



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

9 December 2022

Serious Violence Duty

Report of the Director Community Risk Management

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of the new Serious Violence duty outlined in new legislation under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022.

Background

2. In 2018, the Government published a national, cross governmental Serious Violence Strategy. This was followed by the announcement of funding to tackle serious violence in 18 priority areas, through the introduction of Violence Reduction Units in line with the successful model developed within Scotland.
3. The following year, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new serious violence duty (“the duty”) on public bodies which will ensure relevant services work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence altogether.
4. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships by making sure they have a strategy in place to tackle violent crime.
5. Serious violence has not been specifically defined in the PCSC Act or the draft guidance. This is to allow responsiveness to new and emerging trends and to enable different areas to focus on issues of local prevalence.
6. The Serious Violence strategy (2018) focused on public space violence, including homicide, knife crime, gun crime, robbery, gang crime and ‘County Lines’ activity.

Serious Violence Duty

7. Legislative provision for a Serious Violence duty has been made in the PCSC Act which was brought into law on 28th April 2022.
8. The 'Duty' requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence:
 - Police
The Chief Officer of police for police areas in England and Wales
 - Fire and Rescue
All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales
 - Justice
Probation Services and Youth Offending Teams
 - Health
 - Local Authorities
9. The requirements for the 'duty' holders are:
 - By March 2023, all areas will need to have a Strategic Needs Assessment.
 - By June 2023, all areas will need to have effective multiagency working structures in place.
 - By September 2023, all areas should be able to demonstrate how their local response is rooted in evidence of effectiveness.
 - By December 2023, all areas will have published their strategies.

Approach in County Durham and Darlington

10. The Safe Durham Partnership and Darlington Community Safety Partnership have agreed to a joint approach covering both areas, with the Police taking on the lead role.
11. A strategic group has been formed and a 'Task and Finish' group to deliver a Strategic Needs Assessment for Durham & Darlington.

Recommendations

12. Members are requested to **note** the report.

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