

Reducing serious youth violence: our approach

After 31 years as a police officer, much of this in chief officer roles, I learned that strong partnerships, robust data and clear strategies are vital parts of any approach to reduce crime. I saw that children involved in violence had often been victims themselves and I wanted to help break that cycle.

In my current role as a YJB Board member, and Champion for reducing serious youth violence (SYV), I have seen plenty of innovative and promising practice from across the sector. We have brought this learning together and are sharing it with youth offending teams (YOTs) to help address this complex issue.

We are also offering our support and engaging with central government activity towards a long-term solution to serious youth violence. Our immediate goal is to focus our efforts on delivering practical support for the youth justice community.

SYV Network

We have brought together a network of YOTs who are experiencing the highest levels of serious youth violence. Meeting regularly, the network can share ideas, good practice, success and challenges as well as benefit from expert speakers and additional YJB support.

SYV Stocktake

With the help of the SYV Network and other partners, we have developed a self-assessment tool known as the [SYV Stocktake](#). This can help YOTs identify their strengths and challenges in the work they are undertaking locally to reduce levels of serious youth violence. It also includes a bespoke SYV data toolkit which provides local-level data and trends regarding the most serious of offences including robbery, violence against the person and drugs. It is designed to help YOTs and their partners to understand their local data and support the work that they are undertaking to reduce serious youth violence.

Pathfinders

We have also funded specific projects to explore effective practice and solutions to intractable issues across the youth justice system, including serious youth violence. To date, eleven of these [pathfinders](#) have the aim of reducing serious youth violence. Funded projects include:

- out of hours mentoring
- the further engagement of parents and carers
- arts interventions for children
- staff support
- intensifying partnership working

- a whole-team trauma-based approach to youth justice

We work closely with these projects to learn what is effective and will publish the learning via the [Youth Justice Resource Hub](#).

Future work

Our most recent published data tells us that in the year ending March 2019, there were just over 4,260 offences that we would define as 'serious youth violence'.

While this is a decrease of 3% compared with the previous year (the year ending March 2018), it is 12% higher than the year ending March 2017. We are still strongly committed to finding ways to impact on this complex issue and support YOTs and partners in the vital work they do.

Our business plan for 2020/21 will be published this spring and will outline the additional work we intend to undertake. This will include an evidence assessment and our learning from the SYV network, stocktake and SYV pathfinders.

For further information please email yjbprogrammesupportoffice@yjb.gov.uk.