



Since launching 12 months ago, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) team has invested in a wealth of projects to support vulnerable people at risk of causing or being harmed through violence. While this work has undoubtedly been impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown, our efforts to build resilience in our communities and address the economic, social and personal barriers that lead to violence has continued with

vigour. This newsletter provides an update on the VRU's work and the projects we are supporting to change lives. There is much more to do but working alongside our communities, the people in them and the valuable services they provide, we are already making a difference.

**Paddy Tipping**

**Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner & Chair of the VRU**

## Mentors in Nottinghamshire's first Community Ambassadors appointed

The first cohort of Community Ambassadors has been appointed as part of a pioneering new approach by the VRU to tackle violence across Nottinghamshire.

Six passionate and driven residents have been recruited to work alongside

the VRU in their local areas in a scheme that is the first of its kind in the county.

All the new recruits have proven expertise in supporting young people and communities impacted by serious violence and will be among up to 20 Community Ambassadors eventually appointed to the scheme across the city and county.

Community Ambassadors will support the VRU's work, build relationships with local people and ensure communities across Nottinghamshire have the necessary resources and provision to help residents to thrive.

The scheme is part of the VRU's public health approach to violence which seeks to empower communities to

identify and tackle the problems unique to their areas in collaboration with statutory partners.

The first Community Ambassadors to be appointed are Asad Fazil, founder and chief executive of Al Hurraya, Courtney Rose, executive director of Take 1 Studios and headteacher, Hyacinth Francis-Watson, founder and project manager of Chayah Group, Dalton Stephens, youth worker and sports coach at the Renewal Trust, Marcellus Baz, chief executive of Switch Up, and Naveed Rashid, chairman at Sahara Mental Health.

The VRU would welcome more applicants, please contact [vr@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:vr@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)





**Social media campaign exposes reality of violence**

**A social media campaign revealing the horrifying consequences of knife crime and gang culture has drawn thousands of views since launching in August.**

The #STOPVIOLENCE campaign, which has been under development by marketing firm Powell and Barns Group Ltd since December, has been funded by the VRU and Nottinghamshire PCC Paddy Tipping to lift the veil on weapon-enabled violence and exploitation and direct vulnerable victims and their parents and carers towards help.

The campaign, which was co-produced with young people in the City and County, features a series of hard-hitting films, shot in and around Nottingham, retelling the graphic stories of victims of gang culture, sexual exploitation, online bullying, intimidation, joint enterprise and 'county lines'. It seeks to shatter illusions about violence and gang culture and to signpost young people, parents and carers to advice, guidance and interventions via the [www.hashtagng.co.uk](http://www.hashtagng.co.uk) website.

The campaign gives a voice to young people. It is purposely emotive and realistic in an effort to prevent young people from



being drawn to violent crime – one of the core aims of the VRU.

The message of the films is being reiterated by a poster awareness campaign across the city and county's bus stops and public spaces.

**New help available to support young people impacted by domestic abuse**

**Funding provided by the VRU has increased trauma informed support for children and young people impacted by weapon enabled domestic abuse in the City and County.**

Across the globe, levels of domestic abuse have escalated significantly during the pandemic leading the United Nations to describe the crisis as a "Shadow Pandemic".

Locally, calls to helplines and support services for victims of domestic abuse in Nottinghamshire have surged since the start of lockdown, with one provider experiencing a rise of 158% compared to the same period last year. The same service saw an increase call volume of 253% - 16 extra calls per day – in a single week in July.

The VRU team is working closely with the Police, local authorities, community engagement specialists and public health experts to commission new evidence-based interventions to support victims and survivors.

So far, the VRU has allocated more than £74,000 of Home Office emergency funding to micro-charities working with vulnerable young people in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to support their work and expand outreach services, safe spaces and counselling and mentoring provision.

Specially-trained support workers are ready to intervene and offer help to those who need it. The VRU urges anyone impacted by abuse to come forward.

# New approach to child protection under the spotlight

A series of virtual presentations and discussions has been delivered to key VRU partners on adolescent safeguarding by Dez Holmes, Director of Research and Practice.



The VRU hosted a series of sessions in September for frontline practitioners and other stakeholders examining contextual safeguarding in relation to violence. The workshops focused on understanding violence, the interventions already in place and considered what could be changed to improve safeguarding locally and better manage the risks.

Participants heard how adolescent behaviour and choices can mask underlying vulnerabilities and needs and that young people may require help beyond the age of 18 when some avenues of support become unavailable.

The presentation highlighted the importance of a highly-integrated support system where special attention is paid to childhood/ adolescent experiences to improve resilience in young people and their families.

**Interacting factors**

- Attachment needs
- Childhood experiences, violence and trauma
- Neurobiological development
- Environmental factors, social & educational inequality
- Peer and wider social influences
- Social attitudes

**Risk of harm**

**IFH** (Individual Factors Harm), **EFH** (Environmental Factors Harm), **Exploitation**

**Vulnerability & YJ population**

	YP in general population	YP in custody
Learning disability	2-4%	23-32%
Common mental health problems	5-7%	60-90%
ADHD	1.7-9%	12%
Autism	0.6-1.2%	15%
Any head injury	24-42%	49-72%
Head injury (LoC)	5-24%	32-50%

Young adults involved in the CJ have often themselves been victims of crime. Many have a history of being exposed to violence, including in the home, abuse, neglect, bereavement, relating to the deaths of parents, siblings and other close relatives and criminal behaviour by parents and siblings. These traumatic events have frequently occurred from a very young age and, the traumatic effects may be raw.

**Do not 'stay in your lane'**

...the research and evidence we collected made clear that serious violence between young people is an issue that cannot be adequately understood through a narrow criminal justice lens of suppression and enforcement. Not only would such a lens provide a distorted view of the problem, but crucially, it would prevent the identification and development of effective solutions...

The workshops focused on understanding violence...

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