

# Manchester's Community Safety Partnership

SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY  
2022-2025

Manchester  
Community  
Safety  
Partnership

Our Manchester

Working together to keep Manchester safe

# [ Contents ]

<b>Foreword by Councillor Luthfur Rahman</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Definition of serious violence</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Governance</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Serious violence in Manchester</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>What have our local communities told us about serious violence?</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>What has been done so far in Manchester?</b>	
<b>Our approach</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Learning from reviews, research and activity</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Key priorities and actions</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Measures of success</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>27</b>



## [ **Foreword** ]

by Councillor Luthfur Rahman

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

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

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

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

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

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

# [ Introduction ]

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

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

On 31 January 2023, the Serious Violence Duty came into effect in England and Wales under Chapter 1, Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

The Serious Violence Duty requires Specified Authorities (Local Authorities, Police, Justice, Fire and Rescue and Health) to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. This includes the identification of the types of violence, the cause of violence (if possible to do so) and the preparation and implementation of a response strategy at a local level. The new Duty requires the specified authorities to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence. In doing so, local areas are encouraged to work within the framework of a public health approach:

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

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

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

# [ Definition of serious violence ]

Manchester's Serious Violence Board has adopted the World Health Organization's definition of serious violence, in line with the definition adopted by Greater Manchester's VRU. The World Health Organization defines serious violence as 'The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.'" Source: World Health Organization.

It is recognised that the Serious Violence Duty encourages us to include both domestic abuse and sexual assault within our Serious Violence Strategy. In Manchester, there is already in existence a recent (2021) Domestic Abuse Strategy delivered by the Community Safety Partnership and local voluntary and community groups, which can be found here: [https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500313/our\\_manchester\\_strategy/8604/domestic\\_abuse\\_strategy](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500313/our_manchester_strategy/8604/domestic_abuse_strategy)

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

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

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## **Manchester Community Safety Strategy**

[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7541/making\\_manchester\\_fairer\\_anti-poverty\\_strategy\\_2023-2027](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7541/making_manchester_fairer_anti-poverty_strategy_2023-2027)

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## **Manchester's Complex Safeguarding Strategy**

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

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## **Greater Manchester Serious Organised Crime Strategy**

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

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## **Education Inclusion Strategy**

[https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7154/manchester\\_inclusion\\_strategy\\_november\\_2019\\_%E2%80%93\\_july\\_2022](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7154/manchester_inclusion_strategy_november_2019_%E2%80%93_july_2022)

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## **Making Manchester Fairer strategy**

<https://www.manchester.gov.uk/makingmanchesterfairer>

# [ Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit ]



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

In April 2023, Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit published its refreshed Strategic Needs Assessment, which takes a public health approach to serious violence at a regional level. The needs assessment identifies risk and protective factors through the life course, and identifies recommendations and next steps.

Further to the refreshed needs assessment, the Greater Manchester VRU launched its ten-year violence-reduction strategy, Greater than Violence. The strategy commits to working with individuals and communities to understand their strengths, challenges and ideas in tackling violence. The strategy was founded on two main pillars: preventing violence, and providing a swift and appropriate response when an incident occurs. The strategy has five main principles:

- Community-led approach
- Early and timely intervention
- Partnerships for change
- Equality, equity and justice
- Trauma-responsive city region.

The Greater Manchester VRU needs assessment, and the Greater than Violence strategy has been utilised to inform the refreshed needs assessment and strategy for Manchester.

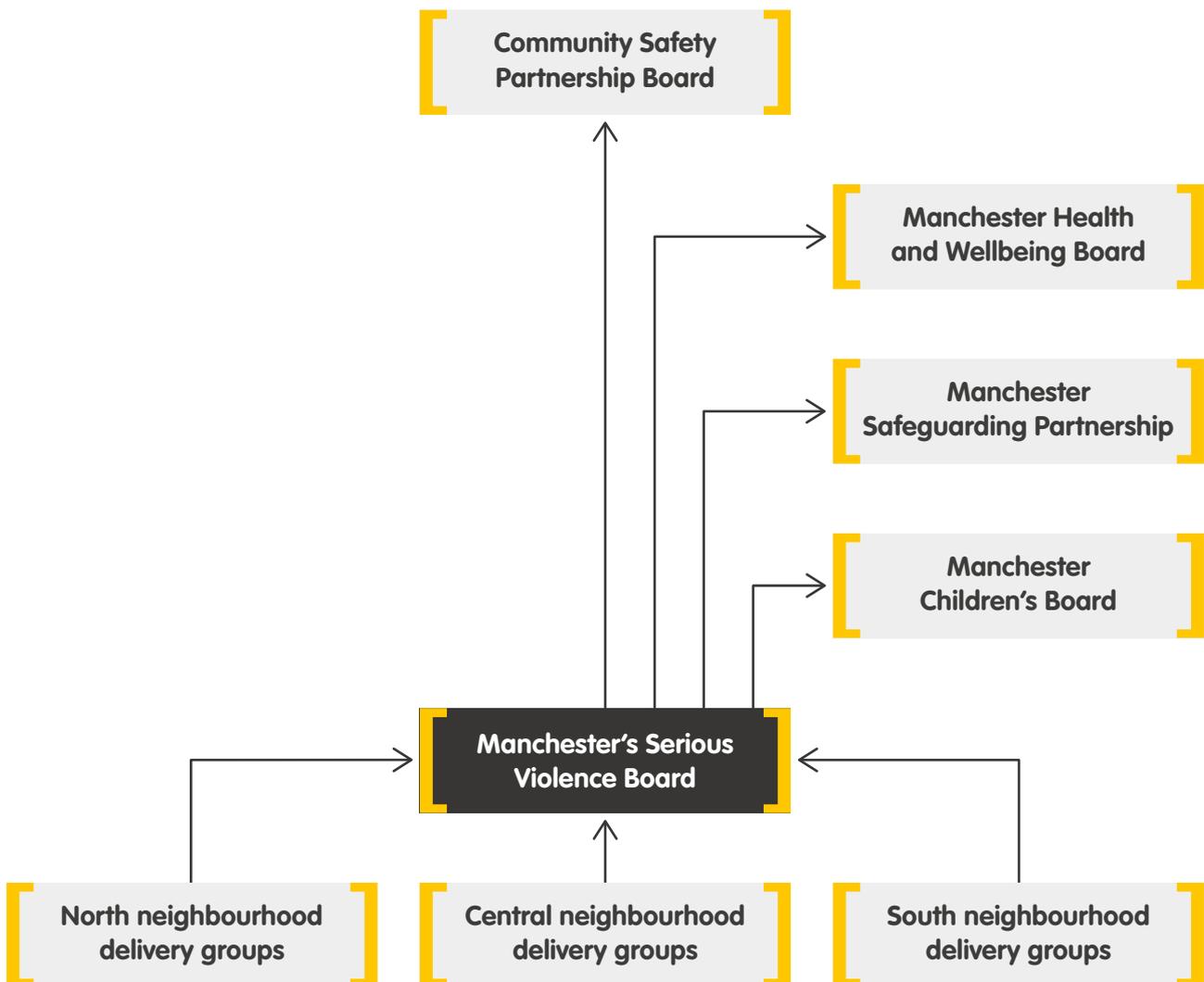
A copy of the Greater than Violence strategy can be found here: <https://gmvruc.co.uk/greater-than-violence-strategy/>

# [ Governance ]

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

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

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



# [ Serious violence in Manchester ]

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

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

Between October 2020 and September 2023, 33% of homicides and attempted murders in Greater Manchester took place within the city of Manchester.

[ 33% ]

The number of serious violent offences in Manchester saw a 9% reduction between October 2022 and September 2023 compared with the previous 12 months.

[ 9% ]

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

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



The significance of cross-border issues continues to be seen in recent homicides involving young people, and these are also more specifically linked to group associations and rivalry, including potential criminal exploitation.

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## Victims

The vast majority of victims of serious violence are male

- Over the past three years (October 2020 to September 2023), 78% of victims of homicide and serious violence in Manchester have been male, as have 79% of personal robbery victims.

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

- Victims of serious violence in Manchester (homicides and wounding) are most likely to be in their twenties and early thirties.

Repeat victimisation is a significant issue across the city.

- 25% of victims of serious violence in Manchester between October 2022 and September 2023 had already been the victim of a violent crime during the previous 12 months.

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## Suspects

Between October 2022 and September 2023, two thirds of suspects linked to serious violent offences had already been linked to another violent offence in the previous 12 months (including public order and weapon-possession offences).

Perpetrators of serious violence were more likely to live locally, with 71% of suspects living in the city of Manchester, and a further 22% living in other parts of Greater Manchester.

The vast majority of serious violence perpetrators are male

- In the past three years, 82% of perpetrators linked to serious violence in Manchester have been male, although the proportion of female perpetrators has increased over this period, from 15% during 2020/21 to 21% during 2022/23.

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## Serious youth violence

Between 1 January 2022 and 31 March 2023, 38 young people were charged with 67 Serious Youth Violence category offences.

- 55% of young people charged with a Serious Violence offence were from the Black Asian or minority ethnic community.
- 87% of young people charged with an offence were male.
- 13% of young people charged with an offence were female.
- The average age of the cohort is 16.3 years old.

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## Deprivation

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

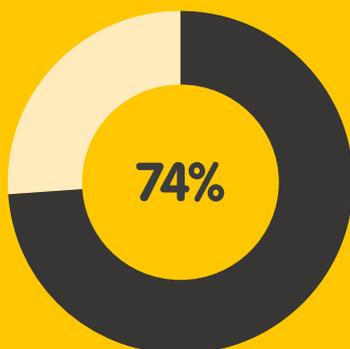


## Education data

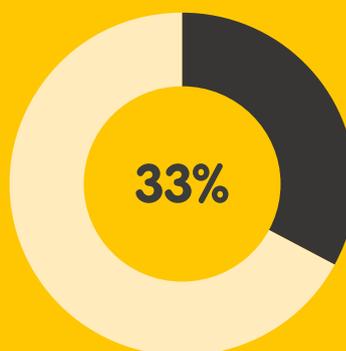
Data sources, including Greater Manchester Police, Youth Justice, Children's Social Care, and Education SAFE Taskforce research, identified 344 young people in Manchester who were within their definition of being involved in serious youth violence. Other factors present for this group were:



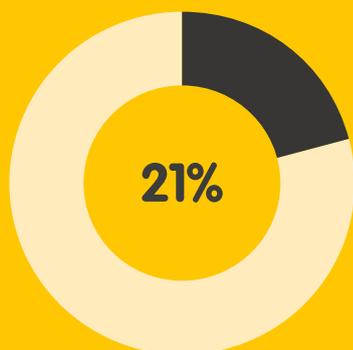
Boys



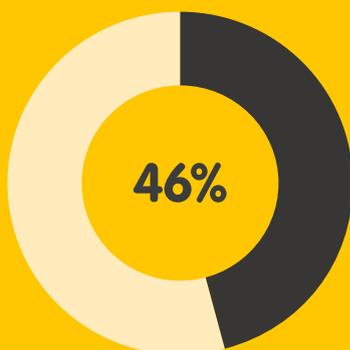
Received a suspension from school



Have 6-10 indicators of ACEs



Received a permanent exclusion



Spent time in an alternative education provision

The most recent data from the Local Authority Education team shows that permanent exclusions and suspensions are increasing in Manchester schools. In 2022/23, permanent exclusions were up from the previous year by 0.4%, and suspensions went up by 0.94%. Both have continued to rise this academic year, and the trajectory is that the increase will be a lot higher. There is also an indication that there is an increase in children with Educational Health and Care Plans being permanently excluded from Manchester schools.

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## Complex safeguarding

Manchester Complex Safeguarding Insights and Impact Framework (2022/23) identified the following:

Between April 2022 and March 2023, 242 referrals were made to the Complex Safeguarding Team.

[ 242 ]

Gender breakdown showed that 69% were male and 31% were female.

[ 👤 69% 👧 31% ]

39% had additional needs, including special educational needs or learning disabilities.

[ 39% ]

# [ What have our local communities told us about serious violence? ]

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

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

## **The Community Safety Strategy Consultation**

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

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

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

## **Listening to the experts – what young people have told us**

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

Young people revealed their hopes for the future were:

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

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

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

The report contains several recommendations:

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

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## **Community-led approaches**

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

Communities told us that they were concerned about:

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

They wanted to see:

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

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

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

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

In October 2023, the partnership undertook a mapping exercise of services working to reduce serious violence across the city. This has enabled us to understand what is currently on offer across the partnership under each of the workstreams and to ensure better co-ordination.

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## **Prevention and early intervention**

### **Community-led work**

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

The Youth Endowment Fund has agreed to support a five-year investment plan in the Cheetham area of the city to develop a community-led strategy to reduce serious youth violence in the locality. A consultation has been completed with a diverse group of young people from the area to understand what young people's thoughts are about serious violence and the area they live in. Work is now underway to commission local services to develop an approach in response to the consultation.

### **Engage panels**

Engage panels are multi-agency panels (made up of both statutory agencies and voluntary and community groups) set up across the city. The panels are focused on supporting children and young people who are 'invisible', meaning they are not currently open to statutory services such as Children's Social Care, Complex Safeguarding or Youth Justice.

Engage panels follow the principles outlined in the Violence Reduction Unit's PPIED (Prevention through Prosecution, Intervention Engagement and Diversion) initiative. This was devised in response to feedback from practice reviews and practitioners, who identified that children were being involved in serious incidents but there was no criminal justice outcome, and they were not getting any intervention or support to address those behaviours. The panel ensures that intervention and prevention support is offered to children and young people who are displaying behaviours that may suggest they are susceptible to being drawn into serious violence.

### **Remedi**

Remedi work with children on a one-to-one and group basis using restorative approaches to build their understanding of the impact of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and offending behaviour. Remedi work specifically around young people's needs, equipping them with the tools to make choices to divert them away from committing crime and antisocial behaviour. The key aim is to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people who are on the periphery of the criminal justice system – bridging the gap between universal and statutory services.

## **AFRUCA**

AFRUCA delivers a holistic menu of services to support children and families in Black and ethnic minority communities across the city at risk of or affected by exploitation and youth violence. The Child Trafficking and Youth Violence Programme includes:

- an Early Help Support Programme for Black and ethnic minority families affected by county lines child trafficking
- a coding project for children at risk of county lines child trafficking
- a Children at Risk of Serious Violence Project
- the Phoenix Project for young women and girls at risk of exploitation.

## **STEER – Salford Foundation Trust**

Steer is a Youth Endowment Fund project that provides a one-to-one mentoring service for young people 10–17 years old who have been identified as being at risk of violence. Support involves weekly one-to-one sessions for up to six months to deliver core interventions, including goal setting, safety mapping, healthy relationships, exploitation, weapon carrying, and anger management, as well as engagement in positive activities.

## **Keeping children and young people safe**

The Community Safety Partnership has used grants from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to target specific activities in areas where there are high levels of antisocial behaviour and violence committed by young people.

One example of this work is done by Manchester Youth Zone, whose engagement with young people in north Manchester includes:

- Street-based detached youth work with children and young people living in communities currently impacted by violence

- Supporting children and young people to deliver meaningful social-action projects in their communities, and encouraging them to engage in positive activities that help them to feel safe, respected, hopeful and supported
- Capturing first-hand experiences and exploring alternative models for youth voice.

Projects are also commissioned to be delivered in Miles Platting and Newton Heath, Clayton and Openshaw, Gorton and Abbey Hey, and Cheetham by local providers.

## **Youth Justice Prevention and Diversion Teams**

**Prevention:** The Prevention Team comprises officers seconded by Remedi, supporting children who have not yet entered the justice system. Officers work with children to help them identify what led to their offending behaviour, and they co-produce interventions to reduce the risk of repeat incidents. The work helps children to recognise their own strengths and build their resilience, providing them with the tools they need to prevent offending behaviour before it escalates. Remedi specialise in Restorative Justice and work with the children to help them understand how their actions can affect the lives of others as well as their own.

**Diversion:** The Diversion Team has a broad range of expertise from Youth Justice, Victim Liaison and the police. The Team supports children who have entered the justice system for low-level offences. Similar to the Prevention offer, the team works with the children to help them identify what led to their offending behaviour and how this resulted in them entering the justice system. Officers co-produce interventions with the children and use strength-based approaches to support them to build resilience. The team encourages children to take ownership of their behaviour so they can recognise this in the future and reduce the risk of reoffending.

### **Work in schools**

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

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

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

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

### **Inclusion Strategy**

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

The full Inclusion Strategy can be found at [https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7154/manchester\\_inclusion\\_strategy\\_november\\_2019\\_%E2%80%93\\_july\\_2022](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/7154/manchester_inclusion_strategy_november_2019_%E2%80%93_july_2022)

### **Manchester Schools Early Intervention**

The Safeguarding in Education Team developed an early intervention and prevention programme offer for Manchester schools. This focuses on raising awareness of the consequences and impact of knife crime, serious youth violence, and child criminal exploitation. The programme has included a range of interventions that have been commissioned and delivered in high schools, and a programme of activity has also recently been developed for primary-school children. Over the past 12 months, the focus has been to support primary schools to raise children's awareness of the consequences of knife crime and how to keep safe in their communities. During the period September 2022 to July 2023, Education Safeguarding commissioned two programmes that were offered to primary schools across Manchester:

Get Away N Get Safe is an intensive five-session educational, preventative, and diversionary intervention. It aims to educate children and young people on the dangers and consequences of criminality, including antisocial behaviour, knife crime, drugs, exploitation, as well as organised crime lifestyles for the individual, their families and the wider community.

Respect Understanding Danger Equality teaches children how to keep safe and recognise dangers. It tells them who to go to for help and support, and focuses on engaging them in discussion and activities around being kind and understanding and respecting one another. Different communities and cultures are also explored.

### **SAFE Taskforce**

Manchester was invited to set up a SAFE Taskforce with the Department for Education.

Having engaged schools across a local authority area, with multi-agency structures and local experts, SAFE has commissioned evidence-based interventions to support young people at risk of serious violence, re-engaging them in their education.

The taskforce commissioned a variety of local mentoring services to provide one-to-one school-focused intervention to reduce involvement in serious violence, improve attendance at school, improve behaviour in school and within the community, and improve social and emotional regulation and wellbeing.

Since phase one of the taskforce was launched, 121 children have received holistic support from mentors, and early indications suggest a positive impact. There will be both local and national evaluations of the project in 2026.

### **Alternative Provision Taskforce**

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

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

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

*“I like the sessions and I think they’re helping me with my issues in and out of school.”*

*“Reyanne helped me see a different perspective of things and that violence isn’t always the answer.”*

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## Support and protect

### Complex safeguarding

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

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

### Oasis Navigator project

The Oasis Navigator project is a youth-led violence-reduction project commissioned by the Greater Manchester VRU. The project was launched in April 2021 in a variety of Accident and Emergency Departments in Greater Manchester.

The aim of the project is to support young people presenting at emergency departments with injuries caused by involvement in a violent incident. The project has now been expanded to include a pathway for community referrals (including primary care). The project is open to any young person aged 10–25 living in or attending school in Greater Manchester who has been impacted by youth violence.

Navigators work with young people to enable them to reflect on and process their experiences following an incident. Navigators support young people to create their own bespoke support plan and help them to identify local support networks, community groups and services that can support them long term to achieve their goals.

The Oasis Navigator project has been further expanded to provide a parent-and-carer service that offers one-to-one peer-mentoring support for parents and carers who are concerned about their child's behaviour.

### Serious Violence Hub

Designated police officers undertaking proactive operations in the city centre encounter a range of individuals of all ages. The Serious Violence Hub connects to Manchester and Greater Manchester safeguarding services to ensure that vulnerable people identified on the street are being referred for the appropriate help and support.



### **The Children's Society – Parenting Service**

Funded by the Community Safety Partnership, this service delivers intensive, therapeutic, trauma-focused interventions with parents and carers to enable them to effectively safeguard children and young people and reduce/prevent further missing episodes. The Children's Society build trusted relationships with parents and carers via one-to-one meetings, group work, and informal coffee mornings. They support parents and carers to understand their role within their child's life, and provide training for residential home staff and foster carers. The Society can also create bespoke training packages for front-line workers, to help them understand the indicators of exploitation and the risks of missing from home/care.

### **Rock Up**

Rock Up works with the youth justice service, offering high-quality and creative music-making activities. It is a responsive and flexible programme that meets the needs and interests of young people, supporting them in their own personal journeys and inspiring them to access mainstream and creative-provision opportunities. It includes weekly musician-in-residence workshops and intensive creative music weeks. As part of the Rock Up programme, Theatre in Probation and Prisons (TiPP) is supporting Manchester Youth Justice's ambition to become an arts-based service.

### **Unity Radio**

Unity Radio has a series of workshops for young people that teaches them how to design, develop and broadcast live radio shows. The content of each radio show includes reflective workshops, as well as discussions between young people that educate them about enhancing their safety, preventing violent crime, and challenging the outlook that enables violence. This preventative education focuses on promoting positive attitudes towards other young people, as well as recognising patterns and vulnerabilities that might lead to violent crime or other criminal activity. It also encourages healthy relationships, sexual citizenship and consent, peer schemes, advocates, and role models.

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## **Disrupt, divert and enforce**

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

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

When considering enforcement action against individuals involved in serious violence, it is important that this is coupled with an offer of support to divert individuals away from further criminality and harm.

### **Another Chance**

Another Chance is a Youth Endowment-funded project that seeks to build evidence on a focused deterrence approach that has seen some success in the United States. The project will take place across Manchester and a defined area of North Trafford until December 2025.

The programme is for people 14–25 years old who have been identified as having been involved in serious youth violence, such as assault, knife crime and sexual assault, within a group of two or more people during the past 24 months. Through Power 2 (support provider), the children and young people on the programme are given the opportunity to work with a mentor to identify support and services that will meet their needs and help them make positive changes.

If those identified as part of this project continue to commit criminal offences, then consideration will be given to utilising enforcement powers to address the behaviour. Such powers may include (but are not limited to) policing powers, Youth Justice powers and civil enforcement powers.

### **SHIFT**

SHIFT Manchester was launched in October 2023 and is based within Manchester Youth Justice. The practice focuses on reducing the use of custody for children and preventing the need for custodial remands and sentences. This is done through intensive levels of community support and improving resettlement outcomes as young people transition from custody to the community. The practice works with some of the most vulnerable children from across the city to break the destructive cycle of crime, influencing system change, with a particular focus on challenging disproportionality.

### **Projects and evaluations**

Owing to several of the above projects and programmes being in their infancy, there is currently little robust evaluation of their effectiveness in terms of serious violence reduction.

To assist with embedding the public health approach, this strategy commits to working with partners to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of our projects and programmes. Each project has an appropriate evaluation method that will contribute to the overarching performance framework for the strategy.

# [ Learning from reviews, research and activity ]

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## **Child safeguarding reviews**

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

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

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## **Youth justice research at Manchester Metropolitan University**

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

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

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

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## **Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) - Serious Youth Violence**

In October 2023 Manchester underwent a JTAI in relation to serious youth violence. The inspection was led by Ofsted and involved a total of twelve inspectors from the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted (schools and social care), His Majesty's Prisons Inspectorate, and His Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary Fire Rescue Services.

The scope of the inspection considered three broad areas.

- **Strategic Partnership responses to serious youth violence** (how well do partners work together, understand and respond to issues in Manchester)
- **Intervention with individual and groups of children** affected by serious youth violence and criminal exploitation (how do partners provide timely, purposeful and impact positively into the lives of children and their families)
- **Intervention in places and spaces** (contextual safeguarding and how partners use intelligence to inform activity and disrupt). The inspection identified a number of strengths in the partnership as well as some areas for improvement.

The full report can be viewed at <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50234228>

# [ Key priorities and actions ]

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

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

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



## Early intervention and prevention

- We will continue to develop prevention and early intervention panels through our Engage model. These panels will allow statutory agencies and local voluntary and community groups to identify children and young people at risk of serious violence at the earliest opportunity. They will then be offered a variety of support and interventions to divert them away from serious violence.
- We will continue to develop the SAFE taskforce, with support from the Department for Education, to work with schools across the local authority area. The taskforce will utilise multi-agency structures and local experts to commission evidence-based interventions to support young people at risk of serious violence and re-engage them in their education.
- We will continue to identify and challenge disproportionality in our systems and practices, including the criminal justice system.
- We will embed a trauma-informed approach across Manchester's Community Safety Partnership. This will include delivering trauma-informed training to staff and amending policies and practices to improve our approach to working with people who have experienced trauma.

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## **Support and protect**

- We will work with our partners to develop the 'think family' model to ensure that support can be offered to families and support networks of those identified being at risk from serious violence. This will include but is not limited to: support for parents/carers/guardians, support for siblings, and support for peer groups.
- We will improve support offers for those who are vulnerable and require extra support when transitioning from childhood to adulthood.
- We will improve information and intelligence-sharing between prisons and community services to ensure that we are able to better support individuals upon their release from prison to reduce reoffending.

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## **Disrupt, divert and enforce**

- We will maximise enforcement opportunities for those identified as persistent offenders of serious violence through effective partnership work across the community safety and criminal justice.
- We will continue to develop a multi-agency panel (through our Another Chance programme) to respond to concerns of serious youth violence where prevention and early intervention are not appropriate. We will include statutory and voluntary and community groups to provide key workers who will deliver consistent and bespoke support and interventions to divert children and young people away from serious violence.
- We will ensure that there is always an offer of support available for those who are identified as perpetrators of serious violence, to assist in diverting them away from further serious violence, even when enforcement action has commenced.

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## **Principles for delivery**

### **Data analysis**

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

### **Listening to our communities**

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

### **Partnership**

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

### **Trauma-informed approach**

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

### **Disproportionality**

- We will continue to work in partnership to identify where existing processes and systems create disproportionality.
- We will work in partnership to challenge and address the causes of disproportionality we identify in our practice.

# [ Measures of success ]

Key to the successful implementation of this strategy is ensuring that we connect the strategic priorities and principles with operational staff across the partnership. This will assist in embedding a co-ordinated and effective approach to reduce incidents of serious violence.

In order to comply with the Serious Violence Duty, this strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis. This will enable us to respond to any emerging trends or patterns relating to serious violence and confirm that our response remains effective.

We will measure the effectiveness of our response by embedding a performance framework focusing on the following areas:

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

# [ Declaration ]

This strategy has been co-produced and will be co-delivered by Manchester's specified authorities in partnership with required authorities and in consultation with the voluntary sector and communities across Manchester.



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