involve schools in the development and delivery of violence prevention plans
- 1.7 Make multi-agency working as easy as possible

### Step 2: diagnose the serious violence problem

- 2.1 Investigate whether and why knife-carrying has become more prevalent
- 2.2 Carry out more granular geographic analysis to understand what drives violence
- 2.3 Investigate the drivers of vulnerability and connections to serious violence
- 2.4 Identify gaps in provision

### Step 3: develop and evaluate responses to serious violence

- 3.1 Remove barriers to uptake of existing programmes and services
- 3.2 Interrogate the evidence and work with local partners to adapt interventions for the local context
- 3.3 Evaluate new and existing approaches to violence prevention
- 3.4 Share and scale promising approaches across Avon and Somerset
- 3.5 Disrupt negative associations
- 3.6 Capture diversion opportunities
- 3.7 Use “teachable moments”

# Introduction

---

In this introductory section, we present the background to this report, explain our methodology and set out a framework to help Avon and Somerset seize the opportunity presented by additional Government funding.

## Background

Serious violence destroys lives. Its repercussions extend beyond those immediately affected to subsequent generations. For example, research suggests that having a parent in prison increases the likelihood of future involvement in crime,<sup>3</sup> and that being exposed to violence in childhood can cause young people to develop aggressive responses that may lead them to become involved in violence in adulthood.<sup>4</sup>

From 1995 to 2015 violence across England and Wales fell significantly, but in the last four years we have seen a reduction in the rate of decline. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) around two in every 100 adults were a victim of violent crime in 2015 compared with around five in 100 adults in 1995. However, over the last four years levels of violent crime measured by the CSEW have remained fairly flat, which may indicate a slowing down in the previous pattern of declining violence (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup>

In addition, since 2014 and more sharply since 2016, nationally, we have seen increases in the most serious forms of violence such as homicide, firearms offences and robbery. Because these offences are relatively low in volume, changes in their levels are difficult to detect via the CSEW. However, police-recorded crime statistics show that, between 2014 and 2019, these offences increased by 30 per cent or more.<sup>6 7</sup> Although there have been improvements police recording practices over the same period, this trend is corroborated by hospital admissions data, which suggests the rise is genuine.

---

<sup>3</sup> For example, a study exploiting changes in sentencing policy in Denmark found that a policy, which reduced the likelihood that fathers were incarcerated significantly reduced the likelihood that male children were charged with crime by the time they were 28: Wildeman, C., & Andersen, S. H. (2017). Paternal incarceration and children's risk of being charged by early adulthood: Evidence from a Danish policy shock. *Criminology*, 55(1), 32-58.

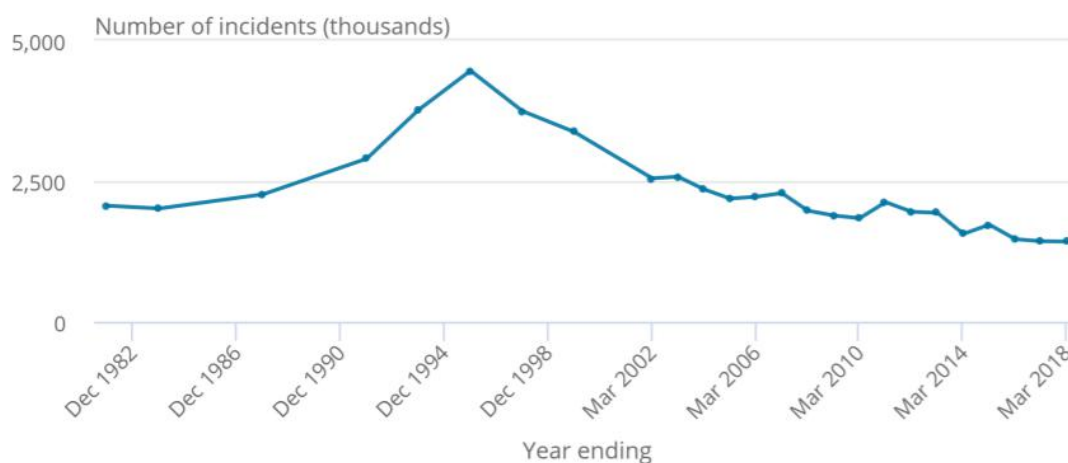
<sup>4</sup> Calvete, E., & Orue, I. (2011). The impact of violence exposure on aggressive behavior through social information processing in adolescents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 81(1), 38.

<sup>5</sup> There are three main sources on which we can draw to understand serious violence in England and Wales: police recorded crime; the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW); and hospital admissions data We present these and their limitations in the Appendix.

<sup>6</sup> Homicide by 32 per cent (excluding victims of terrorism and Hillsborough) firearms offences by 38 per cent; and robbery by 48 per cent

<sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics (2019) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019



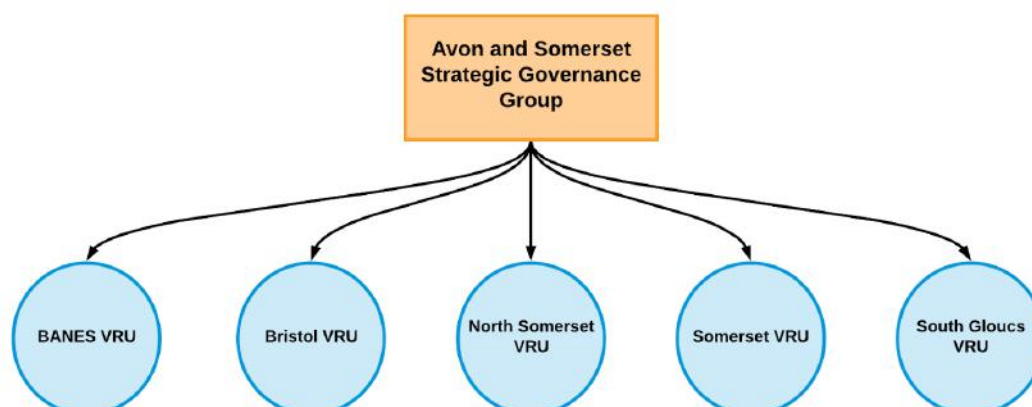
**Figure 1: Number of violent incidents (thousands) to March 2018 CSEW<sup>8</sup>**

In light of these trends and given the high social and economic costs of violence, tackling serious violence is a priority for the Government. In summer 2019, the Government announced that it would provide £35 million to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 18 local areas, including Avon and Somerset, to set up Violence Reduction Units (VRUs). The purpose of these VRUs is to bring together different agencies, including the police, local government, health services, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes.

The VRUs will be made up of multi-agency teams, including representatives from the police, children's services, youth offending services, the National Probation Service, the NHS and Public Health England. These agencies will develop a plan for preventing serious violence in the area (based on an understanding of why serious violence is occurring) and work together to deliver it.

The Avon and Somerset PCC has decided to split the funding allocated for Avon and Somerset across the five local authorities within the force area. Each of these five areas will use the additional funding to build on, develop and deliver a local response to serious violence. The PCC will chair a Strategic Governance Group, with representatives from each VRU. The Strategic Governance Group will provide direction and oversee performance across the force area (see Figure 2).

<sup>8</sup> The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

**Figure 2: the Avon and Somerset VRUs and Strategic Governance Group**

By drawing on lessons and evidence from other areas; carrying out thorough analysis to understand serious violence; and leveraging the additional investment from central Government, there is an opportunity to develop a coordinated response to serious violence, to the great benefit of the citizens of Avon and Somerset. This report has been commissioned to help the PCC and partners to capture that opportunity.

## Methodology

This research sought to build a richer picture of serious violence in the force area; to understand the barriers to multi-agency action in preventing serious violence; and to identify a series of actionable recommendations for local agencies. The findings in this report are based on the following activities, carried out over the course of three months.

- ◆ **Analysis of police recorded data on violent offences recorded from November 2015 – March 2019.** We conducted primary analysis using data from Avon and Somerset Constabulary for all police-recorded occurrences of violent offences during the period November 2015–March 2019. Unless otherwise stated, all figures, graphs, tables and statistics in this report were generated using this data. We present our analytical methodology and limitations in full in the appendix.
- ◆ **Interviews with practitioners and experts across Avon and Somerset.** In order to understand the barriers to multi-agency cooperation in preventing serious violence, we conducted 24 interviews with stakeholders from across the force area. Interviewees worked in each of the five local authority areas, and were from a range of organisations, including the police to local authorities and the voluntary sector. The full list of interviewees is in the appendix.
- ◆ **A short review of the literature.** To identify lessons for effective multi-agency working to prevent violence we reviewed the available evidence on previous multi-agency

approaches including the Cardiff Model and various implementations of initiatives based on Operation Ceasefire (originally developed in the United States).

### How do we define serious violence in Avon and Somerset?

There is no official definition of which offences constitute serious violence. For the purposes of this project, we have worked with Avon and Somerset Constabulary and the PCC to develop a way of categorising serious violence. We consider all offence types under the principal offence categories “Violence against the person” (VAP) and “Robbery” to be violent. We then use the degree of harm, or potential harm, to determine whether a violent offence is serious. For example, “Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm” is classed as serious violence, whilst “Common Assault” is not; and all VAP offences where a knife was present are categorised as serious because of the potential harm resulting from the presence of a knife.

We include domestic violence in our definition of violence and all serious incidents of domestic violence in our definition of serious violence. We also include all occurrences of serious sexual assault or rape in our categorisation of serious violence. We exclude certain high harm offences, such as child neglect, from our definition of serious violence because we believe the underlying factors that drive them are different and will require different responses.

Details of our coding scheme for categorising serious violence offences, including a full list of the offence types falling in each category can be found in the appendix.

**Throughout this rest of this report, whenever we use the terms “serious violence” or “serious violence offences” we are referring to the offences we have selected in line with our coding scheme, unless we explicitly state otherwise.**

## A framework for serious violence prevention in Avon and Somerset

When she commissioned this report, the PCC for Avon and Somerset asked us to look at what could be done to enable the adoption of a public health approach to serious violence across the force area. While a public health approach has been widely advocated and discussed, less attention has been given to what it means in practice. According to researchers and the World Health Organisation (WHO) the approach is underpinned by three simple principles:

- ◆ **Prevention:** by identifying and addressing the underlying root causes and correlates of violence, we can prevent it from occurring.
- ◆ **Evidence and evaluation:** evidence should inform responses and by evaluating the impact of changes to understand what works, we can scale effectively to prevent violence.
- ◆ **Multi-agency working:** the causes and correlates of violence go beyond the remit and expertise of any one agency or profession. As a result, in order to identify where there is a risk of violence and to respond accordingly, agencies need to work together.<sup>9 10</sup>

### Three steps for the Avon and Somerset VRUs

Drawing on this, we have identified a simple three-step framework for agencies in Avon and Somerset to work together to prevent serious violence.

- ◆ **Step 1: create the conditions** to make prevention, multi-agency working and evaluation possible. This requires three things: access to rich data; analytical capabilities to interrogate this data; and effective working across agency boundaries.
- ◆ **Step 2: diagnose the serious violence problem.** The next step is to diagnose the serious violence problem, in order to understand where it is happening, to whom, and what the underlying drivers are.
- ◆ **Step 3: develop and evaluate responses to serious violence.** Lastly, agencies should work to develop and implement solutions and, importantly, evaluate and monitor these to establish their impact and cost-effectiveness.

In the rest of this report, we present each of these steps in greater detail and set out specific recommendations to support them.

---

<sup>9</sup> The World Health Organisation (2002) World Report on Violence and Health

<sup>10</sup> Foege, W. H., Rosenberg, M. L., & Mercy, J. A. (1995). Public health and violence prevention. *Current Issues in Public Health*, 1, 2-9.

# 1. Create the Conditions

---

In order to capture intervention and prevention opportunities, the VRUs in Avon and Somerset must first create the conditions that will enable them to understand where, why and to whom serious violence will occur, and respond effectively. This requires three things: access to rich data, analytical capabilities to interrogate this data, and effective working across agency boundaries. In this section, we present seven specific recommendations to support this.

## 1.1 Introduce Information Sharing to Tackle Violence (ISTV) and use ISTV data

Measuring and understanding serious violence is difficult. Data sources are limited by their reliance on serious violence being disclosed or coming to the attention of the police or other service providers and being recorded accurately. As we will show in subsequent sections, our research for this report has been limited by its reliance on police-recorded data alone.

However, there is evidence that using data from other emergency services to identify problems and inform responses can reduce serious violence. The Cardiff Model was first implemented in 2001 in recognition of the fact that a large proportion of violence goes unreported to the police. Anonymised A&E data (capturing the precise location of where and when the violence occurred, weapons used, as well as the number of assailants involved) was shared monthly and combined with police data to create hotspot maps charting the changing trends in violence.

Informed by these maps, a multi-agency “Violence Prevention Group”, made up of representatives from City Government, the Police, the Hospital Emergency Department and Education and Transport, was able to deploy resources more effectively. For example, the Violence Prevention Group identified specific licensed premises which were hotspots for night-time violence (in Cardiff, a large proportion of violence was driven by alcohol and the night-time economy). The group then discussed the data directly with licensees to point out their role in preventing violence; and allocated additional emergency service resources to those premises. The model also informed and drove a number of policy decisions, such as the adoption of plastic glassware in bars and pubs, and the creation of more pedestrian-friendly streets.<sup>11</sup>

Of the violence prevention models that we reviewed to inform this report, the Cardiff Model has the strongest evidential basis. An evaluation comparing trends in violence in Cardiff with 14 “most similar” cities over an 84-month period found a significant reduction in hospital admissions due to violence (from seven to five per 100,000), where admissions increased in

---

<sup>11</sup> Warburton, A. L., Shepherd, J. P. (2006). Tackling alcohol related violence in city centres: effect of emergency medicine and police intervention. *Emergency medicine journal: EMJ*, 23(1), 12–17. doi:10.1136/emj.2004.023028

comparison cities. Police-recorded woundings increased to a lesser extent than in comparison cities (54 to 82 per 100 000 in Cardiff, versus 54 to 114 per 100 000 in comparisons).<sup>12</sup>

We learned that there is no routine data-sharing between A&E departments and other agencies to inform violence prevention in Avon and Somerset. Instead, agencies rely on informal arrangements (such as attendance at meetings based on individual relationships) to gain insights. Concerns about data sharing post-GDPR and the importance of doctor-patient confidentiality were among the reasons given for the absence of systematic data sharing by A&E.

Due to the success demonstrated by the approach taken in Cardiff, the Health and Social Information Centre published a standard on Information Sharing to Tackle Violence (ISTV) in 2014, to help A&E departments routinely collect and share data with other agencies. This Government-endorsed standard has been updated since GDPR was introduced and addresses many of the barriers to sharing A&E data. The VRUs in Avon and Somerset should work with NHS trusts in the area to ensure they introduce ISTV.<sup>13</sup> Supplementing A&E data with ambulance data, which is available in much larger volumes, could help build an even more complete picture.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.2 Facilitate pooling and use of wider data sets

By pooling, analysing and monitoring wider data sets, agencies in Avon and Somerset can patterns and intervention opportunities to prevent serious violence. For example, in our analysis for this project, we found that not one of the eight victims of domestic violence homicide in Avon and Somerset since November 2015 was reported as a victim of any form of violence to Avon and Somerset Constabulary in the preceding three years. Research suggests that self-harm and suicide risk among potential domestic violence perpetrators could be good predictors for domestic homicide and serious assaults. It is possible that Avon and Somerset Constabulary could have identified the risk of these homicides, by drawing on data from other agencies, such as mental health providers or health services.<sup>15</sup>

In order to draw maximum value from the data available across the force area, the VRUs could pool other data sets beyond A&E data (for example, data from substance abuse treatment providers), once ISTV is in place.

We learned in interviews for this project (and ourselves experienced), that data sharing often fails for the same reasons: ambiguity around what is and is not possible, a lack of a

---

<sup>12</sup> Florence, C., Shepherd, J., Brennan, I., Simon, T. (2013) An economic evaluation of anonymised information sharing between health services, police and local government for preventing violence related injury, *Injury Prevention*, 20(2)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/aes-and-police-to-share-information-to-help-tackle-violence>

<sup>14</sup> : Giacomantonio, C., Sutherland, A., Boyle, A., Shepherd, J., Kruithof, K., Davies, M. (2014) Injury surveillance: using A&E data for crime reduction, College of Policing

<sup>15</sup> Sherman, L. W. (2018). Policing domestic violence 1967–2017. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 17(2), 453-465.

common understanding about what data will be used for, and the lack of a single individual responsible for making data sharing happen. To help address these barriers and ensure agencies are extracting maximum value from the data available to them, the Avon and Somerset VRU Strategic Governance Group should publish guidelines for practitioners around what should be shared and clarify what is permissible within GDPR constraints. This guidance should also set out who can provide the approvals for data sharing and what the expected timescales should be. In addition, the VRU Strategic Governance group should set out who will be accountable for a failure to share data swiftly.

The VRU Strategic Governance Group should also monitor the use of data-sharing agreements once they are in place. Research has shown that adherence to data collection and sharing processes can decline over time, but that specific actions can be taken to moderate this. For example, College of Policing guidance on the Cardiff Model highlights that a named data-sharing champion is essential in maintaining partnerships, ensuring the quality of data and analytic outputs, and driving data-use. In those areas where the Cardiff Model has been successfully implemented, there have been champions such as Jonathan Shepherd in Cardiff and Adrian Boyle in Cambridge, who have driven the continued sharing and use of data. Drawing on this insight, the Avon and Somerset VRUs should look to assign responsibility for data sharing agreements to specific individuals.<sup>16</sup>

### **1.3 Ensure the VRUs have access to analytical capability**

While the collection and sharing of data from broader sources than police recorded data alone presents good opportunities for a more nuanced understanding of where and why serious violence might occur in Avon and Somerset, the VRUs will need analytical capabilities in order to realise these opportunities. To achieve this, they could recruit staff with the necessary skills and make sure they are making the most of the advanced capabilities of organisations such as the Office for Data Analytics (ODA), which is hosted by Avon and Somerset Constabulary.<sup>17</sup>

### **1.4 Build partnerships with universities and research organisations**

In the next chapter of this report, we will present a number of research questions which the VRUs should seek to address in order to inform their responses to serious violence. In order to increase the chances that their responses are effective, the VRUs should ensure they are informed by evidence and evaluated. By partnering with universities and research organisations, of which there are a number within Avon and Somerset, the VRUs can ensure they have the capability to carry out these tasks.

---

<sup>16</sup> Giacomantonio, C., Sutherland, A., Boyle, A., Shepherd, J., Kruithof, K., & Davies, M. (2014).

<sup>17</sup> The ODA is a data science and analytics capability to support multi-agency working across the South West, hosted by Avon and Somerset Constabulary.



### **1.5 Focus multi-agency groups on vulnerability and risk, rather than offence types**

In our interviews for this project we learned that, while there are examples of good practice to prevent serious violence, multi-agency working was often focussed primarily on short-term goals, such as monitoring known offenders, as opposed to prevention and early intervention.

We learned this was in part due to the fact that existing multi-agency strategic groups across the force area were working in “*thematic silos*” based on crime types, rather than the vulnerability of those being discussed. We heard these strategic groups were often attended by the same people, and frequently discussed the same individuals, leading to inefficient use of time, frustration and potentially a failure to identify and respond to interconnected issues and needs.

In order to address the interconnected drivers of serious violence effectively and efficiently, the VRUs should seek to focus multi-agency fora on vulnerability, or specific populations who have been identified as being at risk.

### **1.6 Involve schools in the development and delivery of violence prevention plans**

By working closely with schools, the VRUs can spot early opportunities for intervention that could change the course of someone’s life and take immediate action where there is risk of imminent harm. We know that school-based indicators such as being a victim or perpetrator of bullying can be early warning signs for youth violence.<sup>18</sup> In Avon and Somerset, where the average age for young offenders involved in serious violence is just 15, capturing these early opportunities could prevent young people becoming involved in the criminal justice system at all.

In interviews for this project, we learned that engaging schools was sometimes difficult, particularly academies over which the local authorities had less influence. Schools are sometimes reluctant to share information with other agencies, including early warning indicators, such as bullying, exclusions, drug-use, and knife-carrying in schools. Some interviewees who worked in schools expressed that this could be because schools were not clear on what was expected from them and why. To help address this, the Avon and Somerset VRUs should ensure decision-makers from schools are involved in the development of violence prevention plans.

### **1.7 Make multi-agency working as easy as possible**

Often, small obstacles can inhibit collaborative working. Simple things, like navigating working patterns across different agencies, may make it difficult to attend multi-disciplinary

---

<sup>18</sup> Ttofi, M. M., Farrington, D. P., Lösel, F., & Loeber, R. (2011). The predictive efficiency of school bullying versus later offending: A systematic/meta-analytic review of longitudinal studies. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 21(2), 80-89.



meetings and work collaboratively. The national evaluation of the Troubled Families programme found that physical colocation, local team meetings and harmonising computer and data management systems helped to strengthen multi-agency working in five case study areas over the course of the programme (specifically relationships with schools, health and the police).<sup>19</sup> Similarly, simple steps, like rotating regular meetings at different venues (hospitals, police stations, schools, community halls) may help to ensure that participation in the partnership is as hassle-free as possible for all partners.

The cohesiveness of a multi-agency partnership can also be undermined by perceived and real differences between agencies, including in professional working cultures, methods of working, risk appetite, and resources. This has potential to create a blame culture, which can be a source of tension. To avoid this, the VRUs should look to reduce the perceived sense of difference across agency boundaries. This could be achieved through ice-breaker exercises that encourage people to reflect on the similarities between them<sup>20</sup> or activities such as shadowing opportunities with partners in other agencies.

---

<sup>19</sup> This was evidenced by 54 per cent of Troubled Families Coordinators agreeing that all agencies had a common purpose, an increase from 43 per cent in the previous year. MHLCG (2019), *National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015-2020: Findings*.

<sup>20</sup> We found that an ice breaker exercise that primed people to think about their similarities significantly increased between participants: <https://www.bi.team/publications/increasing-social-trust-with-an-ice-breaking-exercise-an-rct-carried-out-with-ncs-participants/>

## 2. Diagnose the Problem

---

Without a nuanced understanding of where, when and to whom serious violence happens, the VRUs run the risk of investing their limited resources without bringing about sustainable reductions in serious violence. As part of this research, we have attempted to diagnose the serious violence problem and we set out our findings in this section. However, our reliance on police data alone and the timescales for this work have limited our ability to build a comprehensive picture of which types of serious violence are occurring and why. As a result, in this section we also present recommendations for further research for the VRUs.

### An overview of serious violence in Avon and Somerset

In Avon and Somerset, more than 1,000 serious violence offences are reported to the Constabulary every month. These incidents are likely to bring great social and economic cost. We estimate that between November 2015 and March 2019, homicide and violence with injury cost Avon and Somerset nearly £765 million.<sup>21 22</sup> Longer-term costs (through, for example, lost output or long-term physical and mental illness), though more difficult to quantify, are likely to be far greater.

In Avon and Somerset, from November 2015 to March 2019, serious violence recorded by the police has increased marginally. We observe an increase of around 13 per cent in police-recorded serious violence offences. Avon and Somerset's population grew between three and four per cent over the same period.<sup>23</sup> However, we know that a proportion of this increase is due to improved police recording over the period,<sup>24</sup> which suggests that the 'real' increase in serious violence is likely to be less than the 13 per cent we observe.

### There is some evidence that knife crime has increased

Nationally, knife-enabled offences appear to account for some of the largest increases in violence: the volume of knife and sharp instrument offences has increased by 42 per cent

---

<sup>21</sup> Heeks, M., Reed, S., Tafsiiri, M., & Prince, S. (2018), The Economic and social costs of crime, Research Report 99

<sup>22</sup> Homicide and Violence with Injury are prominent components of serious violence. However, the categorisation used in this document incorporates other offence-types. As such, we underestimate the total costs of serious violence. See the Appendix for information on calculations

<sup>23</sup> Based on ONS 2016-based population projections for local authorities. See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

<sup>24</sup> In 2014, the UK Statistics Authority withdrew gold-standard status from police recorded crime figures as a result of evidence that the data recorded might be unreliable. Some offences such as robberies and sexual offences were thought to be particularly affected by inaccurate recording. Since then, all forces have taken steps to improve their recording practices. In addition in 2015, Avon and Somerset introduced a new crime recording system.

since the year ending March 2011. There has also been an increase in knife possession offences as police-recorded “possession of an article with a blade or point” offences rose by 21 per cent, to 22,169 offences between March 2018 and 2019. This rise is consistent with increases seen over the last six years.<sup>25</sup>

When we look at knife crime in Avon and Somerset, there is some evidence that local trends, though less pronounced, reflect these national trends. There appears to have been a 60 per cent increase in the monthly average occurrences of violent knife offences over the past three years, as illustrated by Figure 3.<sup>26</sup> Knife possession offences also increased from around 17 to around 30 recorded possession offences per month.<sup>27</sup>

However, we cannot draw firm conclusions from the observed trends on knife crime in Avon and Somerset because we know police recording practices for knife crime have not been consistent over the period. In addition, from a statistical perspective, the number of violent knife crime or knife possession offences are very low relative to other offences, which means we are more likely to see greater variation from year to year.<sup>28</sup> In addition, a violent offence is recorded as having a knife present, which does not necessarily mean that the knife was used. When we compare the police recorded data with data on hospital admissions, we see that there are on average ten hospital admissions for assault by a sharp object each month in Avon and Somerset, significantly lower than what we observe in the police data.<sup>29</sup> As a result, the VRUs should carry out more research to investigate these trends. We make specific recommendations to support this later in this section.

### **There is some evidence that robbery has increased**

In line with national trends, robberies have increased in Avon and Somerset, albeit at a lower rate than across England and Wales. We see in Figure 4 that the monthly number of robbery offences increased by around 25 per cent between November 2015 and March 2019.<sup>30</sup> The percentage of robberies recorded as involving a knife, at 14 per cent, is lower than elsewhere in England and Wales (around 20 per cent of robberies nationally involve a knife).<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> The nature of violent crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

<sup>26</sup> We calculate the increases in violent knife crime, knife possession, robbery and youth violent offences by comparing the monthly average of these offences for the first twelve months of our dataset with the monthly average in the last twelve months.

<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that the increases in possession offences might be the result of changing police practices, such as the increased use of Stop-and-Search, particularly targeting young people, rather than any rise in the underlying prevalence of knives.

<sup>28</sup> When numbers are small, what looks like a systematic upward trend could just be due to random variation.

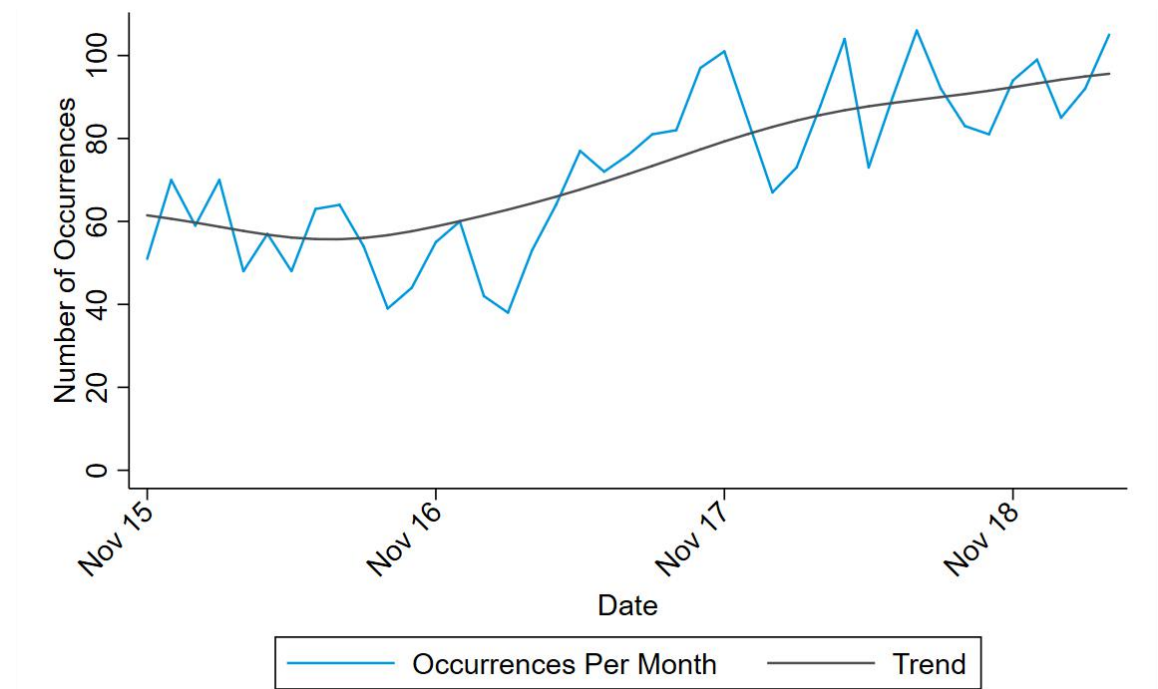
<sup>29</sup> Monthly Hospital Admissions for Assault by Sharp Object (March 2019). Accessed at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/find-data-and-publications/supplementary-information/2019-supplementary-information-files/monthly-hospital-admissions-for-assault-by-sharp-object-march-2019>

<sup>30</sup> From 0.57 per month to 0.73 per month.

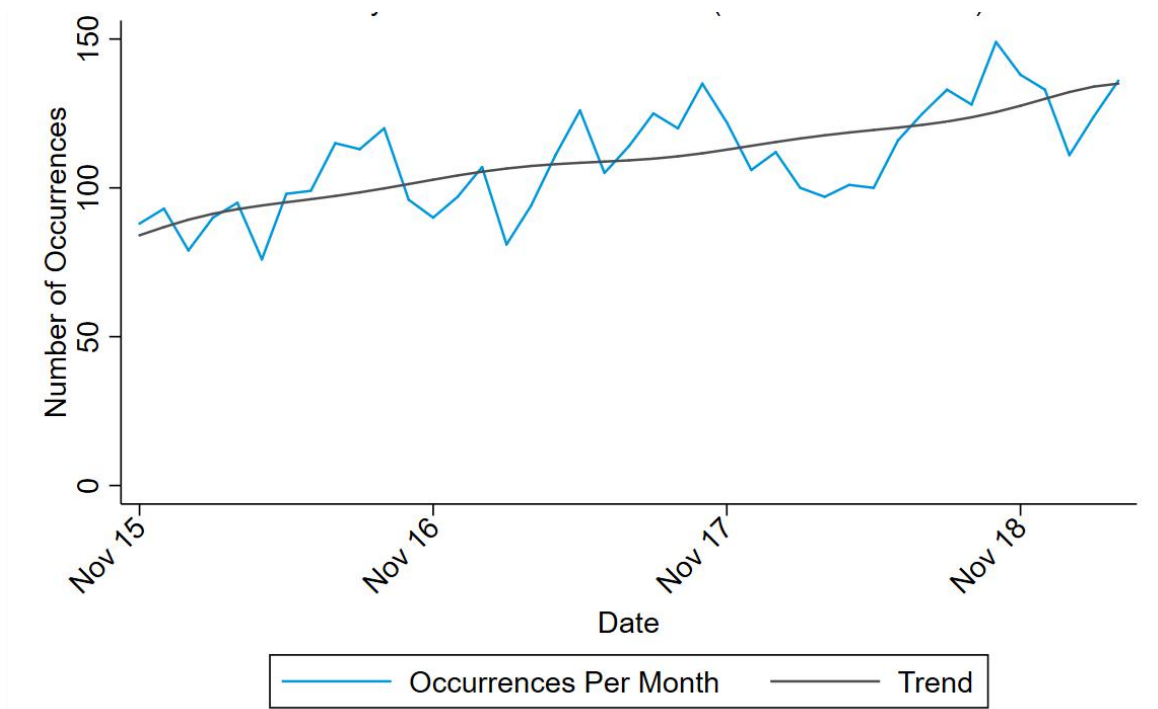
<sup>31</sup> The Home Office (2018).

As with the trends we observe in knife crime, we cannot draw firm conclusions on whether these trends represent an increase in the underlying prevalence of these offences as overall levels are low in statistical terms and recording of robberies may not have been consistent over the period.

**Figure 3: Serious violence knife occurrences per month (Nov '15 – March '19)**



**Figure 4: Robbery occurrences per month (Nov '15 – March '19)**



### **Serious domestic violence does not appear to have increased**

Nearly a third of serious violence in Avon and Somerset is domestic; and one in five homicides in the period for which we have data was domestic. In addition to causing harm to the victim, domestic violence impacts children who may witness it. For example, a 2009 meta-analysis found a significant relationship between childhood exposure to domestic violence and future behavioural problems,<sup>32</sup> such as violence and aggression.

We do not see increases in serious domestic violence in the three years for which we have data. However, given its prevalence (which is likely to be higher than we observe given that domestic violence is widely recognised as being under-reported)<sup>33</sup> and the resulting harm, the VRUs should continue to build on existing work to tackle serious domestic violence in Avon and Somerset.

### **Serious sexual violence does not appear to have increased**

There are approximately 250 serious violence sexual offences (serious sexual assault or rape) reported to Avon and Somerset Constabulary each month. As with domestic violence, we do not see increases in serious sexual violence over the period for which we have data.

## **Where is serious violence happening?**

Avon and Somerset Constabulary covers a large area, spanning rural countryside, market towns, and cities, so it is not surprising that, as depicted in Figure 5, the serious violence offence rate varies significantly across Avon and Somerset's five Local VRU delivery areas. The rate is highest in Bristol and lowest in South Gloucestershire.

Past research has shown that crime is highly concentrated,<sup>34</sup> so local-authority level comparisons may mask stark differences within local authority areas. For example, a recent study illustrated that over two thirds (69 per cent) of London's knife enabled (KE) assaults in 2017/2018 occurred in just 1.4 per cent of all Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs)<sup>35</sup> (67 out of 4835).<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Evans, S.E., Davies, C., DiLillo, D. (2008) Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes, *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 13(2), pp.131-140

<sup>33</sup> ONS (2017) Domestic Abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2017

<sup>34</sup> Weisburd, D., Bushway, S., Lum, C., & Yang, S. M. (2004). Trajectories of crime at places: A longitudinal study of street segments in the city of Seattle. *Criminology*, 42(2), 283-322.

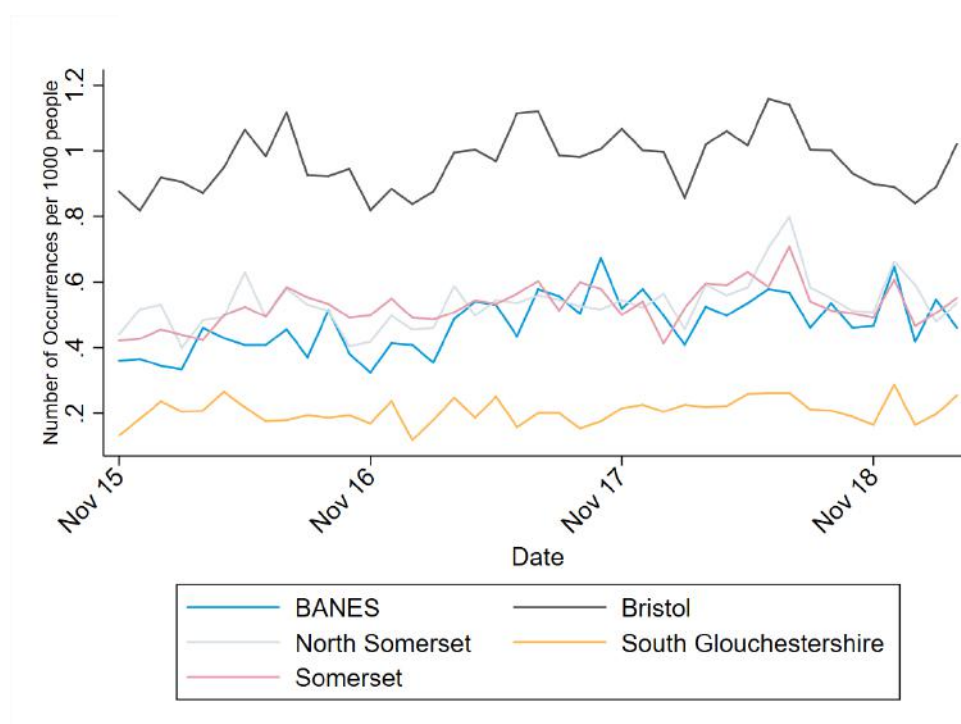
<sup>35</sup> LSOAs in London have between 400 -12000 households

<sup>36</sup> Massey, J., Sherman, L. W., & Coupe, T. (2019). Forecasting Knife Homicide Risk from Prior Knife Assaults in 4835 Local Areas of London, 2016–2018. *Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing*, 1-20.

Given that crime is highly localised, researchers suggest that it is important to use smaller units of geographic analysis.<sup>37</sup> As a result, we have explored levels of serious violence at the postcode district level (the lowest unit available to us based on our data-sharing agreement with Avon and Somerset Constabulary) to build a better understanding of the specific areas in which serious violence is more prevalent.<sup>38</sup>

We found that there are a number of locations where both the absolute and population-adjusted levels of serious violence are high relative to the rest of the force area; and these have remained relatively stable over the three years for which we have data. These areas include the city centres of Bath and Bristol (e.g. Clifton, Redcliffe), in addition to Somerset and North Somerset towns such as Yeovil, Bridgwater and Weston Super Mare, as illustrated by Figure 6 overleaf.<sup>39</sup>

**Figure 5: Serious violence occurrence rates per month by Local Authority (Nov '15 - March '19)**



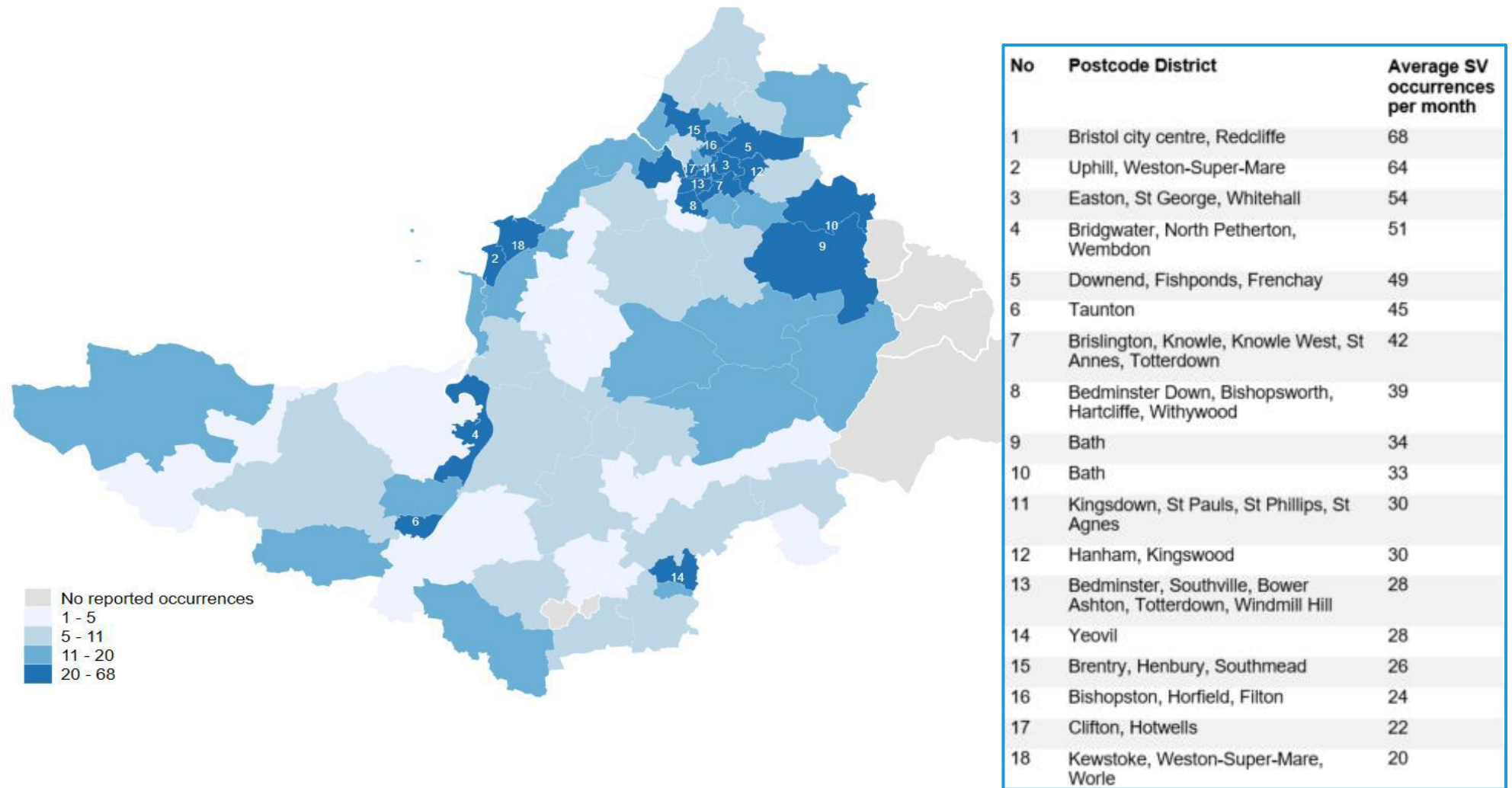
<sup>37</sup> Oberwittler, D., & Wikström, P. O. H. (2009). Why small is better: Advancing the study of the role of behavioral contexts in crime causation. In *Putting crime in its place* (pp. 35-59). Springer, New York, NY.

<sup>38</sup> The postcode district is the area represented by the first 2-4 characters of a postcode (e.g. BA1). In Avon and Somerset, these units include a maximum of 40,000 addresses, and a minimum of 15 (the mean number of postcodes in each district is 12602).

<sup>39</sup> We also produce these maps excluding serious domestic violence. See the Appendix.



Figure 6: Average number of serious violence occurrences per month per postcode in Avon and Somerset (March '18-March '19) – numbers correspond to the key



## Who is involved in serious violence?

Below we set out our findings on who is involved in serious violence in Avon and Somerset based on our analysis of police-recorded incidents from November 2015 to March 2019.

In our dataset, we only have information on who committed the alleged violent offence in 58 per cent of instances. As a result, there are limitations to what we can conclude about who is committing serious violence. It is important to bear this limitation in mind when interpreting the findings presented here, particularly as the lack of offender details is likely to be a factor of the police's ability to detect who committed the offence, which will vary based on the types of serious violence that happen and who is involved.

### Serious violence offenders represent less than 2 per cent of the population

Studies have shown that a disproportionate amount of crime is committed by a small number of people.<sup>40</sup> In line with this research we find that serious violence offenders represent a very small proportion (just 1.4 per cent) of Avon and Somerset's population.

We also found that serious violence is a "local" issue with around 90 per cent of serious violence offences for which there is a known offender committed by people who live in Avon and Somerset.<sup>41</sup> It is important to note that this pattern could be in part driven by the fact that Avon and Somerset Constabulary may be better at detecting offenders who live in the force area (i.e. the sanction detection rate may be higher for offenders who reside in the area, which may skew our findings about the characteristics of offenders).

### Young people appear to be disproportionately involved in violence and there is evidence that youth violence is increasing

Young people are disproportionately involved in serious violence in Avon and Somerset. Those aged 10-19 are responsible for around 20 per cent of serious violence offences, while representing only 11 per cent of the population.<sup>42</sup> When we compare the average number of serious youth violence offences each month in the first 12 months of our data set, with the monthly average in the last 12 months we see that serious youth violence has increased by around 45 per cent over the past three years,<sup>43 44</sup> exceeding the increases in

---

<sup>40</sup> Martinez, N. N., Lee, Y., Eck, J. E., & SooHyun, O. (2017). Ravenous wolves revisited: A systematic review of offending concentration. *Crime Science*, 6(1), 10.

<sup>41</sup> Note that this measure is imperfect: offenders from outside the force area could, for example, provide an Avon & Somerset postcode when asked for their address, even if they do not reside in the force area.

<sup>42</sup> When considering all violent offences, those aged 10-19 are responsible for 17.5 per cent of all offences

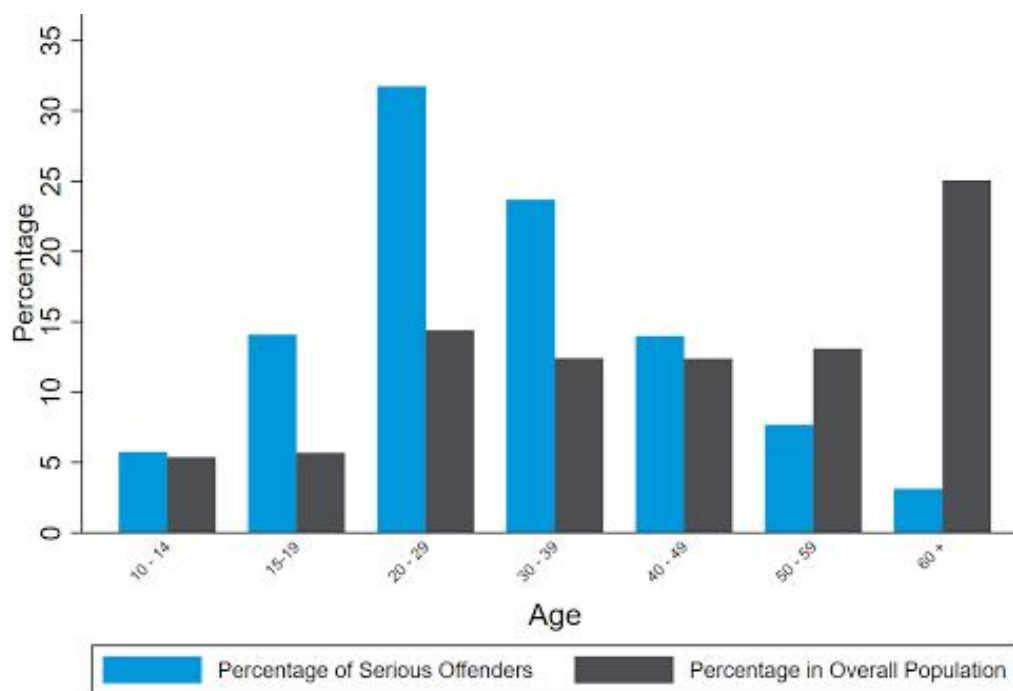
<sup>43</sup> See the Appendix for a graph displaying the trends in youth violence and serious violence

<sup>44</sup> We compare the average standardised offence rate in the first 12 months to the average standardised offence rate in the last 12 months to control for seasonality. We standardise them by



serious violence overall.<sup>45</sup> <sup>46</sup> Young people (10-19) are also disproportionately involved in knife possession offences, committing over 30 per cent of all possession offences.

**Figure 7: percentage of serious violence occurrences in Avon and Somerset by age group relative to their percentage of the population (March '18- March '19)**



Overall, there are around 3,000 young people who have committed serious violence offences in the force area in the period for which we have data. Roughly one third of them reside in just 10 postcode districts out of 86, including a number of Bristol postcode districts (such as BS4), as well as Bridgwater, Yeovil, and Bath.

Table 1 overleaf lists the most common violent offence categories amongst young offenders. As we can see, the significant majority of serious violence offences committed by young people (around 3,500) were serious violence of a non-sexual nature occasioning some form of injury. However, there were also just over 400 serious sexual offences reported to Avon and Somerset Constabulary in the period.

---

calculating them as a rate per 10,000 of the population in the respective 12 months. This ensures that any increase can be attributed to the increase in offences not the increase in population.

<sup>45</sup> The overall increase in serious violence offences was 12.6 per cent

<sup>46</sup> See the Appendix for a graph displaying the trends in youth violence and serious violence

**Table 1: Most Common Serious Violence Offence Categories (Young Offenders) (Nov '15 – March '19)<sup>47</sup>**

Offence Type	No. of occurrences	Of which a knife was flagged as present
Assault occasioning actual bodily harm	3,212	79
Rape of a female aged under 16	187	0
Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm	138	67
Rape of a woman 16 years of age or over - SOA 2003 (recordable)	116	2
Malicious Wounding: wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm	71	8
Rape of a female child under 13 by a male	56	0
Assault on a female by penetration	34	0
Racially or Religiously Aggravated assault or assault occasioning actual bodily harm	34	1
Rape of a male child under 13 by a male	19	0
Rape of a male aged under 16	16	0

<sup>47</sup> Because these sub-categories involve small numbers of offences, we are not able to draw comparisons about how the makeup of serious violence offences committed by young people has changed over time.

## Repeat offenders account for 40 per cent of serious violent incidents

In line with previous research,<sup>48</sup> we find a large proportion of violence and serious violence offences are committed by a very small cohort of repeat offenders. Offenders who commit at least three violent offences, of which one was serious, constitute just 0.35 per cent of Avon and Somerset's population yet account for over 40 per cent of serious violence in the period for which we have data.<sup>49</sup> Some areas, including Uphill, Weston-Super-Mare, Brislington (BS4), and Bridgwater, have a particularly high number of repeat offenders.<sup>50</sup>

## We find a link between indicators of vulnerability and involvement in serious violence

Through our data analysis we found an overlap between indicators of vulnerability, and serious violence perpetration and victimisation. A substantial proportion (more than 30 per cent) of serious violence offences were committed by an offender who was previously a victim of violence,<sup>51</sup> and around 12 per cent of serious violence offences were committed by an offender who was reported as a missing person within the preceding three years.

We found evidence to suggest that offenders involved in violent knife offences display particularly high levels of vulnerability: in over 40 per cent of cases, the offender was previously the victim of violence, and in a quarter, they had been previously reported as missing.

## What is driving serious violence?

This is perhaps the most important question to answer and the one on which we have been able to make the least progress given the limitations of our data set and the timeframes for this project. Below, we set out recommendations for further research that the VRUs in Avon and Somerset should carry out to inform their responses to serious violence.

---

<sup>48</sup> For example, a longitudinal study in Boston found that 3 per cent of males in the study were responsible for 51 per cent of arrests after the age of 31. For discussion see: Martinez et al. (2017) and Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (2003). Life-course desisters? Trajectories of crime among delinquent boys followed to age 70. *Criminology*, 41(3), 555-592.

<sup>49</sup> This is as a percentage of those offences for which we have offender data

<sup>50</sup> 38 per cent of offenders with three or more offences are found in 10 postcode districts.

<sup>51</sup> It is important to note our dataset only looks at violent offences, and only spans a period of three years. As such, we cannot know about offenders who were previously the victims of other offences, or those who were victims earlier than November 2015. Therefore, the percentage of offenders who were previously victims is possibly an underestimate.

## 2.1 Investigate whether knife-carrying has become more prevalent in Avon and Somerset. If so, how and why are knives being used?

Nationally, increases in homicides have been driven primarily by offences where a knife was the weapon of choice.<sup>52</sup> In Avon and Somerset we see upward trends in police-recorded knife crime and possession data but we cannot draw firm conclusions about patterns in weapon carrying from these trends due to the low reliability of this data. As a result, the Avon and Somerset VRUs should investigate these trends more thoroughly through methods including:

- ◆ **A detailed review of instances of police-recorded knife crime** to determine how knives were used, (e.g. whether the offences were ‘knife-enabled assaults’, or whether knives were present but not used), and where these offences occurred (e.g. in the street or in people’s homes).<sup>53</sup>
- ◆ **A review of hospital injury records for cases of assaults with sharp objects** to investigate what can be established about motives and knife use based on the characteristics of injuries; and whether injury characteristics have changed in recent years (e.g. increases in shallow wounds might suggest knives are being used to threaten and intimidate as opposed to kill).
- ◆ **A review of the types of knives that are being seized by the police.** Previous research has highlighted a potential “contagion effect” of weapon carrying,<sup>54</sup> where the introduction or increase in visibility of weapons (such as knives) to a community signals an increase in the overall riskiness of the area, which increases demand for more lethal weapons among those who do not have them. To investigate whether this is occurring in Avon and Somerset, the VRUs could explore which types of knives are being seized by the police. For example, there is evidence of a form of localised “arms race” with increasing prevalence of larger or “zombie knives” (large knives often with serrated edges).
- ◆ **Qualitative research with members of the community**, particularly young people, to explore attitudes towards weapon carrying.

---

<sup>52</sup> ONS (2018) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

<sup>53</sup> The author of a recent Metropolitan Police Service study on predicting knife-enabled homicides manually read 3543 police reports in order to determine whether they were knife enabled and where specifically they occurred. This is an illustration of the limitations to analysing police data at speed to inform targeting. See: Massey, J., Sherman, L. W., & Coupe, T. (2019). Forecasting Knife Homicide Risk from Prior Knife Assaults in 4835 Local Areas of London, 2016–2018. *Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing*, 1-20.

<sup>54</sup> Iain R Brennan (2019) Weapon-carrying and the Reduction of Violent Harm, *The British Journal of Criminology*, Volume 59, Issue 3, Pages 571–593.

## 2.2 Carry out more granular geographic analysis to understand place-based crime drivers

While our analysis at the postcode district level (the lowest unit available to us based on our data-sharing agreement with Avon and Somerset Constabulary) has highlighted a number of locations where both the absolute and population-adjusted levels of serious violence are high relative to the rest of the force area, further analysis is needed to understand what is driving serious violence in these areas. We recommend that the Avon and Somerset VRUs carry out the following:

- ◆ **Further analyses to identify more precisely where serious violence is occurring**, ideally using coordinate-level data to pinpoint which specific locations are driving serious violence in the force area.
- ◆ **Research to understand the impact of alcohol and the night-time economy**. We found increases in serious violence on Saturdays and Sundays, with around half of all serious violence occurring on weekends and over a quarter of all non-domestic serious violence (more than 25 per cent) taking place on Friday and Saturday nights.<sup>55</sup> During the period for which we have data (November 2015 – March 2018), nearly half of all non-domestic serious violence which took place in Bristol City Centre (BS1) (the highest serious violence postcode district in Avon and Somerset) occurred on Friday and Saturday nights. In addition, Avon and Somerset has consistently been above the national average for alcohol-related hospital admissions since 2015, including for under-18s. Previous research has found that the number of alcohol outlets in an area is strongly correlated with local crime rates.<sup>56</sup> For example, the peak time for violent offending is on weekend nights,<sup>57</sup> and the number of alcohol outlets in an area is strongly correlated with local crime rates.<sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup> The VRUs should investigate the link between alcohol consumption and violence, for example drawing on ISTV data to examine whether there are specific locations that are driving alcohol-related violence.
- ◆ **Research to explore the link between drug markets and serious violence**. The VRUs could map known drug markets in the local area over data on known occurrences of serious violence to investigate how these factors interrelate. In addition, drawing on

---

<sup>55</sup> We determine this period to be between 8pm-Midnight on Friday, Midnight-8am Saturday; 8pm-Midnight Saturday; Midnight-8am Sunday

<sup>56</sup> Mark Livingston, Ade Kearns & Jon Bannister (2014) Neighbourhood Structures and Crime: The Influence of Tenure Mix and Other Structural Factors upon Local Crime Rates, *Housing Studies*, 29:1, 1-25, DOI: 10.1080/02673037.2014.848267

<sup>57</sup> Finney, A. (2004) Violence in the night-time economy: key findings from research, *Home Office Findings 214*

<sup>58</sup> Mark Livingston et al. (2014) Neighbourhood Structures and Crime: The Influence of Tenure Mix and Other Structural Factors upon Local Crime Rates, *Housing Studies*, 29:1, 1-25

<sup>59</sup> This is due both to alcohol consumption (which increases levels of risk-taking and aggression), and to the increased density of potential victims and offenders located in a given space see: Bannister, J., Bates, E., Kearns, A. (2018) Local variance in the crime drop: a longitudinal study of neighbourhoods in greater Glasgow, Scotland, *British Journal of Criminology*, 58. pp.177.199

data from substance abuse services, the VRUs could investigate whether new drug markets have emerged in non-urban areas (the CSEW shows there have been statistically significant increases in the use of powder cocaine and ecstasy among rural residents in England and Wales since 2013).

### 2.3 Investigate the drivers of vulnerability and connections to serious violence

As previously mentioned, we find evidence of an overlap between indicators of vulnerability, and serious violence perpetration and victimisation. More than 30 per cent of serious violence offences were committed by an offender who was a victim of violence in the preceding three years;<sup>60</sup> and around 12 per cent of serious violence offences were committed by an offender who was reported as a missing person within the preceding three years. To better understand the drivers of serious violence, and identify early intervention opportunities the VRUs should carry out research to understand the link between vulnerability and serious violence in the area. This could include:

- ◆ **Identifying specific locations (such as care homes) from which young people who go on to be involved in serious violence go missing**, allowing for targeted early intervention.
- ◆ **Exploring the drivers of school exclusions and whether exclusions are related to involvement in serious violence.** The recently-published Timpson review of school exclusion reiterates that exclusion is a risk factor for both violence perpetration and victimisation.<sup>61</sup> For the years 2014-2016, Avon and Somerset was consistently above the national average for fixed period exclusion rate, a figure driven primarily by a consistently high rate of exclusion in Bristol. The VRUs could look to understand the drivers of exclusions, particularly in Bristol. This could include investigating school-based factors such as schools' attitudes towards parental engagement, or their organisational cultures, as well as the 'user journey' of a young person and their families' experience prior to exclusion.<sup>62</sup> This research could identify and inform early intervention opportunities.
- ◆ **Investigate youth involvement in serious violence** to understand who young people are targeting with violence (i.e. whether it is other young people). This could be achieved by reviewing cases of serious youth violence to understand what the trajectories were that led up to them and pinpoint opportunities for exercise; and a data analysis exercise

---

<sup>60</sup> It is important to note our dataset only looks at violent offences, and only spans a period of three years. As such, we cannot know about offenders who were previously the victims of other offences, or those who were victims earlier than November 2015. Therefore, the percentage of offenders who were previously victims is possibly an underestimate.

<sup>61</sup> HMG (2019) Timpson Review of School Exclusion.

<sup>62</sup> Graham, B., White, C., Edwards, A., Potter, S., Street, C.(2019) School exclusion: a literature review on the continued disproportionate exclusion of certain children.

to map victim and perpetrator overlaps and assess whether and how those involved in serious youth violence are connected to one another through co-offending networks.

#### 1.4 Understand gaps in provision

The Home Affairs Select Committee's recent report on youth violence highlighted the widening gap between demand for and provision of public health services (including drug and alcohol services and mental health services) and youth services as significant barriers to realisation of a public health or preventative approach to serious violence.<sup>63</sup>

In line with this, we learned in interviews that in some parts of the force area the level of non-statutory services, such as victim support, could not meet local demand. In addition, we learned that due to reductions in provision, entry thresholds for services (such as early intervention youth services, or domestic violence interventions) had increased, meaning that those who might benefit could not always access them. Before developing new interventions, the VRUs should identify where there are gaps in provision relative to need for example by:

- ◆ Mapping the services in the area available to reduce risk of serious violence based on findings from exploratory work.
- ◆ Identifying where there are insufficient or ineffective levels of provision (i.e. too few spaces on specific programmes, services not delivered effectively).
- ◆ Establishing where demand and supply do not overlap (i.e. whether those who would most benefit from services based on their risk currently access them given provision and eligibility criteria). This could be achieved through a data matching exercise, taking data on a cohort of individuals involved in serious violence in a given area, and mapping this against the violence prevention interventions available to determine whether those in this cohort had access to them.

---

<sup>63</sup> House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2019) Serious Youth Violence Sixteenth Report of Session 2017-19



## 3. Develop and evaluate responses

---

Once the Avon and Somerset VRUs have established a better understanding of the problems they are seeking to address, they will be able to develop responses. In this section we set out how they could approach this. We begin by drawing out lessons we have drawn from a rapid review of violence prevention approaches. We then set out potential intervention opportunities for Avon and Somerset that we have identified through our analysis of police data.

### How should the VRUs respond to serious violence in Avon and Somerset?

The most important step of preventing or responding to serious violence should be understanding the problem in detail. In the previous section, we have provided some assessment on what is happening with violence in Avon and Somerset, but we have also identified many gaps in understanding. Addressing these knowledge gaps should be a priority for the VRUs and an essential precursor to developing new interventions.

#### 3.1 Identify and remove barriers to uptake of existing programmes and services

By identifying the structural and behavioural barriers to the delivery of existing services, and developing interventions to overcome or remove these, the Avon and Somerset VRUs can optimise their violence reduction approach within available resources.

For example, it is likely that some people who are eligible for services, such as substance abuse treatment, will not attend; or that children who are eligible for additional behavioural support to reduce risk of exclusion do not participate. We have run countless trials demonstrating the impact of changes to the way programmes are communicated or delivered that can significantly improve outcomes. For example, in a project in Moldova we found that making it easier for patients to adhere to TB treatment by recording a video of themselves taking their medication and sending it to the clinic, as opposed to having to go to the clinic to take the medication, doubled adherence rates. Developing simple, low cost, interventions to encourage participation and uptake, is a simple way the VRUs can make the most of the existing services and responses in the area.

#### 3.2 Interrogate the evidence and work with local partners to adapt interventions for the local context

Once the VRUs have established an understanding of the drivers of violence and gaps in provision, they should look to what has worked elsewhere to inform their responses. However, in doing so, they must interrogate whether, and importantly why, an intervention or approach has been successful. This will help them to understand whether the success



observed is likely to translate. The VRUs should then work with partners to translate and adapt interventions to the local context and, crucially, build buy in. This could involve selecting specific elements of an intervention and changing and adapting them for the context through a co-design phase with community partners. A failure to do this can mean success does not replicate and interventions can fail due to implementation issues.

To illustrate, we use the example of the translation of focused deterrence strategies (or 'pulling levers' programmes) from the US to the UK. These programmes use a combination of strict law enforcement, community engagement and social service provision to target consistently violent groups and individuals. First implemented in Boston in 1996, the programme, called Operation Ceasefire, appeared to reduce violence.<sup>64</sup> Subsequently, this deterrence strategy was increasingly applied across the US. In 2011, a meta-analysis examined 11 "focused deterrence" strategies similar to Operation Ceasefire, adopted across the US;<sup>65</sup> drawing on 10 quasi-experimental evaluations and one randomised controlled trial, researchers found an overall statistically significant medium-sized effect in crime reductions.<sup>66</sup> However, the strongest program effect sizes were generated by evaluations that used the weakest research designs. The authors concluded that the approach seemed very promising but required more rigorous evaluation.<sup>67</sup> Despite this, programmes based on Operation Ceasefire were imported to the UK.

In 2008, the Glasgow VRU drew on the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (one of the focused deterrence approaches implemented in the USA, discussed above),<sup>68</sup> to develop the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), a focused deterrence approach for Glasgow. Drawing on the "Cure Violence" initiative in Chicago, the programme also aimed

---

<sup>64</sup> A Pre/Post analysis found a 63 per cent reduction in the youth homicide rate. However, this type of evaluation does not control for other factors which could also have affected youth violence (such as changes in the labour market), and is therefore likely to overstate the effect of Ceasefire. To try to corroborate the finding, researchers later used a quasi-experimental design, which compared the trends in Boston to other US cities and controlled for the influence of other factors (such as the employment rate) to determine the impact of the programme. This suggested the programme was effective but less so than the original analysis reported. See: Braga, A. A., Hureau, D. M., & Papachristos, A. V. (2014). Deterring gang-involved gun violence: measuring the impact of Boston's Operation Ceasefire on street gang behavior. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 30(1), 113-139.

<sup>65</sup> These were: Operation Ceasefire in Boston; Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership in Indianapolis; Operation Peacekeeper in Stockton, California; Project Safe Neighborhoods in Lowell, Massachusetts; Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence in Cincinnati; Operation Ceasefire in Newark; Operation Ceasefire in Los Angeles; Project Safe Neighborhoods in Chicago, Illinois; Drug Market Intervention in Nashville, Tennessee; Drug Market Intervention in Rockford, Illinois; and Hawaii Opportunity with Probation Enforcement in Honolulu

<sup>66</sup> The overall effect size for these studies was Cohen's  $d = .604$  which is above the Cohen's standard for a medium effect of .50 and below that of a large effect at 0.80 See: Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the social sciences*.

<sup>67</sup> Braga, A. A., & Weisburd, D. L. (2011). The effects of focused deterrence strategies on crime: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/0022427811419368

<sup>68</sup> Engel, R., Tillyer, M., Corsaro, N., (2011) Reducing Gang Violence Using Focused Deterrence: Evaluating the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), *Justice Quarterly*, 30(3), pp.403-439

to harness the voice of community actors, channelling the “Moral Voice of the Community” to convey the message that the violence must stop.<sup>69</sup>

An evaluation of CIRV found no decline in the rate of physical violence in the intervention group compared to the control group, though did find reductions in weapon carrying as measured through police-recorded data. The authors of this study pointed to a number of limitations in the evaluation approach, which was a pre-post matched comparison design, with potential selection bias in the treatment group and reliance on police data alone to measure outcomes.<sup>70</sup>

In 2014, the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in London sought to develop a Ceasefire intervention to tackle gang violence in London boroughs of Lambeth, Haringey and Westminster. The intervention, called Operation Shield was heavily resisted by stakeholders, leading ultimately to it being rejected by two of three chosen pilot councils. Stakeholders questioned whether a US approach was the most appropriate model for London, given the lower rates of serious violence, fluidity of gang structures and different legal mechanisms available.<sup>71</sup>

A MOPAC evaluation of the pilots highlighted that partner agencies who would have been expected to implement the model did not understand the operational requirements. It also suggested that partners and communities should have involved in the design of the programme much earlier (as opposed to being asked to agree a pre-defined model).

### 3.2 Evaluate new and existing approaches to violence prevention

Once the VRUs have decided which interventions or changes or interventions they would like to implement, they should evaluate them as part of the roll out. Without evaluation, we cannot know which parts of an approach work and where resources should be invested. Below, we illustrate why this is important, using the example of the Glasgow VRU.

Officially established in January 2005 within Strathclyde Police, the Glasgow VRU is often held up as an exemplar of successful multi agency working to reduce violence. Since the VRU was set up, the total number of homicides recorded in the City of Glasgow has declined by 65 per cent and there have been similar if not higher reductions for other non-fatal types of violence.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Violence Reduction Unit, Glasgow’s Community Initiative to Reduce Violence: Second Year Report, retrieved from: [http://actiononviolence.org/sites/default/files/CIRV\\_2nd\\_year\\_report.pdf](http://actiononviolence.org/sites/default/files/CIRV_2nd_year_report.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> Williams, D. J., Currie, D., Linden, W., & Donnelly, P. D. (2014). Addressing gang-related violence in Glasgow: A preliminary pragmatic quasi-experimental evaluation of the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). *Aggression and violent behavior*, 19(6), 686-691.

<sup>71</sup> For example, one of the key features of Ceasefire in the US was ‘gang call-ins’ meetings which gang members were compelled to attend, where they were told violence would not be tolerated. However, authorities in the UK did not have the legal ability to compel attendance at such meetings.

<sup>72</sup> McVie et al, in press, see: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/patterns-of-violence-glasgow-london/>

While the Glasgow VRU is widely associated with a public health and multi-agency approach, many of its early actions were police-led and enforcement focussed (for example increasing police training and innovative policing tactics). Over following years, the VRU drove a wide array of projects and initiatives including anti-knife campaigns, early years' education, and the adoption of the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), based on evidence from the United States<sup>73</sup>.

However, none of these initiatives, except CIRV, were evaluated.<sup>74</sup> Some researchers studying the Glasgow VRU have highlighted that wider global factors may have contributed to the decline in violence.<sup>75</sup> The lack of specific evidence when it comes to the Glasgow VRU in terms of what worked, where, when, why and for whom, means it is not currently possible to understand *which* of the VRU's range of activities, if any, drove the decline in violence noted there. This means we cannot know what should be scaled in Glasgow, or how to replicate the Glasgow VRU's work elsewhere.

Practical steps the VRUs can take to ensure their approach to violence is evidence generating as well as evidence-based include:

- ◆ Develop a clear logic model or theory of change for interventions. For example, what are the outcomes the intervention seeks to change; why might it affect those outcomes; and how can we measure success?
- ◆ Ensure data is routinely collected and outcomes (such as attendance at appointments or interventions) are tracked.
- ◆ Put forward interventions for evaluation as part of the Government's Youth Endowment Fund, a multi-year fund that will fund and evaluate interventions to prevent youth violence.

### 3.3 Share and scale promising approaches across Avon and Somerset

During interviews for this project, we frequently learned that good practice is not well shared across Avon and Somerset's five local authority areas. Systematically sharing good practice is an important opportunity for the five areas to learn from each other based on what has worked **locally**. The VRU Strategic Reference Group should monitor interventions across the area and disseminate those for which evidence is promising.

---

<sup>73</sup> We make this assertion based on presentations we have seen about the VRU's activities. For more information see here: <http://actiononviolence.org/vru-projects>

<sup>74</sup> Williams, D. J., Currie, D., Linden, W., & Donnelly, P. D. (2014). Addressing gang-related violence in Glasgow: A preliminary pragmatic quasi-experimental evaluation of the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). *Aggression and violent behavior*, 19(6), 686-691.

<sup>75</sup> McVie et al, in press

## Promising intervention opportunities

Below, we set out some promising intervention opportunities, which we have identified through our research. These are not exhaustive and we would encourage the VRUs in their first months to investigate these and identify further opportunities.

### 3.4 Disrupt negative associations

As we know, serious violence is concentrated among small groups of people,<sup>76</sup> and research suggests that many of them are connected. A study from Denmark found that a small group of “co-offenders” (offenders who had been charged in groups of two or more), accounted for just 1.2 per cent of the total offender population, but were responsible for 24 per cent of overall crime harm.<sup>77</sup>

Based on data analysis, we found that prolific offenders in Avon and Somerset are more likely to co-offend than the general population of offenders: out of all occurrences with at least one prolific serious violence offender, 12.3 per cent of them involve more than one offender, and 3.9 per cent had three or more offenders; this is substantially higher than the overall proportion of all offences with multiple offenders.<sup>78</sup>

The academic research suggests that young people who in early to mid-adolescence who are at risk of committing crime, and spend the most time unsupervised with peers tend to be delinquent. For those with a greater propensity to commit crime, one of the most effective ‘treatments’ is to avoid the settings and people who trigger, or are the most associated with that behaviour.<sup>79</sup> Based on this research, the VRUs could identify intervention opportunities to reduce the impact of negative social networks, particularly for young people at risk of violence. These could include: using bail conditions to prevent harmful associations, sharing information about harmful networks with parents or carers, and providing positive alternatives to occupy time and provide access to new networks, such as sport or other out of school activities.

### 3.5 Capture diversion opportunities

An early arrest or contact with the police is a timely early intervention opportunity to prevent future offending and involvement in violence. In many cases more could be made of this

---

<sup>76</sup> Our own analysis for a police force with whom we are working shows that only 1.4 per cent of the population committed serious violent offences; and a very small number of repeat offenders account for 40 per cent of all serious violent offences.

<sup>77</sup> Frydensberg, C., Ariel, B., & Bland, M. (2019). Targeting the Most Harmful Co-Offenders in Denmark: a Social Network Analysis Approach. *Cambridge Journal of Evidence-Based Policing*, 1-16.

<sup>78</sup> 5.34 per cent of all occurrences involved two or more offenders, 1.41 percent of all occurrences involved three or more offenders

<sup>79</sup> Wikström, P. O. H., Oberwittler, D., Treiber, K., & Hardie, B. (2012). *Breaking rules: The social and situational dynamics of young people's urban crime*. OUP Oxford.

opportunity, as people may not be engaged by diversionary services, particularly if they receive No Further Action.

In around a third of serious violence offences, offenders had previously been arrested for violence, serious violence, or domestic violence in the three years for which we have data. Around 15 per cent serious violence offenders who were previously arrested had No Further Action taken by the Police on a previous offence, which suggests that an important opportunity to affect their future behaviour may not have been seized. Finally, in around 5 per cent of cases of violent knife crime, the offender had previously been arrested for knife possession.

### 3.6 Use ‘teachable moments’

There is evidence that by identifying ‘teachable moments’, we can increase the likelihood that someone will be willing to listen, engage and respond to a suggested change. For example, research in health has shown that having surgery doubles the likelihood that someone will quit smoking.<sup>80</sup> Drawing on this concept of teachable moments, the charity Redthread seeks to use a young person’s admission to hospital with injuries likely to have been inflicted by violence to help them reassess their life choices and give them support. Though this intervention has not yet been evaluated, it is a good demonstration of how to think about the timing of delivering serious violence prevention messages or initiatives.

The Avon and Somerset VRUs could identify and develop interventions that similarly make use of teachable moments. These could include intervening following a young person’s suspension or exclusion from school; or following the arrest of a sibling.

---

<sup>80</sup> Shi Y, Warner DO. Surgery as a teachable moment for smoking cessation. *The Journal of the American Society of Anesthesiologists*, 2010; 112(1): 102–7.; Keenan PS. Smoking and weight change after new health diagnoses in older adults. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 2009; 169(3): 237–42.; Lee SM, Landry J, Jones PM, Buhrmann O, Morley-Forster P. Long-term quit rates after a perioperative smoking cessation randomized controlled trial. *Anesthesia & Analgesia*, 2015; 120(3): 582–7.

## Next steps

---

This report presents a blueprint for developing a serious violence strategy to support the work of the Avon and Somerset VRUs. The document aims to assist the VRUs in making the most of the opportunities presented by the additional Government funding, and to increase the impact of the VRUs in the first year. The next step is for the VRUs to develop local responses to serious violence based on the recommendations in this report.

# Appendices

---

## Appendix A

### How can we measure levels of violence and serious violence in England and Wales?

Measuring levels of serious violence and interpreting trends is difficult. Data sources are limited by their reliance on serious violence being disclosed or coming to the attention of the police or other service providers and being recorded accurately. In addition, the infrequency (in statistical terms) of some of the most serious forms of violence such as homicide, means it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about short term trends because variations from year-to-year could simply be down to random chance. There are three main sources on which we can draw to understand serious violence in England and Wales. Below we summarise these and their limitations.

- 1. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)** is a face-to-face victimisation survey which asks people about their experiences of a selected range of offences in the 12 months prior to the interview. It is considered to provide a reliable estimate of trends as a consistent methodology has been used to measure these crimes since the survey began in 1981. However, not all violent crimes are covered by the CSEW. The survey does not cover homicide as it is based on the responses of victims. The CSEW is also not well-suited to measuring crimes that occur in relatively low volumes, for example, higher-harm violent crimes like gun and knife crime. In addition, certain types of violence (such as domestic violence) may be under-reported in the survey. Lastly, it is not possible to break the survey down to explore differences in geographic areas.
- 2. Police recorded crime** is considered a better source of data for high-harm, but low-volume, violent crimes that are not well measured by the CSEW due to their infrequency. However, police recorded crime statistics are affected by changes in police activity and cannot provide a full count of crime as not all crimes are reported to the police. In addition, police recorded crime is affected by police recording practices. A renewed focus on the quality of crime recording by the police since 2014 is thought to have led to a greater proportion of reported crimes being recorded by the police, which means we must be cautious in drawing conclusions about trends we see in that data since that date.
- 3. Hospital admissions data** is not affected by changes in police activity nor changes in recording practices. It also captures crimes that are not reported to the police but for which the victim seeks treatment. However, it only captures the most serious offences as for the large majority of violent offences recorded by the police the victim does not require hospital treatment.

## Appendix B: Calculating the costs of violence in Avon &amp; Somerset

		General Cost (Per Unit)	Cost for A&S Nov – 15 – March 2019
Homicide	Total Cost	£3,217,740	£135,145,088
	Health Cost	£1,110	£46,620
	Police Cost	£11,960	£502,320
Violence with Injury	Total Cost	£14,050	£549,172,352
	Health Cost	£920	£35,960,040
	Police Cost	£1,130	£44,168,312
<b>Total</b>			<b>£764,994,732</b>



## Appendix C: Methodology

In order to establish an understanding of serious violence in Avon and Somerset, and how a public health approach can be implemented, we conducted both quantitative and qualitative research. In each case, we describe our methodology below.

### **Quantitative analysis**

We conducted primary analysis using data from Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Unless otherwise stated, all figures, graphs, tables and statistics were generated using this data. The data was collected using the programme *Niche*, and includes Police-recorded occurrences of violent offences during the period November 2015-March 2019.

<sup>81</sup>

There are a number of limitations to basing our analysis on police recorded crime data.

1. **Police recorded crime.** There are two overarching limitations to using police data to understand violence. Firstly, not all occurrences of violence will come to the attention of the police, this may be particularly the case where victims are vulnerable or in domestic abuse cases, which are often under-reported.<sup>82</sup> Secondly, changes in Police recorded crime may be a reflection of differing recording and/or operational practices (i.e. improved detection), rather than changes in the underlying crime levels.
2. **Limited data coverage.** In our dataset, we have information on the offender in only 58 per cent of recorded crimes. Furthermore, we only have a complete information on offenders (age, postcode, gender, ethnicity) in only 32 per cent of recorded crimes. Data coverage on certain offender variables is better than others. For example, in 95 per cent of recorded crimes where there is a known offender, we have data on the offenders age. Conversely, we have data on offender ethnicity in only 59.5 per cent of recorded crimes for which there is a known offender.<sup>83</sup>

Limited data coverage may be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, there may not be a suspect or offender associated with recorded crimes. Secondly, Police recording practices may mean that information on Offenders is not collected or is

---

<sup>81</sup> As defined on page 9

<sup>82</sup> Office for National Statistics (2018) *Domestic abuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2018*, retrieved <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenlandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

<sup>83</sup> We have data on offender gender in 99 per cent of recorded crimes for which there is a known offender; we have data on offender postcode in 89.5 per cent of recorded crimes for which there is a known offender

collected inconsistently. Due to limited data coverage, we do not know whether our findings regarding offenders (about their age, postcode, gender, ethnicity) also apply to offenders for whom we do not have data.

3. **Limited time period.** Due to a change in the data collection programme used by Avon and Somerset Constabulary, and the unreliability of police recorded crime data before 2015, we only analyse data collected during the period November 2015-March 2019. This precludes the identification of trends which pre-date the start of our dataset. More importantly, it means that we are unable to match offenders and victims in our dataset with events that took place before November 2015. This means that we can only identify factors such as reoffending/ repeat victimisation if these occur within the 41 months under study.
4. **Recording accuracy.** The data used in this analysis is manually entered, so the accuracy and consistency of information is likely to vary. This may be especially so at the beginning of the dataset (November 2015), where it is possible that Avon and Somerset Constabulary was still implementing changes in response to HMIC's crime data integrity report.<sup>84</sup> Data on domestic violence and knife crime depends on the use of "Flags", which are also manually entered and we cannot guarantee that officers use these Flags consistently. In our dataset, details on victims, offenders or offences were not always complete, indicating possible data-quality issues. Finally, an extremely disproportionate number of offences are recorded as taking place between midnight and 1am, which leads us to believe that the time of day recording may be inaccurate.
5. **Knife Flags.** Knife Flags do not enable us to differentiate between offences where a knife is present, and more serious offences, such as knife-enabled assaults.<sup>85</sup> <sup>86</sup> As a result, in this report, when we refer to Knife Crime, we are not able to differentiate between knife enabled assaults, or stabbings, and other offences where a knife may have been found but was not used.
6. **Postcodes.** Our dataset provides information on offender/victim address and the location of the offence. Research has found crime to be highly localised.<sup>87</sup> However we were only provided with location information at the postcode district level,<sup>88</sup> which, in some cases covers relatively large geographical areas.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> HMIC (2014) *Crime data integrity: Inspect of Avon and Somerset Constabulary*, retrieved from <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/crime-data-integrity-avon-and-somerset-2014.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> The author of a recent study paper looking at more serious knife enabled assaults manually read Police reports in order to make this differentiation

<sup>86</sup> Massey, J., Sherman, L.W. & Coupe, T. (2019) Forecasting Knife Homicide Risk from Prior Knife Assaults in 4835 Local Areas of London, 2016-2018. *Cambridge Journal of Evidence- Based Policing*, retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41887-019-00034-y>

<sup>87</sup> Groff, E., Weisburd, D., Yang, S-M. (2010) Is it important to examine crime trends at a Local "Micro" Level?: a longitudinal analysis of street to street variability in crime trajectories, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 26(1) pp.7-32

<sup>88</sup> The postcode district is the area represented by the first 2-4 characters of a postcode (e.g. BA1)

<sup>89</sup> The town of Yeovil is, for example, divided into two districts

Therefore, our geographical analysis does not completely capture the localised variation in violent crime. Furthermore, postcode districts limit our ability to match offenders and victims address to infer whether the two live together, or in close proximity to one another. Our geographical analysis assumes that the postcode district linked to an offence is the same district in which the offence took place, rather than for example the postcode district where the individual was arrested. We also assume that the postcode district corresponding to a victim/offender address is accurate, which it may not be as people may give false addresses to the police.

7. **Additional information.** Our dataset does not include certain information which could shed light on the nature of the offences. This includes information on the relationship between offenders and victims, which could help us to better understand domestic violence in Avon and Somerset. Nor do we have information on whether alcohol or drugs were factors in the offence.

### ***Interviews***

In order to identify the barriers to multi-agency working and the development of a public health approach, we conducted twenty-four semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from across the force area. Interviewees worked in each of the five local authority areas, and in a range of agencies, from Police to Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations. The range of interviewees is presented in following Table:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number of Interviewees</b>
<b>Avon &amp; Somerset Constabulary</b>	5
<b>Public Health England</b>	1
<b>NHS England</b>	1
<b>Community Safety Partnerships</b>	2
<b>Local Authorities</b>	6
<b>Councillors/ Elected Officials</b>	1
<b>Crown Prosecution Services</b>	1

<b>Victim Support Services</b>	1
<b>Youth Offending Team</b>	1
<b>Education</b>	2
<b>Third / Voluntary Sector Organisations</b>	3

The aim of these interviews was to learn about the barriers to a public health approach to serious violence in Avon and Somerset and how these could be overcome.

Nevertheless, there are limitations to this type of qualitative research:

1. **Limited number of interviewees.** Due to time constraints and the nature of qualitative interviews, we were only able to speak to 24 individuals. Therefore, claims made in these interviews may not have been representative of the whole of Avon and Somerset.
2. **Limited geographic spread.** Although we spoke to stakeholders from each of the five Local Authority areas, we spoke to more stakeholders in some areas than in others.

## Appendix D Coding Scheme for Categorising Violence and Serious Violence

Serious violence		
Principal Offence Category	Current Offence HO Code	Current Offence Description
Violence against the Person (VAP)	001/01	Murder - of persons aged 1 year or over
VAP	001/02	Murder - of persons under 1 year of age
VAP	002/00	Attempt murder
VAP	003/02	Conspiracy to commit murder
VAP	003/04	Intentionally encouraging or assisting commission of murder
VAP	004/01	Manslaughter
VAP	004/02	Infanticide
VAP	004/03	Child destruction
VAP	004/11	Cause or Allow a Child or Vulnerable Adult to Suffer Serious Physical Harm
VAP	005/01	Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm
VAP	005/04	Attempting to choke etc. in order to commit indictable offence
VAP	005/05	Using chloroform etc. to commit indictable offence
VAP	005/07	Causing explosions, sending explosive substance or throwing corrosive fluids with intent to do grievous bodily harm
VAP	005/10	Administering poison so as to endanger life

VAP	005/13	Making, possessing or controlling explosive substance with intent to endanger life
VAP	005/14	Possession of firearm with intent to injure (Group I (All Firearms in S1 of Firearms Act except Shotguns & Air Weapons))
VAP	005/15	Possession of firearm with intent to injure (Group II (Shotguns))
VAP	005/16	Possession of firearm with intent to injure (Group III (Air Weapons))
VAP	005/24	Use of noxious substances or things to cause harm and intimidate
VAP	005/27	Torture
VAP	008/01	Malicious Wounding: wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm
VAP	008/01S	Assault constable - Malicious wounding: wounding or inflicting (V) grievous bodily harm
VAP	008/02	Administering poison with intent to injure or annoy
VAP	008/06	Assault occasioning actual bodily harm
VAP	008/06S	Assault constable - Assault occasioning actual bodily harm
VAP	008/33J	Racially Aggravated Grievous Bodily Harm without Intent (recordable)
VAP	008/52	Excise, infibulate, aid, abet, counsel (Female Genital Mutilation Act)
VAP	008/59	Racially or Religiously Aggravated wounding or grievous bodily harm
VAP	008/60	Racially or Religiously Aggravated assault or assault occasioning actual bodily harm
Sexual Offences	019/17	Rape of a male child under 13 by a male

Sexual Offences	019/18	Attempted rape of a female child under 13 by a male
Sexual Offences	019/19	Attempted rape of a male child under 13 by a male
Sexual Offences	019/07	Rape of a female child aged under 16
Sexual Offences	019/07	Rape a girl aged 13 / 14 / 15 - SOA 2003 (recordable)
Sexual Offences	019/07	Rape of a female aged under 16
Sexual Offences	019/08	Rape a woman 16 years of age or over - multiple undefined offenders
Sexual Offences	019/08	Rape a woman 16 years of age or over - SOA 2003 (recordable)
Sexual Offences	019/09	Rape of a male aged under 16
Sexual Offences	019/10	Rape of a male aged 16 or over
Sexual Offences	019/11	Attempted rape of a female aged under 16
Sexual Offences	019/12	Attempted rape of a female aged 16 or over
Sexual Offences	019/13	Attempted rape of a male aged under 16
Sexual Offences	019/14	Attempted rape of a male aged 16 or over
Sexual Offences	019/16	Rape of a female child under 13 by a male
Sexual Offences	017/14	Assault of a male child under 13 by penetration

Sexual Offences	020/04	Assault of a female child under 13 by penetration
Sexual Offences	020/04	Attempt to assault a girl under 13 by penetration with a part of your body / a thing (recordable)
Sexual Offences	017/13	Assault on a male by penetration
Sexual Offences	020/03	Conspire to sexually assault a female person 13 or over by penetration (recordable)
Sexual Offences	020/03	Attempt to sexually assault by penetration a female aged 13 and over (recordable)
Sexual Offences	020/03	Assault on a female by penetration

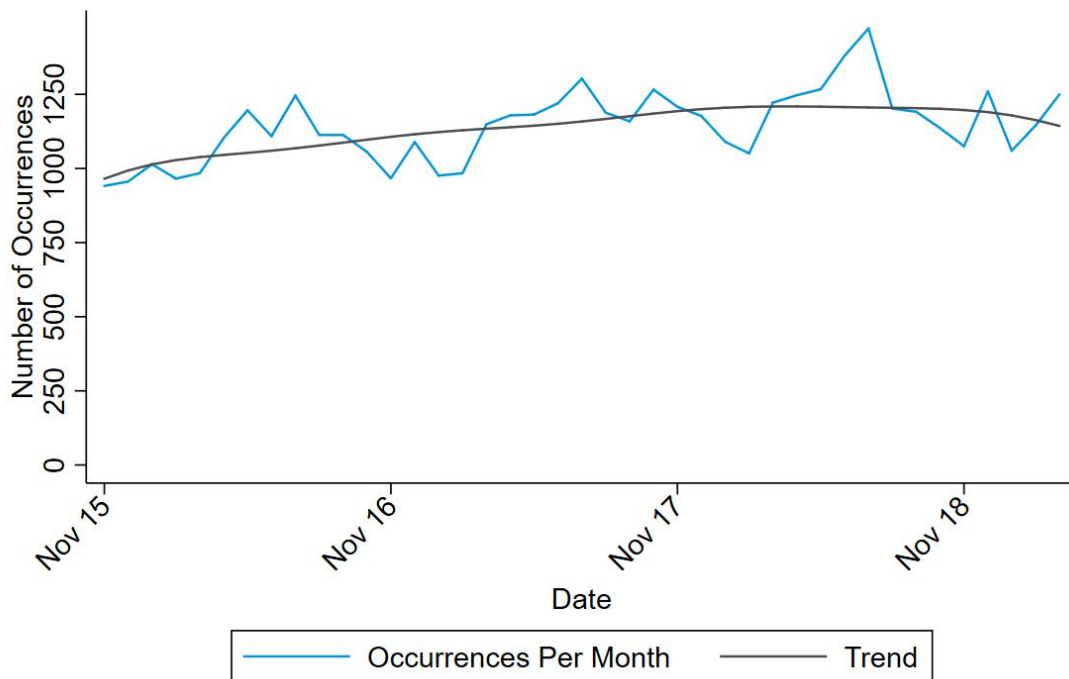
<b>Violence</b>		
<b>Principal Offence Category</b>	<b>Current Offence HOCode</b>	<b>Current Offence Description</b>
Violence against the Person (VAP)		All remaining offences under this Principal Offence Category
Robbery	034/02	Assault with intent to Rob - Business Property
Robbery	034/02B	Assault with intent to Rob - Personal Property
Robbery	034/02	Assault with intent to commit robbery (recordable)
Sexual Offences	017/16	Attempt to sexually assault a boy under 13 by touching (recordable)
Sexual Offences	017/16	Sexual assault on a male child under 13



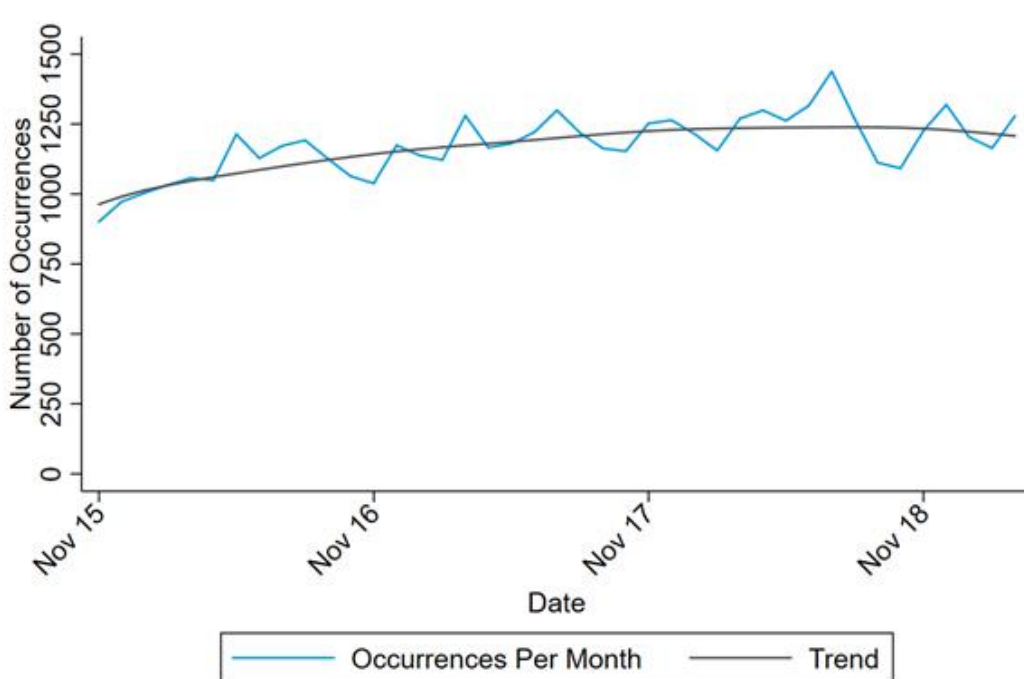
Sexual Offences	020/16	Aid abet the sexual assault of a female child under 13 by touching (recordable)
Sexual Offences	020/16	Sexual assault of a female child under 13
Sexual Offences	017/15	Sexual assault on a male
Sexual Offences	020/05	Attempt sexual assault on a female - SOA 2003 (recordable)
Sexual Offences	020/05	Sexual assault on a female

**Appendix E: Trends in serious violence, domestic violence**

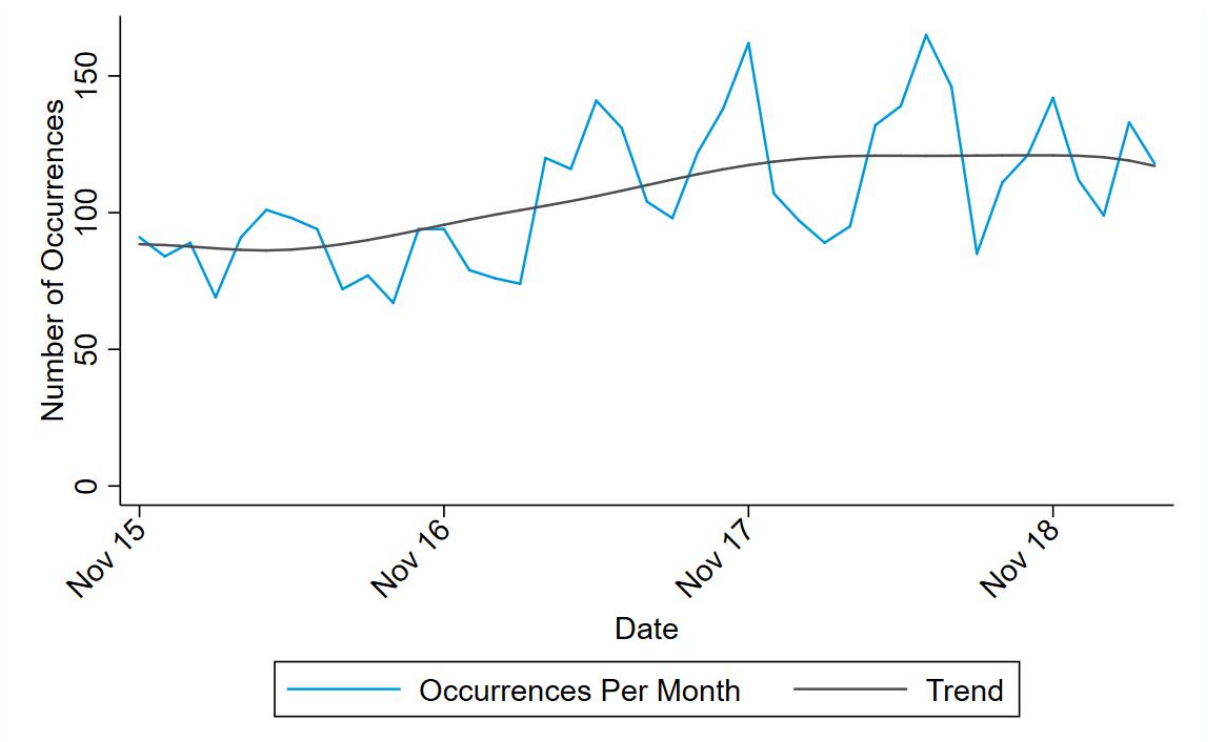
**Serious violence occurrences per month (Nov' 15 – March '19)**



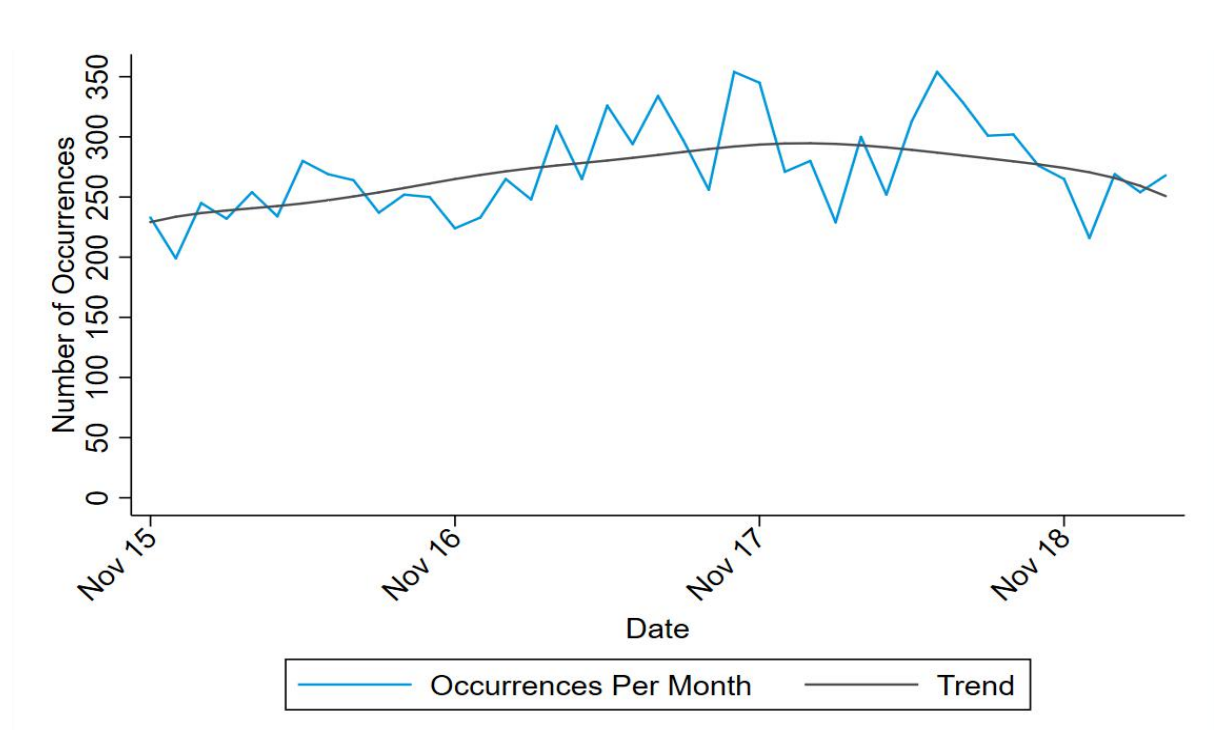
**Domestic violence occurrences per month (Nov' 15 – March '19)**



**Serious violence occurrences per month, Young Offenders (Nov '15 – March '19)**



**Sexual violence occurrences per month, (Nov '15 – March '19)**



## Appendix F: Postcode Key for hotspot maps

Postcode	Number on Map	Town area	Average per month	Rate
BA14	1	Trowbridge	-	-
BA15	2	Bradford-on-Avon	-	-
BA16	3	Street	6	0.51
BA2	4	Bath	34	0.58
BA20	5	Yeovil	19	2.02
BA21	6	Yeovil	28	0.99
BA22	7	Yeovil	5	0.28
BA3	8	Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Holcombe, Coleford	15	0.56
BS36	9	Frampton Cotterell, Winterbourne	5	0.31
BS37	10	Chipping Sodbury, Yate	16	0.50
BS39	11	Clutton, Temple Cloud	5	0.34
BS4	12	Brislington, Knowle, Knowle West, St Annes, Totterdown	42	1.10
BS40	13	Chew Valley, Chew Magna, Chew Stoke, Wrington	5	0.28

BS41	14	Long Ashton	3	0.49
BS48	15	Backwell, Nailsea	7	0.32
BS49	16	Congresbury, Yatton	4	0.32
BS5	17	Easton, St George, Whitehall	54	1.30
BS6	18	Redland, Montpelier, Westbury Park	15	0.51
BS7	19	Bishopston, Horfield, Filton	24	0.75
BS8	20	Clifton, Hotwells	22	0.99
BS9	21	Coombe Dingle, Sneyd Park, Stoke Bishop, Westbury on Trym, Henleaze, Bristol	9	0.30
TA5	22	Cannington, Nether Stowey, Over Stowey, Spaxton, Fiddington	4	0.40
TA6	23	Bridgwater, North Petherton, Wembdon	51	1.41
TA7	24	Puriton, Polden Hills, Westonzoyland, Middlezoy, Shapwick, Catcott, Ashcott, Chedzoy	5	0.34
TA8	25	Burnham on Sea, Berrow, Brean	11	0.75
TA9	26	Highbridge, West Huntspill, Brent Knoll	10	0.92
BS1	27	Bristol city centre, Redcliffe	68	7.54

BS10	28	Brentry, Henbury, Southmead	26	1.17
BS11	29	Avonmouth, Shirehampton	20	1.39
BS13	30	Bedminster Down, Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe, Withywood	39	1.65
BS14	31	Hengrove, Stockwood, Whitchurch, Withywood	19	0.83
BS15	32	Hanham, Kingswood	30	0.74
BS16	33	Downend, Fishponds, Frenchay	49	0.82
TA1	34	Taunton	45	1.41
TA10	35	Langport	5	0.54
TA11	36	Somerton	4	0.34
TA12	37	Martock	3	0.38
TA13	38	South Petherton	2	0.28
TA14	39	Stoke-sub-hamdon	3	0.68
TA15	40	Montacute	2	0.40
TA16	41	Merriott	-	-
BA4	42	Shepton Mallet	11	0.67
BA5	43	Wells	11	0.72

BA6	44	Glastonbury	10	0.83
BA7	45	Castle Cary	2	0.49
BA8	46	Templecombe	2	0.43
BA9	47	Wincanton	5	0.72
BS2	48	Kingsdown, St Pauls, St Phillips, St Agnes	30	2.40
BS20	49	Portishead	11	0.45
BS21	50	Clevedon	11	0.56
BS22	51	Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare, Worle	20	0.62
BS23	52	Uphill, Weston-super-Mare	64	2.38
BS24	53	Bleadon, Hutton, Locking, Lympsham, Puxton, Weston-super-Mare, Wick St. Lawrence	16	0.94
BS25	54	Churchill, Winscombe, Sandford, Shipham	3	0.28
BS26	55	Axbridge, Compton Bishop, Loxton	2	0.30
BS27	56	Cheddar, Draycott	4	0.47
BS28	57	Wedmore	2	0.21
BS29	58	Banwell	3	0.77

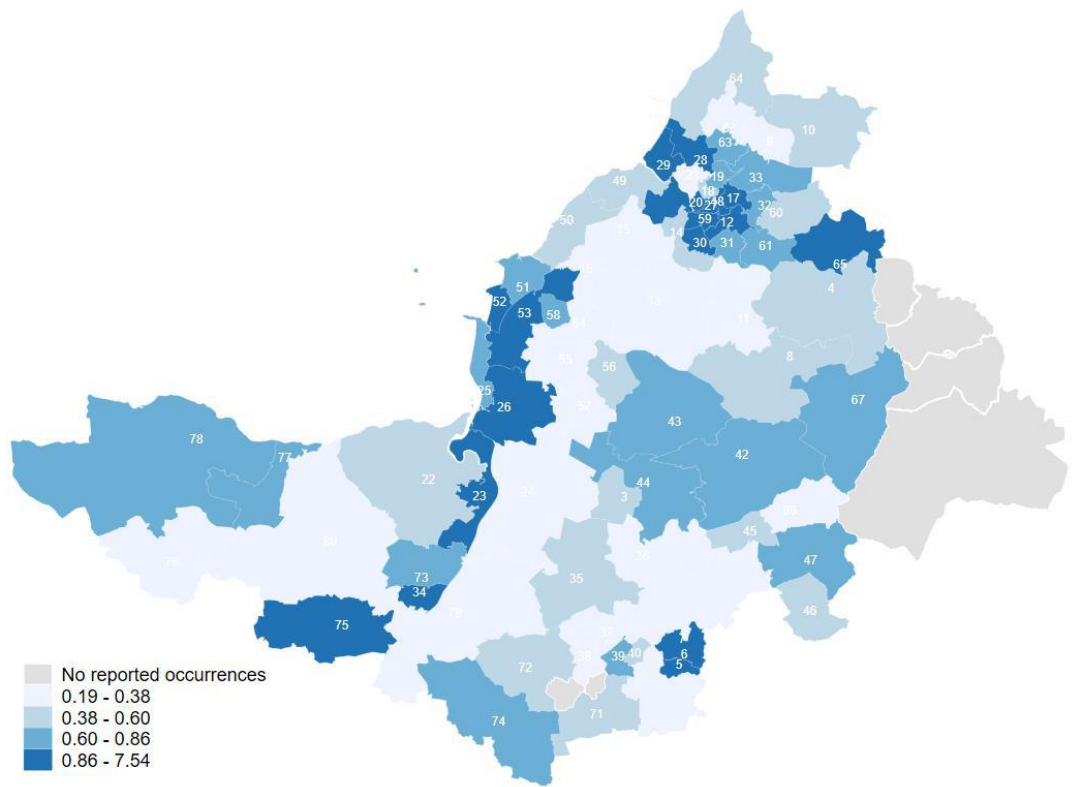
BS3	59	Bedminster, Southville, Bower Ashton, Totterdown, Windmill Hill	28	0.97
BS30	60	Bitton, Cadbury Heath, Warmley, Wick	11	0.41
BS31	61	Chewton Keynsham, Keynsham, Saltford	13	0.75
BS32	62	Almondsbury, Bradley Stoke	8	0.37
BS34	63	Filton, Little Stoke, Patchway, Stoke Gifford	20	0.82
BS35	64	Alveston, Rudgeway, Thornbury	9	0.50
BA1	65	Bath	33	0.99
BA10	66	Bruton	2	0.23
BA11	67	Frome	19	0.69
BA12	68	Warminster	-	-
BA13	69	Westbury	-	-
TA17	70	Hinton Saint George	-	-
TA18	71	Crewkerne	5	0.38
TA19	72	Ilminster	6	0.43
TA2	73	Taunton	20	0.86



TA20	74	Chard	12	0.72
TA21	75	Wellington	15	0.94
TA22	76	Dulverton	1	0.19
TA23	77	Watchet	3	0.65
TA24	78	Minehead	13	0.80
TA3	79	North Curry	5	0.32
TA4	80	Bicknoller, Bishops Lydeard, Crowcombe, West Bagborough, Williton	5	0.27

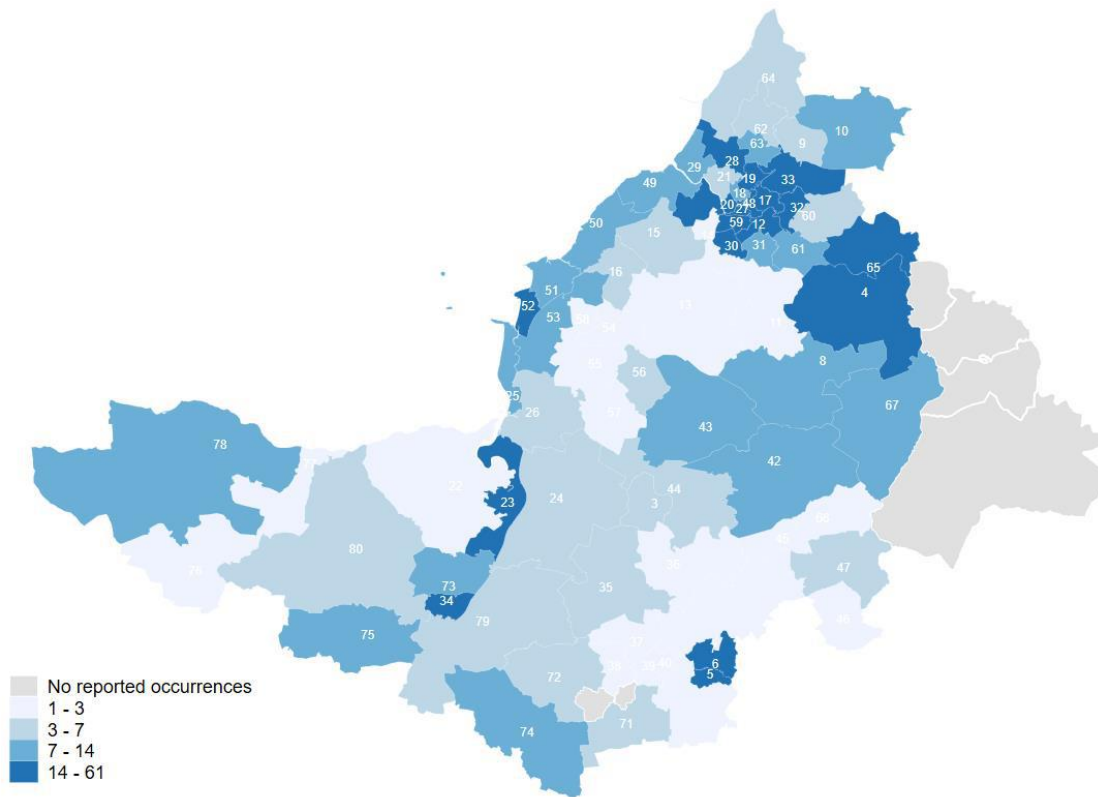
**Appendix G: Maps**

**Serious violence offence rate per postcode (March '18 – March '19)**



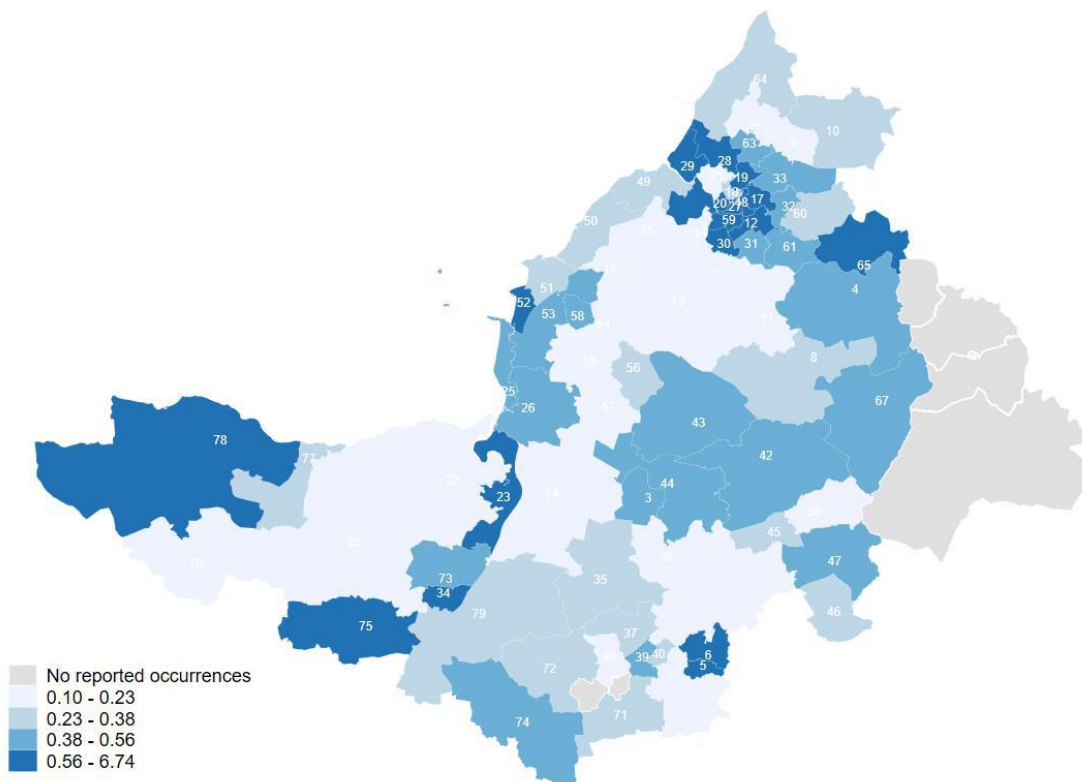
Data from March 2018 - March 2019

**Average number of non-DV serious violence occurrences per month per postcode (March '18 – March '19)**



Data from March 2018 - March 2019

**Non-DV serious violence occurrence rate per postcode (March '18 – March '19)**



Data from March 2018 - March 2019

**Appendix H: Indicators by local authority area****Fixed period exclusion rate<sup>90</sup>**

	2014	2015	2016
<b>BANES</b>	3.77	5.49	5.61
<b>Bristol</b>	6.02	7.31	8.7
<b>North Somerset</b>	2.57	3.73	3.41
<b>Somerset</b>	4.55	5.41	7.2
<b>South Gloucs</b>	3.56	5.14	6.15
<b>Avon and Somerset</b>	4.09	5.41	6.21
<b>National Average</b>	3.88	4.29	4.77

<sup>90</sup> Department of Education (2018) Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017, retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017>

**Alcohol episodes for alcohol-related conditions per 100,000<sup>91</sup>**

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>BANES</b>	590	541	553	546	572
<b>Bristol</b>	773	774	800	774	810
<b>North Somerset</b>	625	658	616	612	663
<b>Somerset</b>	626	619	639	647	668
<b>South Gloucs</b>	519	621	628	678	667
<b>Avon and Somerset</b>	626.6	642.6	647.2	651.4	676
<b>National Average</b>	640	635	647	636	632

<sup>91</sup> Public Health England, Local Alcohol Profiles for England, retrieved from: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles>

**Children in care at 31 March rates per 10,000 children under 18<sup>92</sup>**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>BANES</b>	44	38	42	45	48
<b>Bristol</b>	76	76	73	73	69
<b>North Somerset</b>	51	55	52	52	55
<b>Somerset</b>	45	45	46	43	47
<b>South Gloucs</b>	29	30	29	31	34
<b>Avon and Somerset</b>	49	48.8	48.4	48.8	50.6
<b>National Average</b>	60	60	60	62	64

<sup>92</sup> Department for Education (2018) Children looked after in England including adoption: 2017 to 2018, retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2017-to-2018>