

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
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SUBJECT: **Serious Violence Duty**

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Background Papers: [2023/24 KPIs Update](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
A	Specified Authorities and overview	
B	Organogram	

Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	None
Risk Management	No	None
Legal Implications	Yes	The service is required to meet the Duty as described in the report

Privacy and Security Implications	No	None
Duty to Collaborate	Yes	The <u>Policing and Crime Act 2017</u> requires the Authority to consider opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services. Meeting the duty is dependent on collaboration.
Health and Safety Implications	No	None
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Yes	Positive impact to all communities as the service will identify and support more of the people who need our help most, ensuring we make every contact count by delivering evidence-based interventions that will promote the safety of individuals and the community.
Environmental Sustainability	No	None
Consultation and Communication	No	None

PURPOSE:

To provide Members a high-level brief on the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) and how Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is supporting the delivery of positive outcomes for the people of Bedfordshire across the partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.
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1. Background

- 1.1 The Duty is part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. At the centre of the Duty is the principle of collaboration and the focus on the needs of the individual. The SVD places a new legal responsibility on 'specified authorities' to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence.
- 1.2 The Duty builds upon the service's core function to protect and support our communities and to fully realise our safeguarding responsibilities. Underpinning the intent is an expectation that all agencies work together to share information and identify warning signs, so relevant authorities can get involved earlier ultimately reducing harm and protecting our communities.
- 1.3 Appendix A illustrates the Specified Authorities and the high level approach to the Duty for Bedfordshire.

2. Service involvement to date

- 2.1. The County benefits from hosting a Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit which means Bedfordshire already had significant infrastructure and governance in place to advance work related to the SVD, see appendix B.
- 2.2. In March 2023 the Home office commissioned a series of interviews through Crest Advisory. This was a national pulse survey to determine engagement and progress against compliance with the Duty. The DCFO and Head of Prevention were interviewed to gauge service engagement and partnership progress against the requirements.
- 2.3. Core to this was whether the service had been engaged in the creation of the county strategy and the local plans to deliver the strategy. Officers were able to describe the governance in the county and evidence the service is participating in the work of the Serious Harm Board (SHB) and its sub groups. Officers also described the work already underway to support vulnerable individuals through Prevention activity linked to our own Community Risk Management Plan and our participation in the work of the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP).
- 2.4. The service has been engaged in CSPs since their establishment under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and as such attends each of the three CSPs covering the county. It was determined that although the SHB sits across the county, due to the difference between the three unitary areas, a CSP level strategy and plan would be developed for each.

- 2.5. The CSPs in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton, have worked together, with the support of Crest Advisory and the OPCC to incorporate the VERU Strategy into their respective 2024/25 delivery plans for consistency in implementing the Duty and the service has contributed to each of these delivery plans.
- 2.6. The SVD is governed at county level through the SHB which is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of Luton Borough Council. The BFRS representative at the strategic board is the DCFO. A sub board sits to direct the work against the plan and the Head of Prevention sits on this board as the service lead.
- 2.7. To ensure that the board and sub-board are able to make decisions based on evidence a data group has been established. The Data & Intelligence Group on Violence and Exploitation Reduction in Bedfordshire (DIGVERB) was established last year, and the service is represented at this group by the Business Applications Manager.

3. Service activity in support of the Duty

- 3.1 The service already works with children and young people (CYP) through well-established models, working with partners to use intelligence to identify CYP and adults who are at higher risk of serious violence and engage them in interventions, activities, and education to reduce their likelihood of becoming involved with serious violence and associated anti-social behaviour.
- 3.2 These interventions include the service schools programmes, cadets and other youth settings, and our fire setters interventions.
- 3.3 The service has developed close links with the Childrens and Adults Safeguarding Boards to support risk reduction services for those identified as vulnerable and at risk from exploitation or abuse.
- 3.4 All staff are required to complete e-learning to better equip them with an understanding of harm and vulnerability. This means our workforce can spot signs and symptoms when conducting our routine activity. These learning materials cover:
 - PREVENT
 - Modern Day Slavery

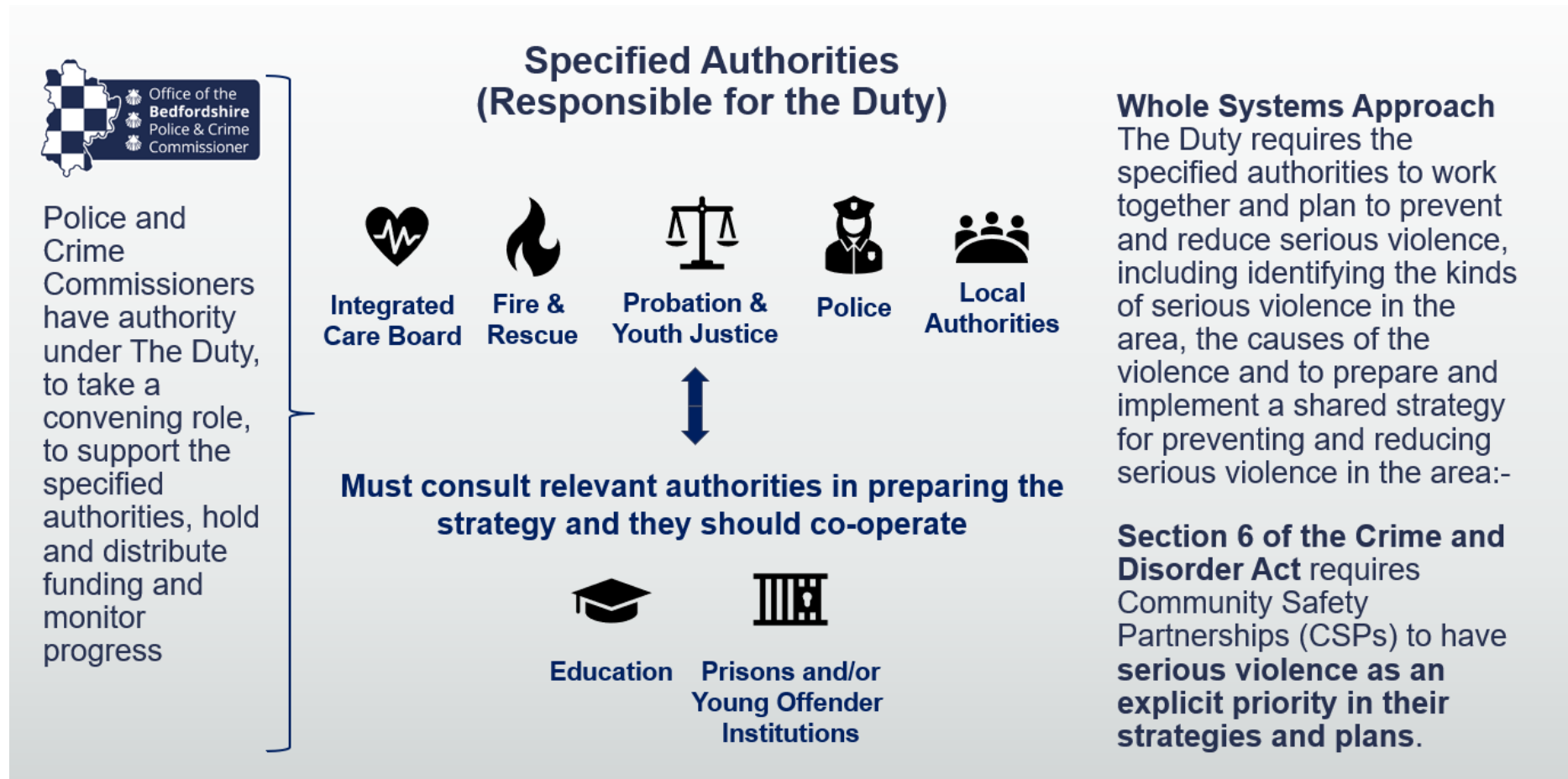
- Human Trafficking
- Domestic Abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Hoarding

3.5 Our home safety check programme and the range of intelligence gathered can be pushed to appropriate agencies automatically to ensure the Bedfordshire system can act swiftly to protect and support our citizens.

3.6 Finally, the service is working with the Project Manager for the SVD to consider a funding bid to deliver an early intervention programme. This is something that has been run in the past by the service but was withdrawn. The bid seeks to run a pilot course on the existing template model of Fire Break, this would see a weeklong programme based around fire service activity to help develop the young persons life skills and distance individuals from poor decision making and exposure to harm. Ultimately supporting a transition away from NEET or criminal behaviour.

CHRIS BIGLAND
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Appendix A



Appendix B

Bedfordshire Drug, Violence and Exploitation Governance Structure

