



Drawing The Lines

A public health framework
for serious violence



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FORWARD

The rise in violent crime is an issue that affects everyone in Three Rivers and Hertfordshire. The development of the County-wide Serious Violence Strategy is a significant step in responding to this challenge. However at Three Rivers District Council we believe that a public health whole-system framework is required to help focus on the key issues that can support us to reduce violence, as advocated by the World Health Organisation.

Our public health framework 'Drawing the lines' seeks to provide a way in which all partners of Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership, and agencies across Hertfordshire, can work together to respond to this issue by tackling the causes and not just the symptoms.

It has been developed based on the experience of the HIV sector in their efforts to drive down new HIV infections in London and the UK, an ambition that has been realized through the collaboration of many different agencies around the world with the help of the Paris Declaration on Fast-track cities. The UK has achieved that ambition with a national downturn in the number of new HIV infections, but it still has a long way to go to achieve the targets of zero HIV stigma.

By sharing this framework Three Rivers District Council hope that all partners in Hertfordshire can join together to achieve a reduction in violent crime.

Andy Stovold, Head of Community Partnerships

INTRODUCTION

Hertfordshire has responded to the national Serious Violence Strategy by undertaking a strategic assessment and developing its Serious Violence Strategy. The level of interest in this work cuts across many different agencies. What has become clear is that violence and criminal exploitation are not issues that can only be addressed by the criminal justice system. This is because violence is a social issue. It therefore needs a whole-system approach to being tackled.

To support this we need a way of understanding the drivers of violence in our communities. By doing this we can focus on the issues that leave our communities at risk and reduce the prevalence of violence and criminal exploitation.

We believe we can do this by articulating an ambition of reducing the factors that make our communities vulnerable and in that we can collaborate to achieve that goal.

THE DRIVERS OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE AND CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

Three Rivers District Council believes that there are two main drivers of serious violence and criminal exploitation - poverty and social isolation. We see these issues as inextricably linked to the cases of violence, criminal exploitation, county lines, and cuckooing in our District.

POVERTY

For people living on low incomes, the ability to make money is a significant driver of their involvement in criminal exploitation, whether that is in allowing their properties to be cuckooed, in running drugs, in cuckooing other vulnerable adults, and in being involved in organized crime. Poverty can often be co-terminus with the experience of trauma.

If we do not address the pockets of income deprivation in our communities then we will never reduce the risk of our residents being drawn into violence. People can find themselves on low incomes for a wide range of reasons, including health and social care needs, poor educational attainment, and lack of training and skills.

To address violence we need to identify those people in our communities who are on low incomes, so we can support them to protect themselves from the risks of violence and criminal exploitation.

We can do this easily through the information that we hold on council tax support and benefits. We can also do this through the information held by children's services, adult social care, and housing providers.

We need to develop proxy indicators for poverty such as reliance on benefits, rent arrears, debt, and reliance on foodbanks so that our partnerships can target those at most risk. Our partnerships need to baseline the numbers of people we perceive to be in poverty using these proxy markers so that we can measure progress.

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social isolation leaves residents vulnerable to exploitation. It also leaves them vulnerable to the temptation of drugs and alcohol as a means of self-medication. If we want to reduce the risks of serious violence then we need to reduce the levels of social isolation in our communities.

People can become socially isolated in many ways. It is not just caused by geographic isolation but rather by being left behind by society, whether that is because of poverty, lack of employment, mental ill-health, long term health conditions and disabilities, family breakdown, poor role models and poor education. Social isolation is often accompanied by experiences of trauma.

To address violence we need to identify those people in our communities most at risk of social isolation to support them to build their resilience against violent crime and trauma.

We can do this easily through our knowledge of people's health and social care records, their benefits and council tax support records, and through our housing records.

We also need to develop our understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences due to the direct link of this with an increased risks of being a perpetrator or victim of violence in adult life. Adverse Childhood Experiences include:

- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Parental separation
- Domestic abuse in the household
- Mental illness in the household
- Alcohol abuse in the household
- Drug use in the household
- Incarceration of a family member.

We have the research that outlines the number of adults living with ACEs in our community and need to develop our services approach to assessing this when we work with residents. We know that 8% of our adult population in Three Rivers are living with 4 or more adverse childhood experiences, and that 43% have one or more adverse childhood experiences.

However we also need to recognize that many adults continue to experience traumatic experiences so we will refer to adverse traumatic experiences – in order to capture both childhood experiences and adult life experiences.

OUR AMBITIONS TO REDUCE VIOLENCE

We want to reduce poverty

We want to reduce social isolation

We want to reduce the impact of trauma on people's lives by helping them to understand the number of adverse traumatic experiences they have had, and the support that is available to them

We want to help people access service to reduce poverty, reduce their social isolation and to build their resilience to adverse traumatic experiences

We want to build resilient communities where our residents can live independent lives, free from exploitation and violence.

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR AMBITIONS

We need to develop a set of agreed measures for our ambitions and to gather our baseline data so that we can set stretching improvement targets to assess our progress. Where we do not currently hold data on our ambitions we need to start to collect it through our community surveys. If we work collaboratively we can collect that data so we know where to focus our energies the most.

DRAFT TARGETS

98% of our residents will not be living in poverty.

98% of our residents will not report that they feel isolated.

90% of our residents that living in poverty and/or are socially isolated will have assessed the number of traumas they have experienced.

90% of our residents with high trauma scores will have access to appropriate support services that join together in a team around the person.

90% of people with a team around the person will report an improvement in their resilience.

These are stretching draft targets and the Local Strategic Partnership will need to gather baseline data and review these targets on an annual basis.

DELIVERY OF OUR AMBITIONS

Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership will oversee the delivery of this framework. It will be delivered by co-ordinated work programmes of:

THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

WATFORD AND THREE RIVERS FAMILIES FIRST PARTNERSHIP

THREE RIVERS ADULTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS PARTNERSHIP

THREE RIVERS 11-19 STRATEGY GROUP

These local partnerships will feed into the County-wide boards that are overseeing the Hertfordshire Serious Violence Strategy.

CASEWORK

The following multi-agency casework structures will be used to develop our team around the person:

WATFORD AND THREE RIVERS FAMILIES FIRST TRIAGE

THREE RIVERS ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACTION GROUP

THREE RIVERS DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFEGUARDING GROUP

HERTSMERE, WATFORD AND THREE RIVERS YOUTH CRIME PANEL

We will also explore the need to develop a broader multi-agency adults with complex needs casework group.

GOVERNANCE

Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership will review the progress against the ambitions through performance reporting from the relevant partnership groups and the establishment of a dashboard of indicators.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fast Track Cities. <http://www.fast-trackcities.org/>