

Hertfordshire Serious Violence Strategy and Delivery Plan

2021 – 2026

This Strategy outlines Hertfordshire's plans for reducing the harm caused by serious violence to individuals, families and communities in Hertfordshire.

It has been informed by the outcomes from the previous Strategy and intelligence products including Drug Market Profile, Cuckooing and Drug Supply Exploitation Briefing, a Violence Against Women and Girls intelligence briefing and Serious Violence Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

This Strategy will take a whole system approach, from prevention to enforcement with a focus on early intervention and prevention.

County Community Safety Unit



HERTFORDSHIRE
CONSTABULARY

Prevention First



Hertfordshire



David Lloyd
Police & Crime
Commissioner
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

Definitions

The key terms used within this Strategy are explained below.

Serious violent crime

In Hertfordshire, the term '**serious violent crime**' covers a wide range of criminal offences including but not limited to knife crime, robbery, homicide, criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults and domestic and sexual abuse where serious violence, including the use of weapons, is a contributory factor.

County lines

'**County lines**' is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs.¹

Cuckooing

'**Cuckooing**' is a practice where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. The most common form of cuckooing is where drug dealers take over a person's home and use it to store or distribute drugs.

¹<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines> , accessed 24th March 2021.

Previous Strategy Achievements

The Serious Violence Strategy 2018-2021 has been key in encouraging multi-agency working around Serious Violence. There have been a number of achievements that have been key in delivering our priority objectives.

Previous Achievements:

- Risk assessment panels reviewed for children and young people, to ensure that exploitation encompasses all serious risks to young people
- Joint training packages on issues such as adverse childhood experiences and child sexual exploitation
- Schools and Gangs team established within Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Violent Assault Data from Accident and Emergency departments shared within Hertfordshire
- Operation Sceptre, the national knife amnesty weeks, were consistently supported in Hertfordshire, with positive results
- Domestic Abuse training package has been developed

It should be acknowledged that the strategy 2018-2021 was operating during the COVID-19 pandemic and that this current strategy will respond to the changing situation throughout the life of the strategy.

³Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) are events that children are exposed to during childhood including but not limited to abuse (verbal, physical and/or sexual) both experience and exposure to early trauma, living with substance misusing parents.

What are the issues?

Hertfordshire's Serious Violence Strategy is central to reducing harm:

- Nationally, 82% of violent crime is committed by males, 12% by females.
- 39% of violent incidents in England are committed under the influence of alcohol and 20% under the influence of drugs.
- In Hertfordshire, knife crime committed by adults has decreased by 48% and youth knife crime by 41%.
- The number of homicides in Hertfordshire more than doubled between 2020 and 2022.
- In 2022/23, there were 175 presentations to Hertfordshire accident and emergency departments for violent assaults involving a weapon – an increase for adult victims (+9%) and a decrease for young people (-50%).
- In July 2023, analysis of child exploitation data from the MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) Panel in Hertfordshire identified 250 young people as being currently exploited, most commonly for sexual (40%) and criminal exploitation (34%)¹.

The general principles of this Strategy and delivery

- Delivering successful outcomes through effective partnership working, including the sharing of good quality data and intelligence.
- Identify interventions based on an assessment of need and evidence of cost effectiveness from national or local research and promote innovation where appropriate.
- The Delivery Plan will be actively monitored and reported on annually, considering emerging and local trends.

¹Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment, hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/jsna/jsna-documents/serious-violence-needs-assessment-2021-public-version.pdf (Accessed 21st November 2023)

Serious Violence Duty

The Duty (introduced by Government) requires 'specific authorities' - **Police, Justice, Fire and Rescue, Health, and Local Authorities** to plan and collaborate to prevent/tackle SV in their local area.²

The specified authorities are the organisations **responsible for delivering the Duty** including production of mandatory products (needs assessment, strategy) and delivery of interventions.

Office for Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) are designated grant holders and distributors and approximately £1million has been allocated to Hertfordshire by the Home Office in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to deliver interventions to tackle serious violence.

Hertfordshire has worked with Crest, the Home Office appointed agency, to conduct a readiness assessment in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire has been assessed as meeting the requirements of the duty and the prevalence of Serious Violence in Hertfordshire is low. It has been recommended that Hertfordshire focusses on early intervention and prevention.

² Serious Violence Duty, [Serious Violence Duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty) (Accessed 21st November 2023)



What are we going to do?

In Hertfordshire we will work together to tackle the following priority objectives:

1. Criminal Exploitation of young people.

Prevent children and young people from being involved in criminal exploitation and serious violence

2. County Lines and organised drug supply.

Intervene as quickly as possible to reduce the opportunities for children, young people and adults further involvement in County Lines exploitation and illegal drugs supply

3. Criminal Exploitation of adults including 'cuckooing'.

Support vulnerable adults who are at risk of criminal exploitation and having their properties used for criminal activity and illegal drug supply

4. Availability of knives and other weapons.

Reduce the opportunities to obtain knives and other weapons used in serious violence



What are we going to do?

These priorities will be tackled via a Delivery Plan which will be focussed on:

- **Awareness and learning**

- This will include campaigns, training sessions and communications for both professionals and the public.

- **Information and Intelligence**

- Both the gathering and sharing of data and intelligence across partner agencies.

- **Prevention and intervention**

- This will cover all ages and includes those already involved in gangs, county lines and committing serious violence.

- **Enforcement**

- This will include but not limited to proactive policing and work with businesses.



How will we make this happen?

We have senior level commitment to work together to tackle serious violence in Hertfordshire from the following countywide boards who are responsible for achieving the actions in the delivery plan.

- Community Safety Board
- Domestic Abuse Executive Board
- Drug and Alcohol Strategic Board
- Integrated Offender Management Board
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

All priority outcomes should be considered to be long term across the whole of Hertfordshire, particularly in relation to prevention and early intervention.

