

# News story: Serious youth violence summit to launch public health duty to tackle serious violence

The new, multi-agency, 'public health duty' is intended to help spot the warning signs that a young person could be in danger, such as presenting in A&E with a suspicious injury, to worrying behaviour at school or issues at home.

Similar approaches have been used in Scotland and Wales, and are designed to ensure every part of the system works together to support young people and makes targeted interventions before they commit violence or are groomed by gangs.

The joined-up approach could also include organisations jointly funding early intervention services to improve their coordination and would be backed up by legislation to make sure professionals in health, education, police, social services, housing and the voluntary sector work together and are held accountable for preventing and tackling serious violence.

The announcement comes as the Prime Minister, Theresa May, is set to host a summit to tackle knife crime, which will also introduce this multi-agency response to violent crime. The summit will bring together attendees from a diverse range of backgrounds including law enforcement, health, the voluntary sector and education. Young people with experience of living in communities impacted by serious violence will also be attending the conference to share their insights.

The Prime Minister, Theresa May, said:

To bring about lasting change and protect young people from the tragic violence we have seen on our streets, we need to work across society to intervene early and stop them from being drawn into crime.

Strong law enforcement plays an important role, and the police will continue to have our support on the front line, but we all need to look at what we can do in our communities, and in every part of the system, to safeguard young people.

That is why our plans to introduce a whole community – or 'public health' – approach are designed to identify more young people at risk.

And this week's summit in Downing Street is focussed on ensuring everyone coming into contact with young people – from the police, health, education, Local Authorities and voluntary sector – work better together to make targeted interventions and steer them away

from violence.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Violent crime is like a disease rotting our society and it's essential that all public bodies work together to treat the root causes.

The public health, multi-agency approach has a proven track record and I'm confident that making it a legal duty will help stop this senseless violence and create long-term change.

I'm committed to ending this scourge and will use all the tools at my disposal to do so.

Government ministers from across Whitehall will continue to chair a series of meetings throughout the week, harnessing expert knowledge to boost joint work in specific areas such as the justice system, business, and community support.

Over 100 experts, including the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, the Met Commissioner, Cressida Dick, charity leaders and Chair of the Youth Justice Board Charlie Taylor, will explore the scope and impact of new ideas whilst kick-starting a further programme of action.

The Prime Minister will also meet privately with the families of a number of victims of knife crime to listen to their first-hand experiences of this issue.

The consultation on a new legal duty to support the multi-agency 'public health' approach will open today to the public and professionals across the UK. The approach will be focused on delivering long-term as well as short-term solutions to preventing and tackling serious violence across England and Wales.

The statutory duty would underpin the multi-agency approach already being driven by the [Serious Violence Strategy](#). This stresses the importance of early intervention to tackle the root causes of violent crime and recently the government launched a £200 million 10-year [Youth Endowment Fund](#) to create a generational shift in violent crime.

The launch of the consultation at the serious youth violence summit complements the government's support for robust law enforcement, which [saw £100 million](#) for police forces announced in the Spring Statement to support forces facing the highest levels of violence and the creation of violence reduction units. Police budgets has also been increased by [over £970 million](#) this year including council tax taking total investment to over £1 billion.

Following the 8 week consultation period, the government will then make a decision on tabling the necessary legislation.