



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>18 September 2024</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Video Conference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Deep Dive Analysis of Violence</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Mark Sutherland, ACC Local Policing West, Police Scotland</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Yes Appendix 1: Police Scotland Violence Governance</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to update members of the Policing Performance Committee on the challenges, strategies and collaborative prevention activity relevant to violence, with a specific focus on children and young people coming into conflict with the law.

The full update will be facilitated by means of a formal presentation to the Scottish Police Authority at the Police Performance Committee on 18 September 2024.

## VIOLENCE PREVENTION

### 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Violence is a cross-cutting issue that can take many different forms and have a profound and lasting effect on individuals, families and communities. It disrupts social cohesion, hinders economic progress and perpetuates cycles of trauma and retaliation.
- 1.2 Police Scotland is committed to ensuring everyone lives free from violence. We recognise this aspiration requires a multifaceted approach across a wide range of statutory and third sector partners. Police Scotland is actively committed to collaboration, applying place-based interventions, policy and legislation, education and awareness, and support for victims and perpetrators.
- 1.3 Through the quarterly and annual performance reporting, Police Scotland continues to publish a large volume of publicly available data relating to violence.

### 2. POLICE SCOTLAND VIOLENCE PORTFOLIO

- 2.1 Police Scotland has a dedicated strategic lead for violence, anti-social behaviour and stop and search. The current lead is ACC Mark Sutherland, Local Policing West. Further assurance is provided through the revised Police Scotland Performance Board and our Performance Framework. The Police Scotland Force and Regional tasking boards provide a suitable tactical response that promotes effective local responses and collaborative working. *Appendix 1* details the violence governance structure and connections in Police Scotland.
- 2.2 Policing Together Violence Prevention and Licensing Coordination Unit (VPLCU) provides support and co-ordination across Local Policing and national divisions. The VPLCU works with partners in matters relating to violence prevention collaborating with internal and external national partners to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of resources to support those affected by violence. VPLCU support local divisions by monitoring emerging trends and areas of risk, and ensuring good practise is shared across the organisation.
- 2.3 The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU), funded by Scottish Government and hosted by Police Scotland is aligned to the Scottish Government Violence Prevention Framework, with a focus on addressing the challenges of youth violence, weapons, the impact of

social media and repeat victims of violence. SVRU work closely with Police Scotland and organisations across the country to deliver, test, evaluate and scale up what works in primary, secondary and tertiary violence reduction.

- 2.4 Preventing and responding to violence is delivered operationally at the local level, supported by our national Divisions. This is of course a system wide response and requires the support of many local partners and an effective community planning partnership structure.

### **3. KEY INSIGHTS – VIOLENT CRIME**

- 3.1 Police recorded crime remains at one of the lowest levels since 1974. The Covid 19 pandemic has of course impacted on recent figures, as has the societal changes driven by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Overall violent crime recorded during 2023/24 was higher than in recent years, mostly due to higher than usual levels of common assault being recorded. Common assaults accounted for 91.6% of overall violent crime in this year.
- 3.2 Serious violent crime (non-sexual) did however decrease with both attempted murder and serious assault reducing. The recent inclusion of common assaults in Group 1 crimes has seen a significant increase in the volume of crimes now categorised under Group 1. Common assault figures account for around 80% of all Group 1 crimes at present.
- 3.3 The detection rate for overall violent crime increased slightly compared to last year. This is largely due to an increase in the detection rate for common assaults although the detection rate for serious assaults, attempted murders and homicides has also increased.

### **4. KEY INSIGHTS – CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 4.1 Children and Young people are an important part of the communities Police Scotland serve. There are about one million children under the age of 18 in Scotland with young people usually described as between 18 and 24. Police Scotland is committed to working with all members of our community.
- 4.2 Any connection to an act of violence is a traumatic occasion for any child or young person. Understanding the data, trends and insights into violence involving children and young people supports our ability to make a positive difference. There were 13,695 violent crimes recorded last year where a young person was identified as

an accused, the majority (63.2%) were common assaults and a further 31.7% were for threatening or abusive behaviour. These two crime types account for 19 out of 20 of violent crimes where a young person has been identified as an accused.

- 4.3 Just over a quarter of these crimes are committed in an open space, and just under a quarter in residential schools/accommodation. The third most likely location is educational premises which account for approximately 10% of youth-accused violent crime where a location-type is identified.
- 4.4 Youth violence and antisocial behaviour are complex issues shaped by a variety of social, psychological and environmental factors. Addressing these issues requires an understanding of the underlying causes, broader societal issues and individual challenges that young people may face. The undernoted graph highlights how the rate of offending in children rises through age 11 to 14 years. This rise can be attributed to several interconnected factors including but not limited to, the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, lack of social and emotional support and the increased use of technology and social media.



- 4.5 In addressing this challenge Police Scotland has focussed on children and young people through a prevention lens, working with partners to support early intervention with an approach that seeks to recognise and mitigate these identified societal impacts. For example, the Public Health Approach to Learning (PHAL) aims to improve health and wellbeing and reduce attainment inequality among school-aged children and young people through collaborative action to support schools in Scotland.
- 4.6 Police Scotland is involved, where appropriate, in the development, provision and delivery of educational resources within education settings across Scotland. Delivery of these resources builds positive

relationships between the police and children and young people while supporting them to make positive choices and better understand the impact crime can have on our communities. The Policing Together Children and Young Persons team host a wealth of resources and links to external partner resources on our own internal site as well as in partnership with I Am Me Scotland on their own free to access platform.

- 4.7 Prevention and early intervention must remain at the core of our approach. There is however an important role in enforcement as we work hard to protect our communities, and to deter children and young people from violent incidents. Tackling violence and ASB when it occurs remains a critical aspect of the policing approach. For example, Police Scotland is currently planning and preparing Operation Moonbeam to prevent, mitigate and tackle violence and ASB associated with bonfire night. Our enforcement activity continues to be informed by analysis, insights and intelligence and recognises the impact on children and young people, whether they are victims or accused persons.
- 4.8 Police Scotland National Stop Search Unit (NSSU), in conjunction with the SVRU and supported by Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, are currently developing an awareness raising video on stop and search which is aimed at informing young people about the use of the tactic and the dangers of weapon carrying. Engagement sessions have involved a range of young people including those who are care-experienced, involved within the criminal justice system and from the BME community. This engagement is crucial for the voices of young people to be heard and reflected and has been instrumental in the video production.

## **5. YOUTH VIOLENCE – A CASE STUDY**

- 5.1 To support the youth violence deep dive, and at the previous request of the committee, the SVRU will present a case study to Policing Performance Committee on the murder of a 14-year-old boy in October 2021. The case study will draw out the factors that led to the perpetrator deciding to pick up a knife in the first place, all the way through to what the response was to support the community after this tragic and traumatic event. Understanding the cause factors and learning from such tragic incidents supports our future approach.



## 6. DEVELOPING OUR APPROACH

- 6.1 Police Scotland, supported by partners and Scottish Government, is developing a violence prevention tactical plan. This plan will set out high level outcomes supported by a systematic plan of activity to support ongoing efforts to reduce the instances and the impact of violence and related harms. This is being done through engagement with the Scottish Institute of Policing Research to ensure a rich understanding of contributing factors. We will also be seeking best practice from across UK policing, and from external stakeholders across the country.
- 6.2 The undernoted examples offer a snapshot of current activity from strategic collaboration and targeted primary prevention to nationally embedded good practice and the common partnership approach seen across Local Policing Divisions.
- 6.3 **Scottish Prevention Hub** - A collaboration Framework Agreement between Police Scotland and Public Health Scotland, outlining a commitment to work together to embed a whole system public health approach to policing and improve the health and wellbeing of communities. The Hub ambition is to reduce health and wellbeing inequalities with a focus on primary prevention.
- 6.4 **Scottish Violence Reduction Unit - Think Equal Project** - Think Equal is a primary prevention programme, co-created with world renowned experts, aimed at teaching social and emotional skills to early years (age 3-6). The SVRU have worked with Think Equal Project and Glasgow City Council to roll out the programme to 49 of 110 Council run nursery establishments in Glasgow. The SVRU will support the evaluation of the programme with a view to facilitating other local authority areas to develop Think Equal across Scotland.
- 6.5 **Campus Officers** - Campus officers engage with young people around a variety of issues including drug harms, violence, online harms, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and road safety. Officers spend time building trust with young people in the school environment to increase confidence in the police whilst providing informal means for young people to speak with officers. This helps to increase confidence in our policing service amongst this group, whilst influencing a reduction in violence through education.
- 6.6 **One Glasgow** – is a multi-agency public health approach for children and young people coming into contact with the criminal justice system and Serious Organised Crime. Greater Glasgow Division work with three youth engagement services: Includem

ADAPT; Action for Children Side Step; and NRS Youth Intervention Team, to identify and provide young people with bespoke engagement and mentoring by 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners. This includes life choices, addiction support, employability skills, family and mental health support.

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 We know that inequality plays a significant role in shaping incidence of violence and the effectiveness of violence prevention efforts. When inequality is high it can foster environments where violence is more likely to occur. Police Scotland will play its part in supporting the recently published Programme for Government. The programme calls out the impact of, and need to tackle persistent inequality, and speaks to an aspiration that 'Scotland remains a place where everyone can live in safety and security.'
- 7.2 Police Scotland will continue to tackle violence through a coordinated and focussed approach that ensures our communities are safe and supported. We will prioritise working closely across Local Community Planning Partnerships in addressing the needs and priorities of local communities. We will continue to support the Violence Prevention Framework and SVRU in identifying, testing and embedding good practice interventions.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

## **11. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are reputational implications in this report. We are aware of the importance to maintain the trust and confidence of our communities and reputational impact to Police Scotland.

## **12. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are social implications in this report. As stated above violence is a cross-cutting issue and can have a profound and lasting effect on individuals, families and communities.

## **13. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

13.1 There are no community implications in this report.

## **14. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 There are equality implications in this report. We continue to monitor equality implications through the Violence ASB and Stop Search Working Groups where data allows and act accordingly.

## **15. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to consider the contents of this report and associated presentation for further discussion.



Appendix 1

