

THAMES VALLEY

**VIOLENCE  
PREVENTION**

PARTNERSHIP

Thames Valley  
Violence Prevention  
Partnership

# Highlight Report

2024/2025 Q2  
July/August/September

Published October 2024

# Foreword

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

Welcome to the latest edition of the VPP Quarterly Highlight Report, which takes a review of our whole programme – interventions, evaluations and our wider programme activity – over the Quarter 2 period (July, August and September). How those summer days seem a distant memory, as the clocks are soon to fall back and the weather has very definitely turned!

It has been an extremely busy time for me as I have taken on my wider role as Director of Strategy & Performance within the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and have been working with colleagues as we progress with the phased restructure of the organisation. This is a wider piece of work than violence prevention and the VPP, but rest assured that the resulting structure will still be able to deliver on any further Home Office-directed grant funding and oversight for violence prevention work.

On this point, as most of our partners will understand, the VPP programme is funded through a grant from our sponsor unit in the Home Office. In addition a small grant is also directed through the OPCC to support local partnerships with the Serious Violence Duty new burden. The 31 March marks the end of our current funding cycle. The new government is in place and our Home Office colleagues have been working with new ministers to understand priorities but we await the October budget announcement. I, along with the other VRU Directors nationally, have been involved in these conversations as to what the future should look like. In particular, many of us are keen for the Home Office to work more collaboratively across central government with the Department

of Education and the Ministry of Justice on violence prevention, as we see many of the answers lying in the education system, for example, with better early identification and treatment for SEND. We anticipate it taking some time – perhaps not until the new year – for any more local funding settlement to become clear.

And so, our focus at this time is to continue to deliver the programme to completion while we await that clarity on what the future holds. Notably, we have two significant evaluation reports finalised, to be presented to VPP Strategy Board on 15 October prior to wider publication. These see significant impact from the Focused Deterrence trial and some encouraging results from the Schools Navigators mentoring programmes. I now ask you to take the learning from these reports, cascade across your local systems and consider these findings in future violence prevention/reduction initiatives. We can anticipate a further evaluation report from the Custody Coaches intervention after Christmas, together with other analysis/research products in coming weeks.

I am confident that by our next Quarterly Report in February next year we will have some greater clarity on the future resourcing and direction of the programme..

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
Fire Service Mentoring Pilot	Working with Berkshire Fire Service, Starting Point and Brighter Futures to develop mentoring initiative for those NEET	Berkshire (Reading)
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







▶ **1189**

Total individuals engaged since projects began

▶ **4067**

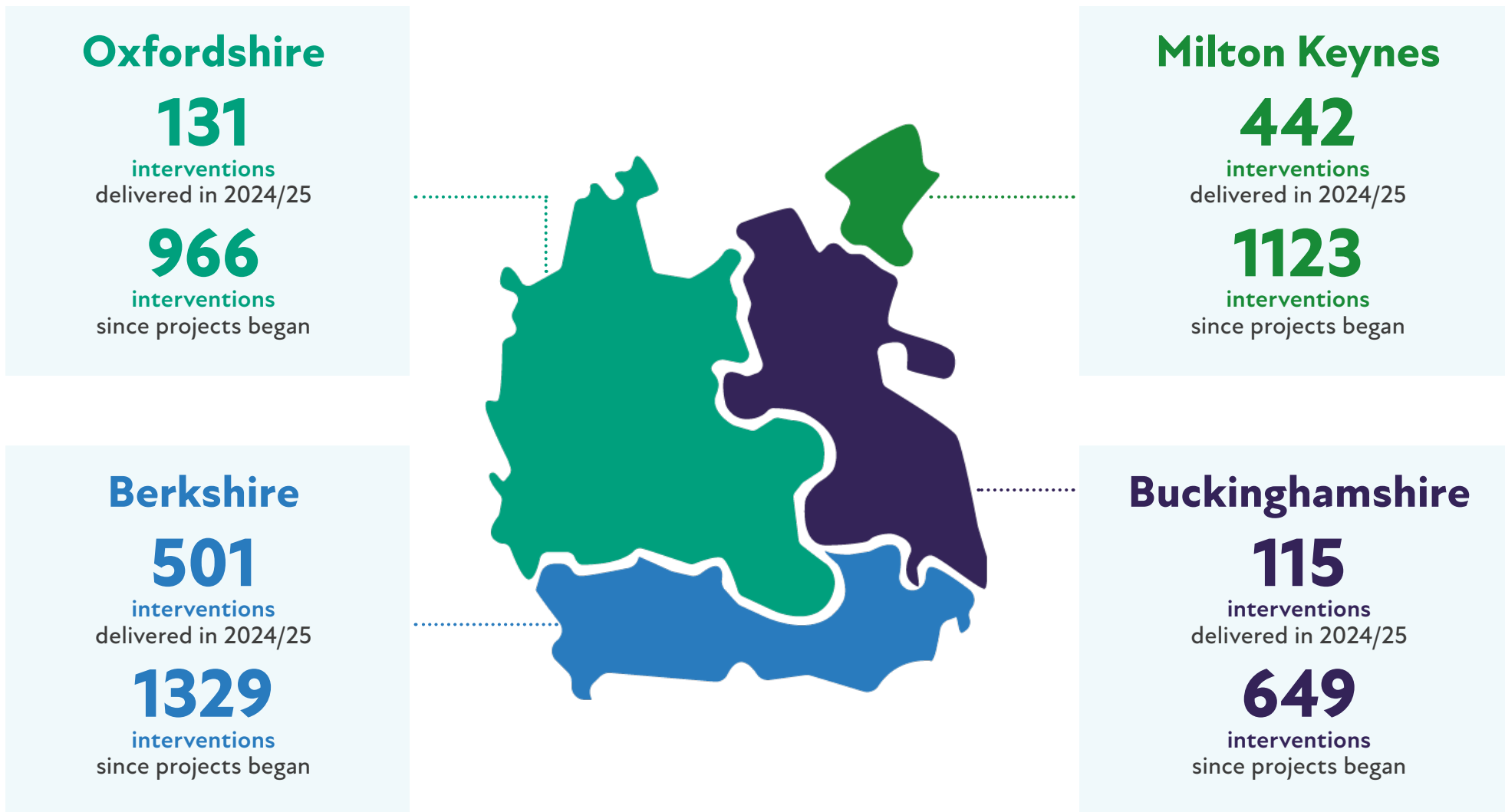
Total trained so far in 2024/2025

▶ **431**

Intervention	Delivery 2024/25	Since projects began
 Hospital Navigators	441	1605
 Custody Coaches	71	254
 Schools Navigators	228	432
<b>FD</b> Focused Deterrence	45	90
 Sports & Inclusion	328	328
 Operation Paramount	38	122
 Stay True to You	280	280

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



Note: Total interventions since all projects began includes count of interventions that we no longer deliver, such as Custody Navigators which ended in March 2023.

# VPP intervention updates

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





## Intervention update

# Hospital Navigators

Our longest running intervention, with five schemes running in five hospital sites.

Oxfordshire Youth has made a strong start to their new provision at 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)

In July, we wrote to all NHS ICBs that cover the Thames Valley, together with Directors of Public Health, sharing the Hospital Navigators evaluation report undertaken for us by Oxford Brookes University. We continue to engage with these local partners to explore opportunities to sustain the Hospital Navigator intervention where possible beyond March 2025.

By hospital site	Delivery 24/25	Delivery since project began
Milton Keynes	27	266
Buckinghamshire	70	524
Oxfordshire	33	106
Berkshire – Reading	56	215
Berkshire – Slough	255	567



## 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.

▶ **254**

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

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.

Individuals are offered the support either while still in custody or as a follow-up once they are released.

We have been running a randomised control trial since January 2024 which has now concluded after nine months as of September. A six month follow-up period will now pass until end of February 2025, at which point an analysis of the impact can be undertaken.

We wish to thank Paul Stewart of MK Dons Sports & Education Trust who has recently moved on from the role of Custody Coach, acknowledging his enthusiasm and commitment to supporting young people, particularly in their finding training and employment.

By custody suite	Delivery 24/25	Delivery since project began
Milton Keynes	14	54
Berkshire – Loddon Valley	25	108
Berkshire – Maidenhead	32	92





## Intervention update Schools Navigators

The Schools Navigator intervention ran across the last academic year September – July in four schools in Milton Keynes. For the academic year commencing September 2024, the scheme has expanded to operate in 11 schools.

We commission SOFEA, a local organisation working to support young people and provide alternative education. Their youth workers offer in-school mentoring sessions working with pupils at risk of suspension, with the aim of reducing the frequency or risk of additional exclusion by providing support.



At the end of summer term, we concluded our randomised control trial to allow for evaluation of the intervention after one full academic year. The analysis has been completed and a full evaluation report will shortly be published.

The impact was shown to be of benefit – with a reduction in suspension frequency and improvements in the student’s self-reported health and wellbeing scores.

**17.5%** lower suspension rate in suspended pupils in the terms following the term in which they were eligible for mentoring in the treatment schools compared to the control schools

**11.5%** lower overall suspension rate in treatment schools (including the treatment term) than in control schools

The scheme has now been re-commissioned from the start of September, but without any further trial and allowing for an expansion of the scheme to work in 11 schools in Milton Keynes.

**228** pupils have now benefited from the Schools Navigators this financial year

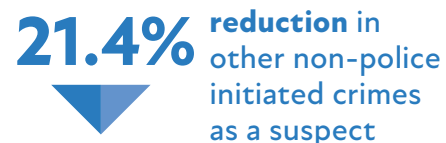
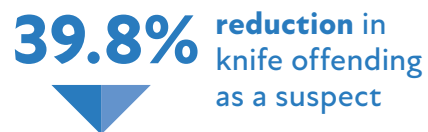
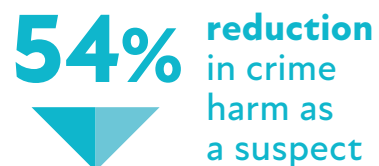
# FD Intervention update

## Focused Deterrence

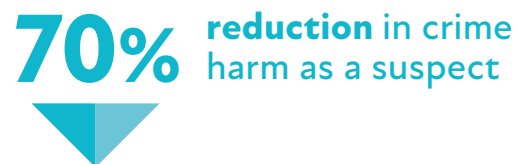
First launching in February 2023, this Milton Keynes partnership project targets those under 25 who habitually carry a weapon/knife and have also committed violent or sexual offences. Primarily implemented by the Milton Keynes Council’s Contextual Safeguarding Team, working with Thames Valley Police.

We are soon to publish our first full evaluation report on the Focused Deterrence intervention, presenting data from the first 12 months of the intervention and the Randomised Control Trial which has been running, measuring impact.

### Overall experimental findings – all age groups



### Sub-group analysis – only those in the 11-17 age group



#### Key to findings

▶ **Statistically significant** – less than 5% likelihood the finding was due to chance

▶ **Not statistically significant** – more than 5% likelihood the finding was due to chance, but collectively they show positive results



## 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

Over the last quarter we have continued to develop the network by supporting place-based partnerships to embed “Sport Plus” approaches within local authorities and community sports providers. Included in this is supporting Milton Keynes’ place-based expansion, led by Active Partnership, LEAP. Similarly, we have committed to recommissioning all six VPP-funded interventions for the remainder of the financial year.

We supported Get Berkshire Active and training provider, Mobile Team Challenge, to deliver an afternoon of networking and training with a mixture of staff from Achieving for Children and sports provider partners. They took the opportunity to brainstorm a collective and collaborative future for the program, how they could increase retention rates, identify new partners and provide necessary training.

As charity partners to Team GB and part of our Inspiration Campaign, we were able to offer a small number of organisations the opportunity to access some Team GB kit to give young people the opportunity to engage with Paris 2024. Young people have been provided full Team GB exercise clothing such as leggings, jumpers and coats.

Nationally, StreetGames has also organised eight online workshops for community sports providers to attend to support them in delivering secondary-level interventions. We hosted a free webinar exploring workforce competencies and skills for practitioners. This webinar builds on academic insight from criminal and youth justice work and family and youth work. It also incorporated learning from research and evaluation programmes carried out by Loughborough University and StreetGames to provide insight about the workforce competencies and skills needed for the effective development and delivery of a secondary level Sport-Based Intervention (SBI).

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 interventions have been funded by the VPP through to 31 March 2025. Alongside this, StreetGames are supporting an external referral pathway in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, funded by Thames Valley Police and the PCC Community Safety Fund, delivered by Get Berkshire Active, the counties Active Partnership.

The programmes continue to work with a growing number of participants, accessing additional support such as mentoring, education sessions and routes to qualifications and leadership opportunities.

Approximately 60 new individuals joined one of the provisions for the first time over the past quarter, with the seven projects having provided positive activities for over 300 young people. All interventions are committed to delivering their interventions as we look to making all provisions sustainable post March 2025.

Provider	Total Participants
Reading FC Community Trust	59
Street Games – Milton Keynes City Council	127
Street Games – Slough Borough Council	32
The Project PT – Oxford (over both provisions)	43
Wycombe Wanderers Sport & Education Trust	31
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>



## 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.

Thames Valley Police has now fully embedded the process in both Reading and Bracknell, undertaking visits to support families identified.

The national influence of the scheme has been demonstrated by Operation Paramount being cited in the Children (Parental Imprisonment) Bill. This is the first time recognition of and for children with a parent in prison has been proposed in Parliament. It was also included in Labour's Manifesto and we look forward to supporting government and Children Heard & Seen over the coming months.

2024/25	Number of young people supported
Oxfordshire	17
Buckinghamshire	14
Milton Keynes	1
Reading	5
West Berkshire	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>



## 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 website [StayTrueToYou.co.uk](https://StayTrueToYou.co.uk) continues to provide a hub for resources, hosting the original research insights, practitioner toolkit and workshop guide, posters and training dates.

We have continued to deliver training sessions for practitioners – with two new dates now available to book onto: 9.30am–12pm Wednesday 12 October, and 9.30am–12pm Tuesday 5 November. See the [website](#) to register.

At the September session run for parents, 100 people joined and feedback continues to be excellent. Another date has been arranged – 6.30pm–8.30pm on Monday 21 October.

**Over 280 people have either attended one of the BKT’s training sessions or have been trained via a VPP contribution elsewhere.**

We have developed a new hard-copy information booklet for parents/carers and the VPP is offering all local partnership areas with an initial print-run for distribution via community centres, children's services, etc. It is also on the [website](#) to download.

We are also about to post out to every secondary school Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead a pack of the Stay True to You resources, inviting them to engage with the intervention, offering training and workshops.

**SEND**

## Intervention update

# Developing a SEND school provision in Oxfordshire

The VPP funded the Orion Academy in Oxford to deliver a holiday project aimed at providing its students – all of whom have a range of special education needs (SEND) – with a range of engaging, enjoyable and inclusive activity days. Activities were designed to foster positive social interactions, support the development of communication skills and confidence and promote wider well-being.



38 students aged 11–16 took part in a wide range of activities. From fishing to bowling, paddle-boarding to cooking, the activities were all designed to challenge the young people to interact with each other and with staff, to build confidence, independence and communication skills.

The aim was to help the young people build relationships with each other, with staff that they would be working with when they returned to school in term-time, to build familiarity with the school and to maintain their sense of connection throughout the holiday time.

The programme culminated with a Family Fun Day which provided a unique opportunity for students and their families to connect with the school in a meaningful and supportive way. For many, it was an important opportunity to view the school as a positive and supportive space for their children's growth and development.

In addition to the immediate positive impact measured, we will be monitoring wider attendance, engagement and disciplinary records of those who attended.





## Intervention update

# Fire Service Mentoring Pilot

In partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Brighter Futures for Children services & Starting Point Mentoring for young people, we have now designed and collaboratively committed to a pilot initiative to provide mentoring to support young people with their engagement in education, training and employment aspirations.

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

The review's findings present evidence that interventions which deliver committed, problem-solving orientated mentoring have the greatest impact in encouraging young people to engage. We have then used these findings to help us design a 'NEET to EET Mentoring' intervention to be collaboratively delivered by our partners; Brighter Futures for Children, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Starting Point Mentoring for young people.

A pilot is due to commence, with the aim to recruit mentors and begin engagement of mentees. Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service will seek volunteers from its firefighters and staff, these will be trained and support by Starting Point. Brighter Futures will create the referral pathway for suitable young people.

The findings of the review conducted in June 2024 will be made available for wider partners as part of the VPP's 'What Works' series later this month.



# Wider programme activities updates

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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

# Joint working with the Department for Work and Pensions

SJ's secondment continues to strengthen joint working between DWP, HMPPS and Probation, taking a focus on how to support prison leavers into work, as a preventative factor.

SJ has ensured that the VPP's existing interventions benefit. Both Focused Deterrence in Milton Keynes and the Custody Coaches in Reading have a closer partnerships with their local DWP and Jobcentre colleagues, allowing them to better support young people.



**Sarah Harvey**

DWP Buckinghamshire, seconded to the VPP

Regular visits continue to the secure estate including HMP Bullingdon and Springhill. These events promote local employment opportunities, provide pre-release support sessions to explore aspirations and barriers and has led to DWP funding being secured for custody-based courses which will support employability through accredited qualifications pre-release. This also includes support for those who wish to become self-employed.

A new provider of a railway infrastructure course has been identified which will provide an employer-sponsored qualification, commencing in October. Other "Sector Based Work Academies" with sponsoring employers are being explored, run in prisons, Jobcentres and probation sites.

SJ has been working with Probation staff to build relationships and to support with DWP training. New opportunities are being generated to create partnerships with potential employers for those on probation.

Another innovation is the creation of new Prison Leave Work Coaches based in Jobcentres, who will be able to provide more specialist support to a claimant whilst they are on probation to help them re-enter employment.

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



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

## Programme activities update

# Welcome to Dr David Davies, Public Health Registrar

Dr David Davies is a Registrar with the Public Health team at Slough Borough Council. He joined the VPP in late August and will be working on projects exploring the intersection of serious violence and health across the Thames Valley region.

David's background as a medical doctor includes working as a psychiatrist in South East London before transitioning to Public Health.

David will focus on strengthening partnerships within health services, with a particular emphasis on education and training. His work will also examine areas such as SEND and prevention. He is already liaising with key stakeholders to advance these efforts.

David is keen to engage with health partners to enhance further collaboration. If you are interested in discussing potential partnerships or initiatives, please contact him at [david.davies@slough.gov.uk](mailto:david.davies@slough.gov.uk)



**Dr David Davies**

Public Health Registrar, seconded to the VPP

## Keep in touch

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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](mailto:vpp@thamesvalley.police.uk)



Our website has information on all our projects and evaluations. [www.tvvpp.co.uk](http://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.

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