

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 17 July 2023

Serious Violence Duty

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Executive Summary

This paper provides Members with an update on our progress against the Serious Violence Duty (SVD). The SVD identifies Fire & Rescue Authorities as a specified authority with a requirement to collaborate and plan with other specified authorities within the local government area to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Recommendation

To note and endorse the ongoing actions.

Information

The Serious Violence Duty (SVD) is part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 which came into force on 31 January 2023. The SVD is new legislation that requires a range of specified authorities to work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions. Within the SVD Statutory Guidance it is stated that ideally this should be done through existing partnership structures and these structures should be used to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. The duty identifies the Police, Probation Services, Youth Offending Teams, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities in addition to Fire and Rescue Authorities as being specified authorities. Prison and Education Authorities are known as Relevant Authorities who are able to co-operate with Specified Authorities as necessary.

Specified authorities must identify the types of serious violence that occur in the area and, so far as it is possible to do so, identify the causes of that violence. To do so, specified authorities should undertake an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence and use this analysis to develop a local strategic needs assessment which should inform the local strategy. The strategy, which specified authorities must prepare and implement, should contain bespoke solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area.

The duty does not specify a lead organisation however the statutory guidance identifies the Police and Crime Commissioner as being the lead convener for local partner agencies. It is for the Specified Authorities to come together to decide on the appropriate lead and structure of collaboration for their area. At the meeting of the Specified Authorities on the 5th January 2023 it was agreed that the responsibility for the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty will sit with all Lancashire Community Safety Partnerships.

Lancashire is also fortunate to have the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN), not all localities throughout the country have a Violence Reduction Unit. Through the LVRN, Lancashire has a Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Lancashire Serious Violence Strategy. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) is represented within the LVRN and local district needs assessments produced by the Violence Reduction Network were included within the district planning process to ensure discharge at a local level through targeted risk reduction activities.

Crest Advisory Board has been commissioned by Home Office to conduct a readiness assessment across the country. LFRS has contributed within the Lancashire return which aims to identify barriers and areas requiring additional support as well as progress across the country in comparison to other localities.

LFRS has signed a Lancashire Partnership agreement and will be represented at a newly formed Lancashire Serious Violence and Community Safety Board.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

The Serious Violence Duty guidance recognises that Fire and Rescue Services are established in engaging with local communities to promote fire safety as well as wider models of community and individual engagement to support citizenship, community cohesion and direct support to vulnerable individuals and communities. Work with young people, safeguarding, in addition to fire reduction strategies, such as the sector's work to reduce deliberate fires, should be recognised as part of the Duty.

LFRS has an established Prince's Trust and Fire Cadet offering. The Prince's Trust works in partnership with LFRS, working towards a shared vision that will contribute to better outcomes for young people and local communities. LFRS has one of the strongest Prince's Trust offerings across all other Fire and Rescue Services in the country. Prince's Trust is used as a case study within the statutory guidance for responsible authorities, produced by Home Office to demonstrate how Fire and Rescue Services engagement can strengthen protective factors and allow opportunities for positive behaviour change.

LFRS also deliver education packages in schools, this is offered to all schools across Lancashire in years 2 and 6 with comprehensive uptake. LFRS also pick up tertiary prevention work for example Arson Threat Referrals, an intervention session delivered to young fire setters (FIREs) and bespoke work with Youth Offending Teams.

Safeguarding is a core function of LFRS, and we work across all levels and in all areas to support, and in some cases lead risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse. LFRS is represented at Local Authority Safeguarding Boards. This is recognised within the SVD.

National Fire Chiefs Council

During the consultation period for the SVD, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) held a number of meetings with the Home Office to ensure the role of the FRS is fully realised as part of the duty. NFCC released a paper in November 2022 presented by the NFCC Prevention Lead, CFO Neil Odin.

NFCC identify the primary role for Fire and Rescue Services in the SVD to be the well-established work that is already undertaken with Children and Young People and SVD is referenced within the NFCC Early Intervention Implementation Framework. Existing safeguarding work and arson risk reduction is also referenced as being key to Fire and Rescue Services involvement in the SVD.

Business risk

The SVD applies to the Fire and Rescue Authority for all Authority areas. Fire and Rescue Authorities are specified authorities under the duty therefore, we must be in a position to demonstrate compliance.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

N/A

Equality and Diversity Implications

N/A

Data Protection (GDPR)

N/A

HR implications

N/A

Financial implications

N/A

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper: Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

Date: 31 January 2023

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Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A