

'AN INSPECTION OF HOW WELL THE POLICE TACKLE SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE'

PUBLISHED BY HMICFRS ON 8TH MARCH 2023

AVON & SOMERSET PCC REPONSE DATED 25TH APRIL 2023

Serious violence is one of the areas of focus in my Police and Crime Plan and in Avon and Somerset we have Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) which specifically operate to try and prevent youth violence. This report reflects the good work of the VRUs across the country and estimates that, across the 18 areas where VRUs operate, some 49,000 crimes have been prevented. Even with this good work there is always more that can be done, and I absolutely believe that early intervention, when people are young, is the key to preventing a lot of harm in our society.

This report also talks about the disproportionality where children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are at far greater risk than White children and young people; this is particularly acute for young Black males. Tackling disproportionality is also an area of focus in my Police and Crime Plan as it is not fair, or just, that people have different life outcomes because of their race or ethnicity. There are some significant pieces of work underway in this area which are discussed below.

There were two recommendations for Chief Constables in the report.

Recommendation 3

By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.

Recommendation 4

By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.

In response to the recommendations from this report, I can confirm the following.

Recommendation 3

Every crime recorded by the police must be finalised by applying an official Home Office Outcome. Outcome 22 was introduced in April 2019 and is defined as “*diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action*”. Outcome 22 is regarded as an out of court disposal. Other out of court disposals include cautions and community resolutions. A key difference with the use of outcome 22 is that the offender does not have to admit the offence.

Guidance from the National Police Chiefs’ Council was shared with forces in September 2022. The Constabulary have been preparing for the national, legal changes to out of court disposals which were due to be implemented in April 2023; however, this has now been delayed until later in 2023. The Constabulary had planned to promote the outcome 22 guidance with the other out of court disposal changes but due to the delay they are currently adapting these plans.

The Constabulary currently have three main uses of outcome 22: the Drug Education Programme, the Youth Alcohol Drug Diversion scheme and for a child’s first offence of possessing a knife or other offensive weapon. Part of the training will help ensure these schemes are being used in the most appropriate circumstances.

Recommendation 4

Avon and Somerset Police have a programme of work relating to reducing disproportionality and being an anti-racist police service. This is led by an Assistant Chief Constable and brings together the local recommendations from the [Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System](#) report and the national [Police Race Action Plan](#).

A large set of data is currently being analysed to understand racial disproportionality within particular crime types and particular parts of the criminal justice journey: serious youth violence will be included in this analysis. A disproportionality data set is being built into the Constabulary’s data visualisation tool, Qlik. This will make the data easily available going forward and this will support continued oversight.

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