



It has been more than a year since the VRU launched and what a year it has been. Together, we have delivered intensive support to more than 900 young people at risk of violence and reached a further 80,000 through targeted social media.

There are numerous stories of success and many young people will be setting out on a completely different course in 2021 thanks to a host of intervention programmes. There have also been sustained reductions in knife crime across the county with latest Office for National Statistics figures confirming an 11% drop in the year end to June 2020. This is just the start and although much has already been achieved the VRU team is looking forward to building on this progress with more exciting projects in the New Year.

Dave Wakelin

Director of the VRU

Nottinghamshire VRU has shown the impact we can all make in our communities



by taking time to understand young people's backgrounds and how their life experiences contribute to how they behave. The projects funded by the VRU give young people the tools they need to make positive choices and already we are seeing the difference this support this can have on their lives. However, we simply cannot become complacent. Our communities hold the key to creating safer futures and we will continue to work with them to make our streets safer.

Paddy Tipping

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner & Chair of the VRU

Youth custody project turns lives around

Young people previously involved in serious violence are making a fresh start thanks to the support of the VRU's flagship custody mentoring scheme.

Since launching in January 2020, the U-Turn custody intervention project, delivered by The Inspire and Achieve Foundation, has supported 24 young people aged 16 to 26 following their arrest for various offences. All 24 have stayed on the right side of the law since receiving intensive mentoring with none of them reoffending since engagement began.

Of the participants, a former gang member progressed into formal education within two weeks of the intervention starting while 12 have embarked on education or training, four attended a bespoke course to change offending behaviour, two gained employment and two are actively seeking employment.



Counselling service helps reverse damage of childhood trauma

A pioneering project helping young people affected by trauma to rebuild their lives has received high praise for breaking the cycle of violence in Nottinghamshire.



The Evolution Project, delivered by charity Base 51, was commissioned by the VRU to support young

people who have been impacted by serious violence as a perpetrator, victim or bystander and to promote recovery through counselling.

Since launching in April, the project has received 16 referrals of young people aged between 11 and 25 (nine males and seven females), completed 14 full assessments and delivered 40 one-to-one counselling sessions – even creating its own YouTube channel to reach vulnerable service users in the pandemic.

One of those being supported is a 22-year-old man from Nottingham who was forced to flee his home country after enduring severe domestic violence and

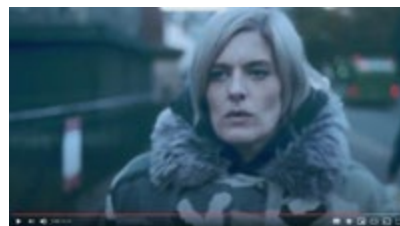
once in the UK became a victim of sexual exploitation. Since having counselling through the service, he has learnt new ways of coping which do not involve self-harm and is developing resilience and strength.

Operation Sceptre

The spotlight shone on the VRU's work to tackle serious violence in November with the launch of a national enforcement campaign against knife crime.

Operation Sceptre is held twice yearly and provides a snapshot of the ongoing work undertaken by police, partners and local communities to combat knife crime.

A highlight was the launch of a new social media film, 'Know Your Knives', by one of the VRU's newly appointed Community Ambassadors Courtney Rose, founder of community charity and independent school Take 1 Studio in Nottingham.



The film, which depicts a distraught mother who discovers one of her kitchen knives in her daughter's schoolbag, was co-produced by pupils attending the school, alongside their film teacher Gavin Gordon and the VRU, and warns parents to pay attention to their children's behaviour, concerns and associations as well as their household knives.

Hard-hitting social media campaign reaches 100,000+ people

More than 100,000 people have so far engaged with a social media campaign revealing the horrifying consequences of knife crime and gang culture.



The #Stopviolence project, funded by the VRN and PCC, saw the launch of a series of hard-hitting films retelling the graphic stories of victims of gang culture, sexual exploitation, online bullying, intimidation, joint enterprise and 'county lines' to shatter illusions about violence.

The campaign concluded with the Community Voices video, launched during the national Operation Sceptre action week, which included a series of interviews with local people including Damien Henry who was previously impacted by street gangs and is now a community activist.

So far the campaign, developed by marketing firm Powell and Barns Group Ltd, has reached more than 106,000 people across all platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google and Snapchat while almost 2,000 people have clicked for more information.



Contact details: The VRU is based at Loxley House in Nottingham

Email: vru@nottinghamcity.gov.uk | Website: www.nottsvru.co.uk

Twitter: @Notts_VRU | Instagram: nottsvru | Facebook: NottsViolenceReductionUnit