

## **Wales Safer Communities Network response to: Serious Violence Duty Consultation (draft)**

Closed 21 July 2022

### **Questions:**

#### **1. Does the draft statutory guidance improve your understanding of the legislation relating to the Serious Violence Duty?**

Yes

The guidance does explain the Serious Violence Duty and the public sector organisations captured by the legislation.

#### **2. Are there any specific aspects of the Serious Violence Duty that remain unclear (or are missing) after reading the draft Statutory Guidance?**

Yes

The definition of what is a 'local' area is unclear which will result in inconsistency in the application of the duty across England and Wales. In almost all instances it would be more appropriate for the serious violence duty be applied at local Council level, allowing all partners the ability to fulfil their responsibility especially important in ensuring that rural areas are not overshadowed by large urban areas. Though allowing the flexibility may enable those Council areas who do have similar issues to combine resources and deliver on just one assessment. The Serious Violence Duty should be considered as both strategic and operational alongside information on developing trends.

In Wales, we have a prevention focus across public services therefore we agree one key way to prevent serious violence is also to address less serious violence to prevent escalation. The prevention of all violence should be a driver, as the line between violence and serious violence is blurred. This is not recognised within the guidance.

Paragraph 169. The role of PCCs' is unclear and may cause confusion and potentially be to the detriment of the assessment if as was mentioned at the engagement events they are given powers to decide who is involved and the funding without full understanding of how other partners are set up, potentially providing them with powers and resources without them being subject to the duty.

There is also the issue of funding delivery of the Guidance, for those areas with a VRU (VPU in Wales) then things will be provided through established systems and with analytical support. For those areas outside the VRUs then there is no such help and support, there has been a suggestion that there will be funding to assist in the

delivery for fairness this should be at a comparable level to the VRUs to deliver this key piece of work to the same consistent level and quality. Police Analysts in Wales are stating that they are working to capacity already and many Councils no longer have analysts following the removal of funding for community safety directly to them, therefore without the additional funding the quality of the assessments and therefore the response may not be as good in the areas that are left to manage it within existing already stretched resources.

Not everyone subject to violence reports to the Police, this can be for a number of reasons, but there is evidence that the best data on violence is actually held within Health, the exclusion of health data means that there will be key information missing from the needs assessments reducing the usefulness of what is produced.

Serious Violence does not sit separate to the rest of community safety, it therefore has to compete locally for resources against other key duties such as Prevent and the ASB duties or Safeguarding, yet it is being sat separately instead of incorporating into the wider Assessments that are required of Community Safety Partnerships. There is no information about how the serious violence needs assessment will sit alongside or feed into the wider assessment, if it sits alone then the risk is that it is considered in a silo and not as part of the wider community safety conversation which enables the appropriate delegation and allocation of resources.

Wales has the added complexities of devolved and non-devolved partners and areas of work, community safety being one of the most involved in this space. Whilst our partnerships are one of our strengths the need for constant collaboration and a focus on relevant issues needs to remain strong. That the guidance allows for implementation through the existing structures is reassuring, but that requires the Home Office and Welsh Government to continue to work together as different legislation crosses over with the serious violence duty.

**3. We are keen to include updated case studies to support the statutory guidance and to support continuous learning on serious violence. If you are able to provide a case study, please provide brief details below, including your contact details.**

**We are currently considering options for how we might best support local areas to prepare for implementation of the Duty. We are drawing on previous experiences of implementing national policies and we are keen to hear views on what might be most helpful.**

Partners in Wales have submitted directly.

**4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for support for local areas on the Duty?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
National seminars		x			
Peer support by operational experts		x			
National Facilitators			x		
Local consultancy support		x			
Other (please state)	x				

**Other:** Utilise the existing structures and Networks in operation in Wales, specifically the Wales Data Analysis Innovation and Improvement Network (WDAIIN), the Wales Safer Communities Network and the Wales Association of Community Safety Officers (WACSO).

**5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following suggestions for areas of support for local areas on the Duty?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Data and information sharing	X especially including health data				
Strategic Needs Assessment		x			
Multi agency working			X already working well in Wales		
Defining serious violence		X a Wales wide definition may be more helpful			
Other (please state)	x				

**Other:** Linking the serious violence data and documentation into the wider community safety and Public Service Board requirements, this will be looked at in Wales by the Wales Safer Communities Network working across all partners in Wales.

The Network have been asked by partners to act as a noticeboard for sharing issues and solutions and for calling meetings to problem solve, this will apply in Wales only.