

West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership

Annual Report 2024–25



Delivered by

**West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority**

**Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire**



Contents

Foreword	5
Key statistics	6
Research and evaluation	9
Partnership	10
Our campaigns	16
Engaging communities	18
Interventions	20
Community Safety Partnerships	22
Next steps	24

“We have become exemplars in our approach on both a local and national level”

Foreword

The past year has seen many key moments, bringing an even greater emphasis on our partnership mission to tackle serious violence head on.

A key milestone has been the publication of the [Mayor of West Yorkshire's Police and Crime Plan](#) and its cross-cutting priority on serious violence.

Launched from our very own showcase event, it reinforces the relevance and significance of our ongoing work across local communities.

The team have produced a Needs Assessment and Response Strategy that delivers against the mayor's ambitions, getting to the heart of the challenges we face.

We have become exemplars in our approach on both a local and national level – one of the most mature Violence Reduction Partnerships in the country.

Our 'Child First' framework and partnership network, for instance, have been recognised by the Children's Commissioner for England and are helping pave the way forward.

This all corresponds with our pioneering co-produced campaign with the West Yorkshire Youth Commission called 'I Took a Seat'. It connects with the recommendations from their 'Big Conversation' report and demonstrates how we are not just giving a voice to young people but acting upon it.

Innovation has also remained the cornerstone of our approach, from the use of virtual reality headsets to deliver immersive programmes on knife crime, to our in-house Serious Violence Data Hub, providing analytics to direct our efforts.

A flagship of our work has been the West Yorkshire Community Leaders programme, which has expanded to a second cohort and a network of ambassadors. They have been specially trained in new leadership skills and knowledge, promoting safety in their local area.

As you will see throughout our Annual Report for 2024–25, these represent just a handful of the interventions, engagements, and interactions, which are making a real difference on the ground.

Albeit we are making important progress, we know there is more we must do in partnership to protect young people and save lives.

Lee Berry

Director of the West Yorkshire
Violence Reduction Partnership

Key statistics

Financial year 2024–25

15,630

Helped reach 15,630 young people aged 24 and under

1,234

Engaged 1,234 aged 25 and over

477

Trained 477 professionals

300

Connected over 300 at our showcase events





Community Leadership Programme and Violence Reduction Partnership showcase event

Research and evaluation



We deliver a rolling programme of research and evaluation, getting to the root causes of serious violence

In 2024–25 this included:

- Five district based Strategic Needs Assessments for partners along with a West Yorkshire wide [Strategic Needs Assessment](#).
- A comprehensive [evidence synthesis](#) exploring the influential factors linked to violence, the risk and protective factors that can influence or deter a person's involvement in violence and exploitation.
- Significant [community engagement work](#) as part of a 'Serious Violence Duty' survey, providing an evidence base for our work.
- A refreshed West Yorkshire wide [Response Strategy](#) produced and published.
- Several [commissioned evaluations](#) to explore the impact of the A&E Navigator programme, the 'Custody Diversion' programme, our mentoring scheme in schools and the innovative virtual reality diversion programme.
- [A Theory of Change, Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit](#) helping partners across West Yorkshire to deliver informed interventions, capture relevant data and evaluate the impact of their work. Since the launch of the toolkit, a number of learning events have been held to help embed the practice across the partnership with 27 people trained in the approach.
- A multi-agency data dashboard developed for Serious Violence Duty holding partners to enable direct access to meaningful data sets, including the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service and Health.
- Collaborating on a project with the Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre to strengthen existing responses to Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Partnership

Our ‘Knowledge Exchange’ took place in March 2025, with a theme of ‘Adversity and Trauma, Serious Violence and Inclusion Health’

Becoming Trauma Informed

Since 2020, we have worked collaboratively with the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership to co-lead a system wide programme focused on Adversity, Trauma and Resilience, to deliver on the shared partnership vision of:

Working together with people with lived experience and colleagues across all sectors and organisations to ensure West Yorkshire is a trauma informed and responsive system by 2030 and develop a whole system approach to tackling multiple disadvantage.

Around 100 professionals from across West Yorkshire attended our first Criminal Justice themed conference in October 2024 and during the same month a 4-part mini-film was premiered, showcasing the progress within the programme and across the system.

Dedicated capacity has been secured to focus on workforce development, which currently provides foundation level trauma informed training and a ‘train the trainer model’.

Our annual ‘Knowledge Exchange’ took place in March 2025, with a theme of ‘Adversity and Trauma, Serious Violence and Inclusion Health’.

Guest speakers from across the county shared good practice and learning, taking part in panel sessions, and answering questions from the audience.

This covered a range of topics including violence against women and girls, neurodiversity in the criminal justice system, racial trauma and palliative care.

ATR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE



Putting children's voices at the heart of everything we do

A Child First approach

We began our journey to become a 'Child First' organisation, putting children's voices at the heart of everything we do, involving them in decisions whenever possible.

Seeing children as individuals, recognising their strengths, and building positive relationships.

We recognise there are fantastic examples of this work across West Yorkshire, so we are building on this to create a co-ordinated, consistent approach, so all services a child encounters will work in this way.

Over 450 children were engaged in the coproduction of our Child First Framework, which is highlighted within the Police and Crime Plan.

Following the launch of the Child First Framework, a national delivery group was launched providing a collective space for organisations to work together more effectively to support, safeguard and secure better outcomes for children in the justice system.

Key themes covered during the inaugural meeting include: The sharing of effective Child First practice, custody sites and alternatives to custody, child participation and engagement and the child's journey through the system, as well as the importance of scrutiny panels.



Spearheading new collaborative ways to tackle violence against women and girls across the region

Women's Safety Unit

The Women's Safety Unit is making huge strides on improving safety for women and girls in West Yorkshire.

The pioneering partnership comprises of members from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the region's Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), and West Yorkshire Police.

It has received financial backing to continue for another year after making a significant impact across the region. It is spearheading new collaborative ways to tackle violence against women and girls across the region.

As part of a week dedicated to tackling violence against women and girls, the team worked with local partners to promote the campaign '[It Does Matter](#)', which aims to educate and empower victims to report non-contact sexual offences, such as exposure and voyeurism, which have been historically overlooked.

Other highlights from the unit include a 'test purchasing' operation in Leeds to support the safety of women and girls, which saw 92% of venues respond positively to the '[Ask for Angela](#)' initiative.



Our campaigns

‘I Took a Seat’

In February 2025, we announced a brand new flagship campaign called [‘I Took a Seat’](#). Co-produced by members of the West Yorkshire Youth Commission from beginning to end, it responds to recommendations contained in their first ‘Big Conversation’ report, covering key issues, which include:

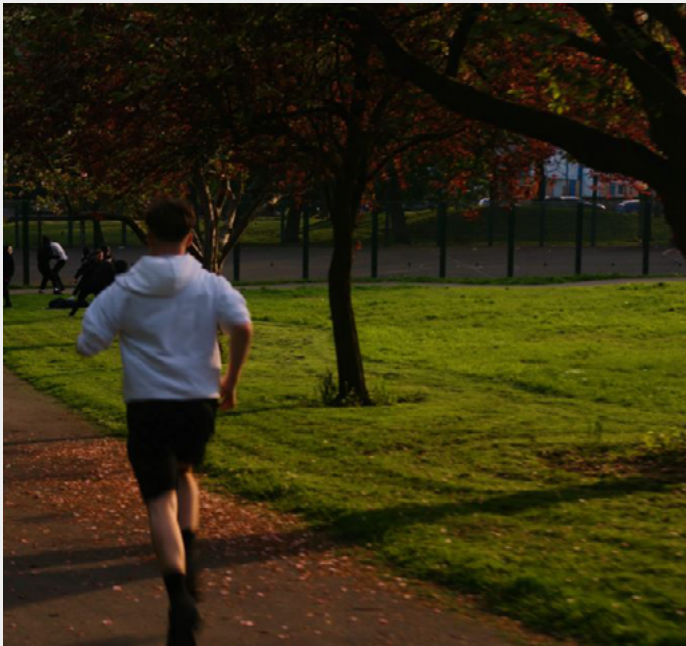
- Gangs, Drugs and Knife Crime
- Attitudes and Violence Towards Women
- Rehabilitation and Prevention
- Community Relationships and Life

The campaign focuses on encouraging behaviour change and signposting to support through online and offline mediums. This includes a targeted social media approach and visual assets in local bus stations.



‘Knives Claim Lives’

In collaboration with the local Sam Teale Productions, we published a new short film entitled [‘Knives Claim Lives’](#), addressing the choices and consequences of carrying knives. Supported by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Partnership and Safer Kirklees, the film aims to educate children and young people across the region about the deadly consequences of knife crime. It follows the story of a teenager drawn into gang culture, highlighting the fatal outcomes. The film can be accessed alongside a training package.



Summer Safety Campaign

Over the Summer of 2024, we worked alongside West Yorkshire Police on a safety [campaign](#) focusing on five key areas:

- Domestic abuse
- Drink and drug driving
- One punch manslaughter
- Sexual assaults
- Safe nights out

Engaging communities

It followed peer to peer research with over 1,700 young people

West Yorkshire Youth Commission

Our collaboration with the West Yorkshire Youth Commission and Leaders Unlocked entered its second year of delivery. They recruited additional children and young people aged 14-25 to join the cohort, offering skills training, tools, and support. In February 2025, we held a celebration event where the findings from their second-year work was presented. It followed peer to peer research with over 1,700 young people. As part of the ‘Big Conversation’ they have continued to focus on their priority issues of:

- Rehabilitation and prevention
- Community relationships and life
- Attitudes, and violence towards women
- Gangs, drugs, and knife crime



Community Leaders Programme

After commissioning our first [Community Leaders Programme](#) in early 2024, this work has gone from strength to strength. As part of our first cohort, twenty community leaders and emerging leaders took part in training over 3 months which included areas such as leadership, project management, community empowerment and trauma informed training. A second cohort has subsequently followed, and a wider Community Leaders Network developed, which will be supported into 2025–26. By investing in our community, we can ensure that they are equipped with the right skills and knowledge to increase their impact across the community. A Community Leaders celebration event also took place in January 2025, acknowledging their work, as well as contributing to the launch of the Mayor’s latest Police and Crime Plan.

65

Attendees at the Community Leaders event

40

Community Leaders trained



Interventions

Our programme of interventions are designed to deter, reduce, and navigate people away from violence.

They are evidence led and designed to encourage learning. A total of 57 have been developed alongside partners.

These include A&E Navigator services in Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Calderdale and Kirklees; a West Yorkshire Custody Diversion Programme; a West Yorkshire ‘Focussed Deterrence’ approach, and a number of local interventions with Community Safety Partnerships.

In addition, there has been lived experience mentoring in HM Wetherby Young Offenders Institute, education programmes using virtual reality technology, targeted work focussed on online harms and a wide range of smaller community-based projects.

Focussed Deterrence

Working with each of the five Community Safety Partnerships and local Police Districts, this programme has aimed to deliver against the core principles of ‘Focussed Deterrence’ - support, community engagement and deterrence.

Combining the expertise of skilled youth workers with police officers, the approach proactively engages with young people in open spaces and other local settings, or as a reactive response following an incident or referral from another service.

This programme has been flexible and adapted locally to work in tandem with existing local services and referral pathways.

It ensures a personalised follow up support offer for young people identified as being in need, either due to local intelligence, referral or engagement.

Clear communication on the consequences and potential enforcement activity, has provided a positive deterrence against ongoing criminal activity or new involvement in crime. Working with local communities, parents and peers, it ensures consistent messaging and understanding.

Virtual Decisions

Building on the training provided and pilot in Leeds during 2023–24, we have worked in partnership with local agencies and organisations to deliver Round Midnight’s ‘Virtual Decisions’, virtual reality, based education programme.

This immersive learning programme is aimed at supporting children and young people who may be at risk of criminal exploitation, enabling participants to use the technology to make multiple decisions that will then lead to different impacts and consequences.

Following the virtual reality film, facilitators from organisations across West Yorkshire have run workshops that explore the issues raised in more depth.

These workshops have allowed users to reflect on their personal journey within the virtual reality and discuss with others to share and learn from each other.

A recent Ofsted inspection of Greenhead College said that “students shared their appreciation for the opportunity to engage in the virtual reality headset workshops and the positive impact it had on their understanding of the risks around knife crime.”

- There was a 125% increase in children saying they understood a lot more about gangs after watching the film compared to before.

- There was a 157% increase in children saying they knew more about knife crime after watching the film compared to before.
- Fifty-six percent strongly agreed that virtual reality was a good way of teaching people about these topics.
- Just over 50 percent said the knives film taught them that carrying a knife is more dangerous than not carrying a knife.

Parent Liaison Service – Therapeutic Support

Working with the Ivison Trust charity, this programme has been delivered to expand on existing support offered through their Parent Liaison Service, working with parents to keep children safe from exploitation.

The support available has been provided through a dedicated out of hours telephone service, giving parents and carers an outlet for advice.

It also enables them to share how they are feeling particularly following arguments with their children, or when facing other challenges.

By offering a therapeutic counselling service for parents and carers, it works to enhance their mental health, increase understanding about the impact of trauma and helps to build resilience and improved relationships between parents/carers and their children or young people.

This has been achieved through outdoor activities and walk/talk style approaches, in face-to-face sessions and using online technology to offer remote opportunities.

Virtual Decisions – a virtual reality based education programme



Community Safety Partnerships (CSP)

Bradford

Work continued with the 'Breaking the Cycle' service, delivered through the Bradford Children and Families Trust. Delivery has included specific intensive work with children and young people identified as 'high risk' and or those being criminally exploited with links to Organised Crime, Urban Street Gangs and 'County Lines'. County Lines is where criminals establish networks for the supply and sale of drugs across towns and rural areas, using other people (typically those who are young or otherwise vulnerable) to carry, store, and sell the drugs.

Our work includes dedicated engagement with parents and children, increasing knowledge about violence and providing practical support to better respond to emotional outbursts or anger and improve parent/carer to child relationships.

Finally, a Safer YOUTH programme has helped children recognise their emotions and provide skills to manage their feelings/self-regulate, provide education on healthy relationships and develop pro-social skills.

Kirklees

There have been 5 interventions, delivering a range of activity in conjunction with Yorkshire Mentoring. This has included specialist one-to-one support for those young people at risk of being involved in urban street gangs and organised crime groups. It was complemented by a 'Train the Trainer' programme for teaching staff, youth justice and other voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

Local community resilience grants also supported a programme for girls aged 13 and above, to promote empowerment through sport in Ashbrow and Greenhead. Other work includes a creative arts diversion programme for children from Crossland Moor, Nethertown, and Dalton using music production and songwriting.

Calderdale

Working again in 2024-25 with Project Communities CIC, mentoring and leadership sessions. It has included sport-based activity and outdoor activity delivered within 4 secondary education settings within Brighouse, Calder Valley, Ryburn and Halifax. An area of focus for these sessions has been conflict resolution and creating a safe space to manage anger or aggression.

Wakefield

There has been continued delivery of the 'Men and Masculinities' programme from Cranstoun, a behaviour change programme to address domestic abuse. It supports young people who are using harmful behaviours in a family or intimate partner setting, for whom abusive behaviour has become embedded or normalised. Over 24-week, it offers bespoke, one-to-one sessions and group sessions, depending on what is deemed more appropriate and effective. It explores what it means to display appropriate behaviour within relationships and highlights how conflict, aggression and anger can deeply impact the lives of others.

Leeds

There have been 10 funded interventions across the Leeds District. Some of these provided focused youth work from the Local Authority both on a one-to-one or small group basis working in the city centre and local suburbs.

Others used a volunteer model to recruit, develop and engage with 11-19 years olds to participate in local social action. This involves working with young people at increased risk of involvement in violence, providing mentoring and parenting support aligned to local schools and community settings. It also uses mentors and youth workers to help reduce knife crime affiliation and promote healthy relationships with street-based workshops looking at toxic masculinity, violence against women and girls and drug awareness.



Next steps

The introduction of the Government's 'Safer Streets' mission has brought greater emphasis upon our work with young people and 'Child First' ambitions.

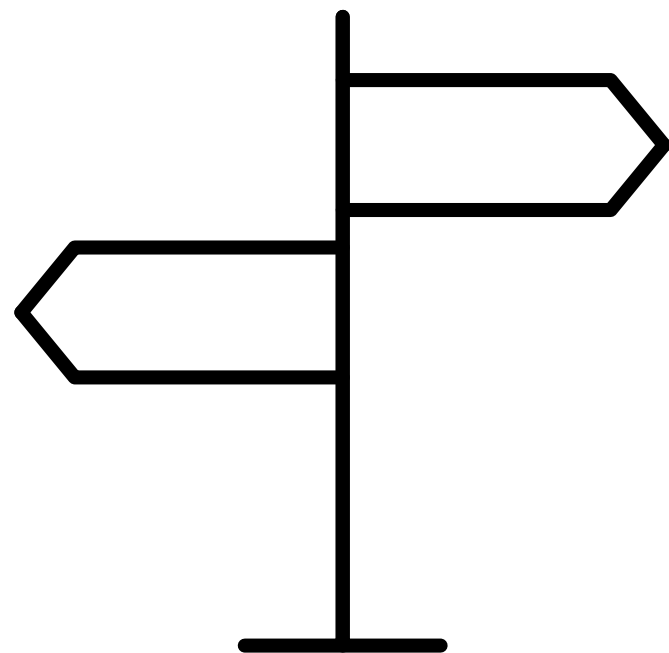
Announcements around 'Young Future Hubs' and 'Prevention Partnerships' will act to bring local services together, deliver support for teenagers at risk of being drawn into crime or facing mental health challenges, and deliver universal provision.

The Crime and Policing Bill also prompts changes for tackling serious violence with tougher sentences for selling dangerous weapons for under 18s and fines for those who profit through social media.

Likewise, it brings requirements for online retailers to report suspicious knife orders and new measures to protect women and girls from stalking and spiking.

These developments offer fresh opportunities in our collective approach to tackle serious violence. By embracing this, we can have an even greater impact across our communities, changing attitudes and behaviours.

Now is the time to double down on our partnership approach, ensuring we remain greater than the sum of our parts.



These
developments
offer fresh
opportunities
in our collective
approach to
tackle serious
violence



Delivered by

**West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority**

**Tracy
Brabin
Mayor of
West Yorkshire**