



OPCC

Office of the Police &
Crime Commissioner
for Gloucestershire

29 April 2023

An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence

I welcome this report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) into such an important issue for me as Commissioner, for the Constabulary and, most importantly, for the people we serve.

As the response from T/ACC Ocone outlines, Gloucestershire has suffered from serious youth violence showing that no area, no matter the size of the force or relative low levels of criminality, is immune to serious youth violence.

This is why, despite not being a VRU (Violence Reduction Unit) area, I am pleased to see the work the Constabulary and the OPCC has initiated and/or been involved with in conjunction with partners. This includes bidding for additional funding such as the Youth Endowment Fund which, although not successful, has prompted discussion with a range of partners and thus supporting our work in preparation for the Serious Violence Duty.

The report is significant and I will be seeking assurance from the constabulary on the recommendations raised in the report. It is vital that we do all that we can to prevent further incidents of serious youth violence in our county.

I agree with the response from T/ACC Ocone regarding the issues raised in the report and will monitor Constabulary activity in this area in due course.

Chris Nelson

Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner



To Ruth Greenwood
Chief Exec to OPCC

Our Ref: T/ACC Rich Ocone

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Ruth.Greenwood@gloucestershire.police.uk

Email: Richard.Ocone@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct
Dial: 01452 752334
Date: 16.04.2023

Dear Ruth,

Re: An inspection of how well the police tackle serious youth violence

Please find below our response to the above report, aimed at assisting you to meet the requirements of Section 55(1) of the Police Act 1996.

The constabulary have reviewed the HMICFRS publication and cross matched this to our existing approach and future planned activities. You will be aware that this has been an area of particular focus for the constabulary following the sad murder of 16 year old Remarni Crosby in Gloucester in December 2021. Our aspiration is clearly to seek to reduce levels of serious youth violence across the county by progressing, more swiftly, work in this important area.

The first two recommendations are:

Recommendation 1: By 31 March 2024, the Home Office should define processes for violence reduction units to use when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce serious youth violence.

Recommendation 2: By 31 March 2024, the Home Office should further develop existing joint evaluation and learning for violence reduction units to share learning with each other.

The Force was one of the two forces reviewed who do not have a violence reduction unit (VRU) with those recommendations linked directly to the Home Office and the forces inspected that have a VRU in place. However, we are keen to learn from the forces that have these and also to engage with others around the work we are doing to ensure the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) is fully established within the county. To this end we will be attending a conference later this month regarding the introduction of this duty and also a further conference in Lancashire in June around the best practice identified from forces with VRUs.

We are currently working with Crest Advisory to develop a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) for the SVD and together with partners from across the county have attended several workshops to assist in both the understanding of the SVD and the development of the SNA. To support this the OPCC has employed a person to directly co-ordinate this work across the county and the Community Safety Partnerships and provided further support in the employment of a dedicated analyst.

The third and fourth recommendations are as below:

Recommendation 3: By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their officers are trained in the use of Home Office crime outcome 22.

Recommendation 4: By 31 March 2024, chief constables should make sure their forces, through data collection and analysis, understand the levels of racial disproportionality in serious youth violence in their force areas.

Within Gloucestershire we have had a specific diversionary scheme for young people, Children First, which has focused on providing support plans for them following a meeting of the Youth Diversionary Panel. This is a multi-agency panel which meets every week to ensure decisions are progressed quickly and where possible and suitable diversionary outcomes are fully supported rather than progression through the Criminal Justice System.

The use of 'outcome 22' for young people was introduced in 2019 and following a move to two-tier out of court disposals for adults became available for all ages in 2021. There are dedicated teams within the Criminal Justice Department that deal with the use of OOCDS (including outcome 22) and regularly provide training to operational staff in the correct use of these. They provide ongoing support and guidance to staff with any queries.

Accurate crime recording and closure has been a particular area of focus for the constabulary since June 2021 when we were identified as inadequate for issues relating to Crime Data Integrity by the HMICFRS. Significant work has been invested in additional training and awareness. A Closure Team has also been established with a key responsibility for ensuring appropriate outcome usage. Further work is being developed at the moment to ensure that improvements in the correct use of outcomes is sustainable.

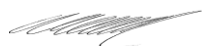
There is an extensive program of engagement with young people across the county with officers and PCSOs from our Schoolbeat and Aston teams attending both primary and secondary schools to deliver educational packages. These include but are not limited to, internet safety, online relationships, drugs and peer influence, role of the police, grooming, drugs and alcohol, sexting, exploitation, domestic abuse and county lines. They support schools with ongoing advice regarding safeguarding, reducing pupil exclusions and day to day advice on policing. This will be further supported with the introduction of Mini Police later this year.

There is further engagement with young people through the Youth Independent Advisory Group and the use of a Community Legitimacy Panel where the force is able to be challenged on many issues particularly around diversity and disproportionality. The newly employed data analyst will work on all areas of serious violence and disproportionality involving all protected characteristics as part of the SVD as we create a Serious Violence Strategic Response.

We have commissioned a problem profile specifically around the use of knives in gangs and this has helped the work of staff particularly within Gloucester to address the problems of Urban Street Gangs and further challenge behaviours through multi-agency approaches and the introduction of a Gang Reduction Intervention Pilot (GRIP) team.

Finally the constabulary has created a Crime Prevention Command which is the lead for all areas involving serious violence reduction strategies and will work closely with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Community Safety Partnerships.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Ocone

T/Assistant Chief Constable 252434

Operations

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