

THAMES VALLEY

**VIOLENCE
PREVENTION**

PARTNERSHIP

Thames Valley
Violence Prevention
Partnership

Highlight Report

Delivery year 2024 – 2025
Q1 April/May/June

Published July 2024

Foreword

by Jules Bottazzi, Head of the Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership

Colleagues,

Here we are in July already and I hope you're enjoying the British summer – which, despite the rain, doesn't seem to have dampened the English men's football team's performance. We live in hope!

I write to you at an interesting time, as we wait to discover what the new government has in store for the Serious Violence and VRU programme. Although there is still some degree of uncertainty around future funding, it's likely we will have a budget in early autumn and we hope to have some clarity by the New Year.

In the meantime, we continue to focus on the cultural and financial stability of this, our three-year delivery programme, which comes to an end in March 2025, and this July Strategy Board will focus on the evaluation programme and sustainability conversations. I was delighted to attend the launch of the Hospital Navigators evaluation at Oxford Brookes University last month; this final report is provided to all ahead of our Board and commissioning conversations are well underway. A suite of "What Works" reports will be provided after all the other evaluations are complete and our RCTs deliver high-quality results.

We still have nine months of delivery still ahead of us, however, and May saw the successful launch of our Stay True To You counter-narrative programme with associated resources and

training. Our training provision continues to grow, with a focus on sustainability – train-the-trainer packages, lasting video resources. We're also close to finalising some new provision in Oxfordshire for the school summer holidays working with local SEND schools.

Our work on system leadership continues, both with regards to co-ordinating the partnership and also more discrete work, such as the partnership with DWP; the ongoing partnership work with TVP on the MASH scoping exercise; the continued national interest in Op Paramount as an approach to supporting those with a parent in prison; and the secondment of a Public Health registrar into the training team for a short period to assist with training packages for A&E departments.

For those of you who are planning a summer break, I wish you a peaceful and restful one.

With best wishes,

Jules Bottazzi

Director of Strategy & Performance,
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
for the Thames Valley



VPP interventions & wider programme activities

Intervention	Summary	Area
Hospital Navigators	Trained volunteers offer support in A&E to those admitted in risky circumstances	All Thames Valley through the five A&E sites
Custody Coaches	Youth workers work with those in police custody, offering ongoing mentoring and support	Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Berkshire (not Buckinghamshire)
Custody Navigator Volunteers	Volunteers work with those in police custody to offer short-term support & signposting	Oxfordshire (Abingdon) and Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury)
Schools Navigators	Youth workers in schools provide 1-2-1 mentoring and social skills support to children at risk of exclusion	Milton Keynes
Focused Deterrence	Support-first, social care-led model of diversion, supported by procedurally-just police enforcement	Milton Keynes
Sports & Inclusion	“Sports Plus” activities, providing positive sports and inclusion activities accompanied by mentoring and education	Six projects in Oxford, Milton Keynes, Reading, Slough and High Wycombe
Operation Paramount	Partnership between Thames Valley Police and charity Children Heard & Seen, improving support for families following parental imprisonment	Rolling out to all of Thames Valley
SEND school summer provision	Working with an education trust in Oxfordshire over summer holiday period with children with SEND needs to support transition back into education activities	Oxfordshire
‘Stay True to You’ behaviour change resources	Research and development of new behavioural change approaches and resources for practitioners, parents, young people	All Thames Valley
Family Drug & Alcohol Court	Working with the Centre for Justice Innovation to establish an FDAC in Berkshire	Berkshire
Sustainable Training	Supporting partners with training needs associated with violence prevention	All Thames Valley
Thames Valley Together	A partnership programme working to develop a multi-agency data-sharing platform and analytical products	All Thames Valley

At a glance – all VPP intervention delivery

Total individuals engaged so far in 2024/2025







▶ **464**

Total individuals engaged since projects began

▶ **3342**

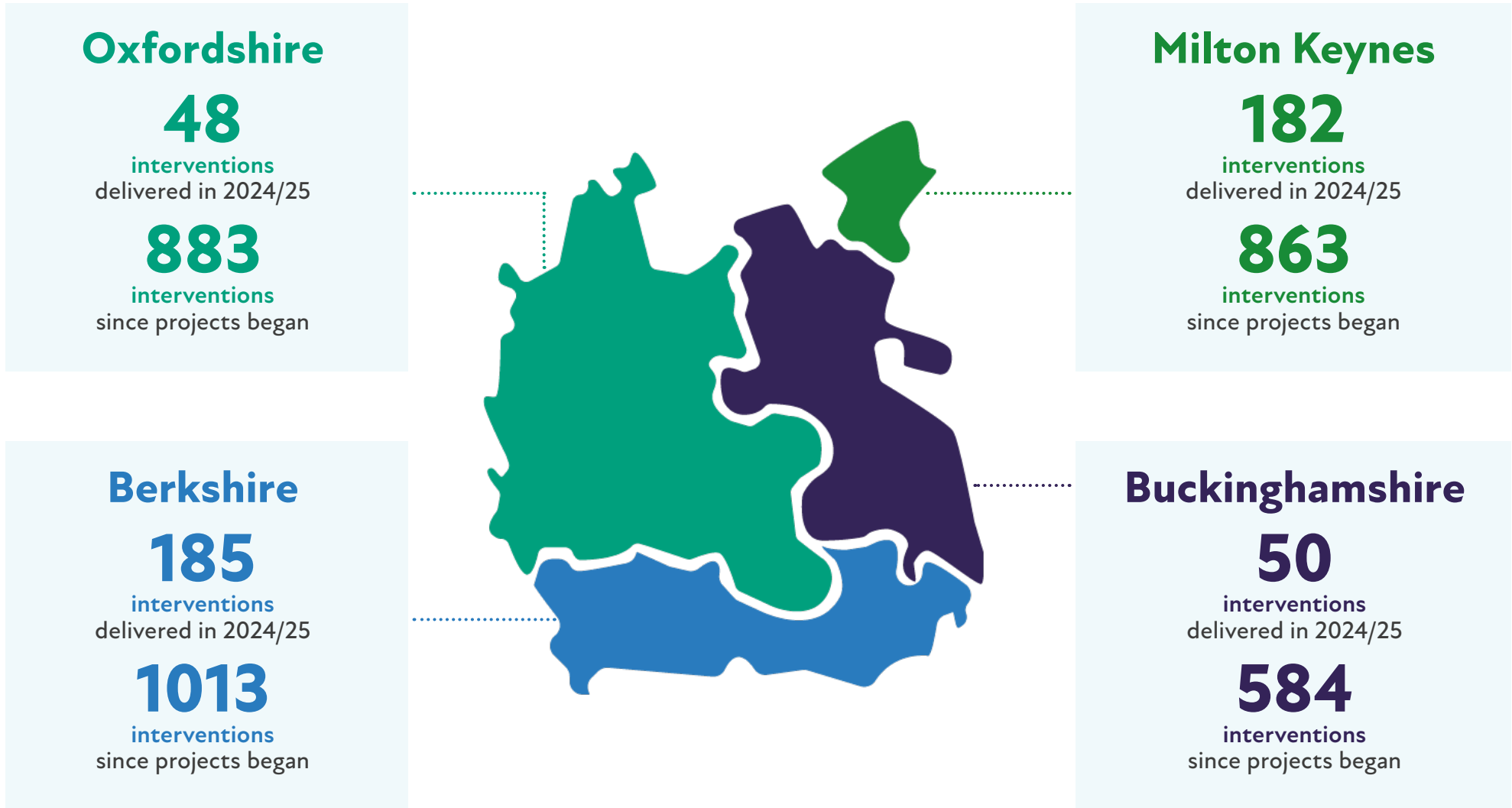
Total trained so far in 2024/2025

▶ **320**

Intervention	Delivery 2024/25	Since projects began
 Hospital Navigators	105	1342
 Custody Coaches	39	222
 Schools Navigators	50	353
FD Focused Deterrence	45	65
 Sports & Inclusion	254	254
 Operation Paramount	17	101
 Stay True to You	180	180

Note: Count is of individuals engaged. Sports and FD programmes retain individuals over time. Paramount is count of referrals made to Children Heard & Seen. Total trained includes STTU and other VPP training.

At a glance – VPP intervention delivery in local areas



VPP intervention updates

The following pages provide updates on those interventions funded by the VPP from the Home Office grant.





Intervention update Hospital Navigators

The project continues with delivery live across four sites and we are close to Oxfordshire Youth commencing their service at the fifth site, the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

We work with five voluntary sector organisations to deliver the schemes in the following hospitals:

- YMCA MK (Milton Keynes)
- 7Roadlight (Aylesbury)
- Oxfordshire Youth (Oxford)
- Starting Point (Reading)
- Together As One (Slough)

By hospital site	Delivery 24/25	Delivery since project began
Milton Keynes	6	254
Buckinghamshire	13	467
Oxfordshire	0	73
Berkshire – Reading	24	183
Berkshire – Slough	62	374



Intervention update

Launch of the Oxford Brookes University evaluation of the Hospital Navigator scheme

In June we published an evaluation of the Hospital Navigator intervention, completed by colleagues from the Oxford Institute of Applied Health Research at Oxford Brookes University. This provides a review of both the model of delivery and the impact and benefits of the scheme.

The lead researchers Dr Sarah Bekaert and Dr Georgia Cook of Oxford Brookes University presented key findings from the evaluation at the event to an audience which included colleagues from commissioning bodies including Integrated Care Systems (ICs), Community Safety Partnerships, NHS Trusts and the voluntary sector organisations delivering the support.



Key findings from the review period include:

- 70% referred to a Hospital Navigator positively engaged
- Of those who engaged, around a quarter benefited from signposting to other services
- Of those who engaged, around three quarters engaged in longer-term, ongoing support
- 77% of those supported did not re-attend the Emergency Department

Initial attendance in the Emergency Department was often linked to mental health crisis, alcohol/substance misuse, domestic abuse. But through the referral to a Navigator a trusting relationship was developed leading to wider positive individual outcomes. These include:

- Support/advice with regard housing
- Support in securing employment
- Re-engagement with education
- Positive emotional and psychological growth

Positive organisational outcomes included:

- The model of volunteers co-located within the Emergency Department led to improved engagement with the support offered and was also highly valued by busy NHS teams as an additional resource
- Potential cost benefit is estimated at £82 for every £1 spent, when considering health costs, quality of life and economic impact*
- Potential for significant cost savings to Emergency Departments through reduction in readmission and also through provision of mental health/wellbeing support

Both the evaluation executive summary and the report in full are available on [our website](#).

* Florence, C., Shepherd, J., Brennan, I., & Simon, T. R. 2014. An economic evaluation of anonymised information sharing in a partnership between health services, police and local government for preventing violence-related injury. *Injury Prevention*, 20(2), 108–114. <https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2012-040622>



Intervention update Custody Coaches

Custody Coaches are trained youth workers who work with those aged 18 – 30 who have been arrested and detained in police custody. The Coaches offer support to address harmful behaviours and life circumstances, providing an enduring mentoring role. Coaches from MK Dons Sports & Education Trust and Reading FC Community Trust are operational in three custody suites covering Milton Keynes and Berkshire.

▶ **222**

individuals have now benefited from a Custody Coach engagement since the project began

We are running a Randomised Control Trial to measure the impact of the intervention. The cohort includes those aged 18–30 arrested and detained in police custody for an offence which includes weapons possession, violence or public order, robbery, amongst others.

Seconded police officers to the Violence Prevention Partnership’s central programme team continue to work with Thames Valley Police custody teams to identify those who can be offered support.

When an individual is identified and is randomised to receive the treatment, they are offered the support either while still in custody or as a follow-up once they are released.

As it is a voluntary initiative, the scheme relies upon a custody officer to explain the opportunity to them and to then pass their acceptance to the relevant Custody Coaches. To support this, the VPP has created a leaflet to better explain the process and to ensure a consistency in the information each is receiving.

Over the past quarter the Coaches have continued to engage with those who have been randomised into the trial, offering a range of support. This is often focused on assistance with entering employment and there have been successes in supporting people to successfully secure job offers.

By custody suite	Delivery 24/25	Delivery since project began
Milton Keynes	10	50
Berkshire – Loddon Valley	15	98
Berkshire – Maidenhead	14	74

See case study on [page 24](#)



Intervention update Schools Navigators

The original concept to the Schools Navigators programme began with a model implemented in 2022-2023 and included four schools in Reading and six in Milton Keynes through two providers, Starting Point and SOFEA.

It has since been re-designed to allow for a more robust randomised-control trial evaluation and is being delivered only in Milton Keynes by SOFEA, working with four new schools, chosen for the programme in liaison with the local partnership.

Data from Milton Keynes shows that 70% of children suspended go on to be suspended again, with clear links between exclusion from school and wider vulnerabilities and poor outcomes.

Schools Navigators are working to prevent additional exclusion or a reduction in frequency. Since the start of the academic year, SOFEA's four youth workers continue to offer up to six weekly mentoring sessions for young people referred by the school at their first suspension.

Over the past quarter, support has been provided to a further 50 young people across the four schools. Feedback from the schools continues to be positive, with teachers welcoming the additional support for young people who are suitable for the mentoring-style approach. SOFEA has also been gathering additional information with regard behaviour and attendance levels to inform the evaluation.

Currently, the service will deliver through to the end of the summer term in July, at which point the VPP's evaluation team will use a full academic year of data from the RCT. This will allow the scheme's impact to be evaluated, with findings presented to partners in the Autumn and a decision taken based on this evidence.

2024/25:	Number of young people engaged:
St Paul's Catholic School	4
Leon Academy	17
Watling Academy	16
Radcliff School	13
Total	50

See case study on [page 25](#)

FD Intervention update

Focused Deterrence

First launching in February 2023, this Milton Keynes partnership project targets those under 25 who habitually carry a weapon/knife and have also committed violent or sexual offences. Primarily implemented by the Milton Keynes Council's Contextual Safeguarding Team, working with Thames Valley Police.

The current cohort receiving treatment stands at 45 individuals, with 20 aged under 18 and 25 aged over 18. As the cohort has gradually added new individuals at different stages, around 25 have nearly completed a full year, with 20 having started more recently and having completed two months so far.

The model of delivery continues to see a coordinator post, with three dedicated support workers, all from the Safeguarding Team. They convene multi-agency panels and deliver the in-person case work with the young person, maintaining contact and facilitating the support/problem-solving approaches.

Monthly multi-agency panels review those on the cohort, taking a deep-dive review into at least 10 of those posing the highest risk levels. Colleagues from within the council and the police review data such as incidents, missing episodes, intelligence on activity and as a collective they discuss and agree their respective response plans to each individual. A shadow panel of just the Safeguarding Team undertakes similar reviews of all others, coordinating their case work accordingly.

Recently, the case workers have seen an increase in the amount of support they've given to some young people as they progress through the criminal justice process, noting that this is of value to the young people and has helped strengthen their trust and confidence. With improved relationships, it has helped their engagement with other support offers.

The first six month interim results from the RCT have been analysed and will be published as part of the VPP's "What Works" series, coming soon.

See case study on [page 26](#)



Intervention update

Sports & Inclusion interventions in partnership with StreetGames

The Thames Valley Sports & Inclusion intervention programme has two components; the first is to support system change and embed sport as a prevention and diversion measure. We host a VPP Sports & Violence Impact Manager post, part-funded by the VPP and by StreetGames UK.



Chelsea Piggott

Sports & Violence
Impact Manager

Chelsea continues to play an active role in supporting local place-based partnerships to embed “Sport Plus” approaches, helping a number of local authority areas to develop new, or enhance existing, partnership structures to coordinate provision. Chelsea also contributes to wider strategic discussions and helps to shape local policy around the use of sport as a preventative intervention.

In addition to overseeing the delivery of the six VPP funded local sports projects, Chelsea continues to identify opportunities for new funding routes, most recently with Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

On 22 April, Chelsea coordinated the annual Thames Valley annual conference celebrating the power of sport, bringing together around 80 representatives from local organisations and partnerships, sharing learning and supporting new networking.

As a national organisation, StreetGames UK continues to deliver a range of quality resources which Chelsea is promoting into local organisations. This can include data and analytics such as the Community Sport Dashboard, research/evaluation evidence on the impact of sport and guidance and toolkits such as the recently published Referrals Toolkit.

Visit the [StreetGames UK website](#) to access research findings and the latest guidance and toolkits.



Intervention update

Sports & Inclusion interventions in partnership with StreetGames

The second component to the intervention is VPP funding provided to StreetGames for the commissioning of local “Sports Plus” activities that provide positive activities alongside support such as mentoring, education sessions, help with accessing employment etc.



Six local projects have been funded by the Violence Prevention Partnership – some commenced in 2022/2023 delivery year and have continued, others began in 2023/2024.

Each project provides an enduring engagement for those referred. While inevitably some drop out for a variety of reasons, new referrals enter as capacity allows. Many of the individuals engaged have now been participating for well over a year and have benefited from building relationships with the staff and peers who attend, as well as accessing other support such as mentoring, education sessions and routes to qualifications and other activities.

Approximately 20 new individuals joined one of the sports programmes for the first time over the past quarter, with the six projects currently providing positive activities for around 250 young people.

Provider	Total Participants
Reading FC Community Trust	59
Street Games – Milton Keynes City Council	116
Street Games – Slough Borough Council	11
The Project PT – Oxford (over both provisions)	37
Wycombe Wanderers Sport & Education Trust	31
Total	254

See case study on [page 27](#).



Intervention update

Operation Paramount

A partnership between Thames Valley Police and the charity Children Heard & Seen, Operation Paramount is the name of a brand new data-sharing process which is speeding up the offer of support to families affected by a parent being imprisoned, with the VPP also funding a dedicated support worker for the charity.

Families are provided an holistic offer including parenting support, financial advice, navigating the prison system and overcoming stigma and trauma for child and parent. They become part of a wider social network of other families, and receive support in building trust in authorities and policing. Through this, the whole family – but particularly children and young people – receive protective support to prevent risk of offending or wider vulnerability and improve outcomes.

Over the past quarter, Thames Valley Police has expanded into Bracknell Forest and Reading, with local officers/PCSOs ready to undertake visits to families identified to make the support offer. This means the only areas not covered are Slough, Wokingham and the Royal Borough. However, the Chief Constable remains committed to a force-wide roll-out as resourcing allows.

The team continue to share their learning with a number of forces and partners as Operation Paramount's principles and approach are seen as a national innovation.

2024/25	Number of young people supported
Oxfordshire	11
Buckinghamshire	6
Milton Keynes	0
West Berkshire	0
Total	17

See case study on [page 28](#)



Intervention update

Stay True to You campaign and training

In May, the VPP launched the “Stay True to You” research and resources, providing a new approach for all partners to support the counter-narrative and to improve positive engagement with young people.

The approach takes a deliberately positive approach, aiming to reach young people through the trusted adults around them – supporting youth workers, sports coaches, volunteers, teachers and parents to build positive relationships. It aims to build young people’s confidence in their own abilities to make positive choices for themselves.

The resources are published on the website StayTrueToYou.co.uk, providing a copy of the original research insights, practitioner toolkit, workshop guide, posters etc. Also, signposting links to national and local support and services. These continue to be accessed by partners and parents.

The second component is the provision of training for practitioners and information sessions for parents. Working with The Ben Kinsella Trust, we have been running training events since May. These online sessions are delivered by one of the BKT’s most experienced trainers with three different sessions offered: for practitioners, for those in education, and for parents/carers.

Over 180 people have either attended one of the BKT’s training sessions or have been trained via a VPP contribution elsewhere.

Engagement and feedback from the practitioner sessions has been good and the post-training surveys show a marked increase in confidence and knowledge across all aspects of the training, which includes difficult conversations, exploitation, how to talk about safety and use of the Stay True to You resources and approach.

There is one last practitioner session (17 July) and one last parents session (24 July) before the summer holiday when we will pause, before recommencing the training offer in September.

We are also working on further developing our in-house training so that we can continue to deliver once our commission of The Ben Kinsella Trust completes in the Autumn.

SEND

Intervention update

Developing a SEND school provision in Oxfordshire

In response to the added risk-factor presented by those with additional needs, we have been keen to test how the provision of enhanced support and a continuation of provision over the summer holiday period can help maintain their engagement in education.



Orion
Academy

The Gallery Trust operates a multi-academy trust to provide education for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across Oxfordshire.

One of their seven academies, the Orion Academy, in Blackbird Leys, Oxford, has capacity for around 100 pupils. All have Education, Health and Care plans with a range of needs, but the majority have Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, Autistic Spectrum Condition and other associated difficulties.

We are finalising with their team how we can support their capacity to deliver a programme of positive summer holiday activities for children attending both the Orion, but also some children from local primary schools who are due to attend the Orion in September.

The approach aims to provide a range of activities that will allow relationships with teachers and staff to be built and maintained before the start of the September term. It will help pupils make friends, build their own confidence and help their attendance, behaviour and educational outcomes.

We will be working closely with the school to evaluate the impact, measuring quantitative and qualitative data.



Intervention update

Blue Light Mentoring – rapid evidence review process

Not being engaged in education, training or employment remains a significant risk factor to those more vulnerable and can contribute to exploitation, crime and violence. In response, in partnership with Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and Reading's Brighter Futures for Children service, we have begun to scope a new pilot initiative to provide male mentors to help support young people.

In line with the VPP's "Project Life Cycle", before committing to design and implement any new intervention, our VPP Research Officer Jade Stephens has undertaken a significant review of existing literature associated with how mentoring programmes can contribute to helping those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to engage.

What we have identified is that where there was positive evidence of impact from the studies/trials reviewed, it was clear that approaches which delivered committed, problem-solving orientated mentoring have the greatest impact with encouraging young people to engage. We will use this evidence to assist in designing an approach which we hope to pilot this year.

The findings of this exercise will have wider benefit beyond shaping our approach with this particular pilot idea and they will be published for partner's benefit shortly under our new "What works" series.

Wider programme activities updates

This section provides updates on some of the wider activities being delivered by the VPP's programme team, working with local partners.





Programme activities update

Sustainable training

The VPP is committed to supporting local partnerships by providing sustainable training, helping to build skills and capacity, raising awareness of risk factors to violence and helping embed train-the-trainer approaches so that learning can be taken into organisations.

If any partner has an idea or a training need, please contact [Chris Ward](#).

We continue our partnership with Oxfordshire Youth and the Oxfordshire Children Safeguarding Board to offer training to professionals with a focus upon child exploitation. In this quarter we have delivered training to 80 people and have more courses scheduled for the remaining 8 months, targeting a further 60 people.

We recently partnered with The Iffley Academy in Oxford, a member of The Gallery Trust, which provides specialist provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. We have provided a tailored training provision that explores the risks of exploitation of young people who have SEND and the risks of online harms. Through this, we have trained 70 of their staff and are now developing a further package for parents/ carers which we will launch in September.

Since Sarah Harvey joined the VPP on secondment, this has opened up new opportunities to provide training to staff from local branches of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

We are planning a new series of “bite sized” learning topics which can be self-led, helping to explore particular topics and then signposting to other resources or training opportunities. In addition to these shorter training products, the team is developing more comprehensive packages which can be used in a train-the-trainer approach.

In August, we also welcome a trainee Public Health Consultant on secondment who will assist us with some aspects of training development with a focus on the NHS workforce.

Programme activities update

Joint working with the Department for Work and Pensions

We believe strongly that being in positive, stable employment is a strong preventative factor, helping to prevent becoming involved in crime and violence in the first place and helping to prevent reoffending.

To help us develop some new areas of work associated with employment and training, we are very pleased to have welcomed in April the addition of Sarah Harvey (known as SJ), who joined the VPP central programme team on a secondment from her substantive role in the DWP's local Employer Team in Buckinghamshire.



Sarah Harvey

DWP Buckinghamshire, seconded to the VPP

SJ's primary focus has been on developing improved partnership working with the HM Prisons & Probation Service (HMPPS), aiming to increase the provision of new training and employment opportunities for those leaving secure custody (taking learning from a recent Merseyside VRU project).

SJ has already begun working with colleagues at HM Prison Spring Hill and Bullingdon, working directly with individuals to help them access benefits, gain construction industry safety cards and certificates, and to begin to introduce them to local employers.

SJ has planned an employer open day at Bullingdon prison with a number of large national construction and infrastructure firms participating.

SJ has also been developing support for those prison leavers who wish to work in a self-employed capacity, but need help in establishing themselves in business, how to manage their finances, tax, and to overcome the practical barriers that may be holding them back.

SJ has brought a real energy, making lots of contacts and helping to create connections and we look forward to continuing this work during her secondment with the VPP, which currently ends in March.

If any local partnership has an idea or needs advice with regards employability, contact SJ via: sarah.harvey1@dwp.gov.uk



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Programme activities update

Working with the Youth Endowment Fund

The Youth Endowment Fund is the national body established to invest over a 10-year period into evidence-led practices and to build an understanding of what works in preventing youth violence. Over the past quarter the VPP has been working with colleagues from the YEF on three areas:

Psychological therapies grant bid

In May the YEF launched a new grant round to fund the trial of psychological therapies for young people vulnerable to crime and violence and for those already in contact with the criminal justice system.

The VPP has brought together four providers of talking therapies/services (Ark Counselling, Reading-based No. 5, YouthLine UK and WMC Counselling) to develop a consortium which could operate across the whole Thames Valley.

If successful we could receive around £1m to fund a Thames Valley-wide talking therapies service for those with vulnerabilities. Delivery would begin in March 2025 and the funding would also support a robust evaluation of the model of delivery and impact.

Sport interventions – multi-site trial

We are working with StreetGames UK to support a large multi-site trial bid which could see YEF investment into the Thames Valley, to a specific local sports intervention. The multi-site trial is a national intervention/evaluation which will commence with a pilot in Yorkshire, but we are hopeful that a sports provision in Reading will be funded as part of the wider multi-site trial as it expands.

Operation Paramount – support for families with a parent in prison

We continue to discuss with YEF the Operation Paramount principles including the use of data to identify children with a parent in prison, the provision of targeted support, and how this can provide benefit to prevent crime and violence.

Programme activities update

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub – process mapping

In our published Response Strategy 2024–2025, we included funding of £120,000 to support the scoping, process mapping and potential design of future interventions informed by and aligned to support the work of the Thames Valley Police Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

As these multi-agency safeguarding processes – commonly known as “the front door” – are often the earliest contact agencies have with vulnerable families, we have commenced a research process to identify where potential investment could be made to develop a new impactful early intervention later in the year.

The first stage of this has now commenced, in close partnership with the force and the MASH team. The VPP appointed a lead Project & Business Change Manager who is working to undertake a scoping/mapping exercise to better understand the processes in place between the force and local partners. In particular, the scoping will explore how risks are identified and data/information is shared across partners.

By undertaking this process, we will build a better understanding of the ways of working and where there may be opportunities for improvements to processes and the response to vulnerabilities.

Sonia Viridi has recently joined the Violence Prevention Partnership core programme team on a six-month contract as the lead for undertaking the process mapping exercise of the Thames Valley MASH.

Sonia brings a wealth of experience from working in project management and business improvement roles in both the private and public sector. For nearly 10 years, Sonia worked in adult and children’s social services, including working in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, where she led or worked on programmes including digital transformation, process improvement for missing persons, exploitation, multi-agency safeguarding.

A further update on the research phase will be completed for partners by the October Strategy Board.

Case Studies



Case Studies

Custody Coaches

Keith Greene is one of the most experienced Custody Coaches from Reading FC Community Trust, with a long background in youth work and coaching.

He recently engaged with Michael (name changed), who had been referred through Loddon Valley custody after an arrest for a public order offence after a fight had broken out.



Keith Greene

Reading FC Community Trust

In their discussion about the circumstances and what was happening in his life, it was clear that just engaging with Keith was itself a major step forward for Michael. As a member of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community he had low trust for those in positions of authority.

However, he was clear that he didn't want to repeat the mistakes of his family and wanted to move on positively with his life, with a wife and children.

They discussed his difficult upbringing, the loss of his mother to cancer and the impact of his father who was an alcoholic and serial shoplifter. Michael had never held a job but was motivated to find a role in construction.

Keith helped him to find a local roofing company that needed labourers and after a successful trial he was taken on full-time.

Keith has had weekly catch-ups with Michael, encouraging him to stay positive, to be proud of what he has achieved and to help him deal with problems in life in a positive way.

Michael has said:

“I felt sure that I wasn't going to last in this job – I'd be given the sack and I'd be back to crime. But with Keith's help I've been able to keep going, he gives me good advice and I'm sure that I can make this work, for me and the family.”

Case Studies

Schools Navigators

Craig (name changed) was referred to the see the School Navigator because he had been excluded due to his disruptive behaviour and instances of violence.

In exploring what he would like to achieve from the sessions, he explained that he was struggling with controlling his anger and it was agreed that improving his social skills should be the focus. He was struggling too with a very negative attitude to school.



Arshna Ram

Therapeutic Team Lead, SOFEA MK

The Navigator used the time with Craig to explore his aspirations. They discussed how by achieving his GCSEs he would be in a good position to join his family's business. Time was spent exploring what the skills and attitudes he would need and how he could use his time at school positively, helping him to adjust his mindset so that he could see how school was helping him to do what he wanted in the future.

Reflecting on his behaviours and attitudes, they explored how breaking down tasks can help to make things seem more achievable – simple goals were agreed such as getting to class on time, sitting down and being quiet without disrupting the lesson.

His frustration and negativity toward school was fuelled by disciplinary problems, many of which were simple to resolve such as uniform or timeliness. But also, the Navigator helped to explore how he could rise above distractions, ignore those people who he knows lead him into difficult situations.

In his last of the six sessions, Craig spoke about recent improvements in his behaviour – both in class and out in the local community. Importantly, he spoke of an incident where he stayed calm in the face of provocation, kept his calm and walked away from a confrontation.

Craig said:

“I’ve found the sessions helpful, just to have the time to talk about what’s happening and how it makes me feel. I think I’ve learned how staying calm, standing tall and walking away – just ignoring people when they start mouthing off – is better than getting into trouble.”

Case Studies

Focused Deterrence

Dale, age 14, (name changed), was added to the under-18 cohort due to multiple reports to the police that he was routinely carrying a knife. In April 2023 there were 10 active police investigations involving him.

Dale lived with his mum but their relationship was strained. His attendance at school was poor and he spent most of his time with a mixture of people engaging in anti-social activities. The FD case worker helped explore what motivates him and worked with the school to develop opportunities and to help demonstrate how by completing his education could open up the opportunities he was interested in. The case worker also took him to school twice a week and helped him develop his coping mechanisms and social skills. The school noticed a marked improvement in behaviour and attendance.

At home though things were hard with his mum no longer able to cope. The case worker helped her access mental health support and parenting support programmes, helping her find the balance of support and authority. She commented that Dale was spending more time at home and their relationship improved.

Dale's last offence was in May 2023, which is just one month after starting the programme and there have been no further intelligence reports received since.

Dale has welcomed the consistency of the meetings with his case worker, feels more comfortable talking to them and values the amount of time they have to talk.

Looking forward, the case worker has started to identify positive activities and work experience, while also opening pathways within health, with Dale awaiting an ADHD and CAMHS assessment.

Case Studies

Wycombe Wanderers Foundation – Youth Intervention Programme

Femi, 13, (name changed) was referred to by a local grassroots football team to Wycombe Wanderers Foundation and their Youth Intervention Programme.

They had identified he needed some additional support as issues in his personal life were spilling out onto the football pitch. At school he was at risk of exclusion due to his behaviour and attendance, his parents were struggling with him and they were worried he was socialising with old people who were having a negative influence.



FOUNDATION

His father said:

“Having a session available that can support him to make better decisions, without it just being his parents moaning at him, will hopefully help him and give him something to look forward to each week”

Femi loved football but was unsure about the education workshop sessions and struggled to engage, that was, until the professional player appearance session when he finally came out of his shell, asking lots of questions and finally getting to know staff. This included a new youth worker, someone with lived experiences similar to Femi’s. They connected well and soon began one-to-one sessions talking about school, home life, personal life issues. Their relationship has strengthened and has become key to some hugely positive changes.

He’s since become far more sociable with others, he’s expressed interest in work experience with the Foundation this summer. He has begun a Sports Leader Award qualification. Outside of the programme, his school attendance has improved and he is more positive in his relationships with teachers.

Carl Robinson, one of the lead coaches at Wycombe Wanderers Foundation, said:

“Femi has shown a brilliant attitude and desire to change certain behaviours since he has been attending Youth Intervention Programme. It took him time to settle into the sessions but once he realised there was something in this for him, he engaged and took all the opportunities that he was offered.

“I have spoken with his parents several times who have attributed an upturn in his behaviour to attending these sessions and creating positive relationships with other young people and staff.”

Case Studies

Operation Paramount and support by Children Heard and Seen

Katy (name changed) was 10 years old when she was referred to Children Heard And Seen in March 2023. Her mother is serving an 18-year minimum sentence following a murder conviction. Katy was just a baby when she was imprisoned and their relationship was always poor, with Katy not wanting to visit.

Katy also grew up estranged from her father and had very few positive male role models in her life. In response, Children Heard & Seen allocated her a male support worker to try to improve that. Together they have worked on her self-esteem, explored her understanding of her emotions and how she can manage those difficult feelings, helped her reflect upon the positive support network she has and she has opened up to talk about her mother's imprisonment and how she feels.

Katy had many difficult questions which she didn't want to ask her family, but she finally felt she could ask of her case worker, and which have been sensitively shared with her family so they know of her needs.

CH&S has also worked with her family, developing a plan and some simple materials to help them as they prepare to properly discuss with her the reason for her mother's imprisonment and some of the circumstances. They have been helped to plan on how to do this in a safe, supportive way.

Since the support started, Katy has resumed phone contact with her mother, and is becoming open to starting to visit her in prison again. She also has a much better understanding of what will happen when her mother is eventually released, which had been a constant source of concern for her (unbeknownst to her family and school).

Katy continues to attend activities which have given her the opportunity to meet other children impacted by parental imprisonment, which will reduce her feelings of isolation, shame and stigma. Similarly, her family have also had the opportunity to meet other parents and kinship carers, providing them with peer support.



Keep in touch

This is the third highlight report created by the VPP for our partners and we welcome your feedback.



If you have any questions please contact the core programme team via vpp@thamesvalley.police.uk



Our website has information on all our projects and evaluations. www.tvvpp.co.uk



You can also follow us on X/Twitter [@TV_VPP](https://twitter.com/TV_VPP)

A teal starburst graphic with eight points, centered on a dark blue background. The starburst contains a white square with text.

THAMES VALLEY

**VIOLENCE
PREVENTION**

PARTNERSHIP