

THAMES VALLEY

**VIOLENCE
PREVENTION**

PARTNERSHIP

Thames Valley
Violence Prevention
Partnership

Highlight Report

2024/2025 Q3
Oct/Nov/Dec

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Foreword

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

I am pleased to share with all our wider partners the latest VPP Quarterly Highlight Report covering the period of delivery between 1 October and 31 December 2024.

Yet at the point this publication reaches you in mid-February, we are but six weeks away from the year-end and what will mark the end of the current three-year VPP programme. As such, while I hope this report highlights some of the great work delivered over the past quarter, I also want to use this foreword to share our latest understanding of the landscape and direction for next year.

It is a time of significant change and uncertainty. Our sponsor unit in the Home Office has been working with new ministers and across wider government departments to respond to the new priorities of the new administration.

There is firm government commitment to the Safer Streets Mission set out in the manifesto, which includes a plan to halve knife crime and violence against women and girls within a decade.

In December, we received confirmation that the national VRU programme would be funded in 2025/2026 with £49.7m to continue with its strategic approach. However, a key component of the new approach is the new Young Futures Programme which will consist of two elements: The establishment of Young Futures Hubs and Young Futures Prevention Partnerships – both new structures to be established at the local level.

While we have played an active role in a number of consultation exercises, we still have not received any further information on any local funding allocation or guidance on how it is to be utilised or distributed.

We also understand that the Serious Violence Duty and its accompanying statutory guidance will be used as the mechanism to implement these changes, with refreshed guidance to be published which all local partnerships will need to respond to.



Jules Bottazzi

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

With regard the existing central programme of VPP activity, we have previously discussed at our VPP Strategy Board that current funded interventions will close on 31 March.

We have completed evaluations of some already (Hospital Navigators, Schools Navigators and Focused Deterrence) and will be completing further “What Works” evaluation reports by end of March. The publication of these reports are an important opportunity to share the evidence and use that to inform our collective approaches now and in the future.

We will look to local partnership structures to utilise that evidence base and to continue the ongoing sustainability discussions on continuing any of these intervention programmes which they may wish to maintain, for example, the Hospital Navigators programme.

Once we are in receipt of further clarity with regard grant funding and accompanying guidance, we will develop a VPP Delivery Plan for the VPP for 2025 – 2026. We anticipate putting forward some areas of investment and intervention activity take forward. These will draw upon our evaluations and our principles with regard early intervention, education, and diversion. And of course, we will discuss these with local partners at the earliest opportunity.

We will continue to use our VPP Strategy Board and the Community Safety Partnership Managers network to discuss our shared direction over coming weeks and months.

And finally, as we are at a point of change in our programme, I share that I will be leaving the role of Director of Strategy & Performance within the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner in April. An interim director will be recruited shortly and will be in place to take forward our programme of work on this matter; I will let you know who the successful candidate is in due course. I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved, often referenced by ministers and colleagues as “the best VPP in the country”.

I look forward to further discussions with partners at forthcoming meetings and will of course use our established structures to share further information as it is received.

With best wishes,

Jules Bottazzi



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
Ignite Mentoring Pilot	Working with Berkshire Fire Service, Starting Point and Brighter Futures for Children to develop mentoring initiative for those NEET	Berkshire (Reading)
Thames Valley Police MASH	Working with TVP's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to optimise processes and ways of working	All Thames Valley
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







▶ **3846**

Total individuals engaged since projects began

▶ **5668**

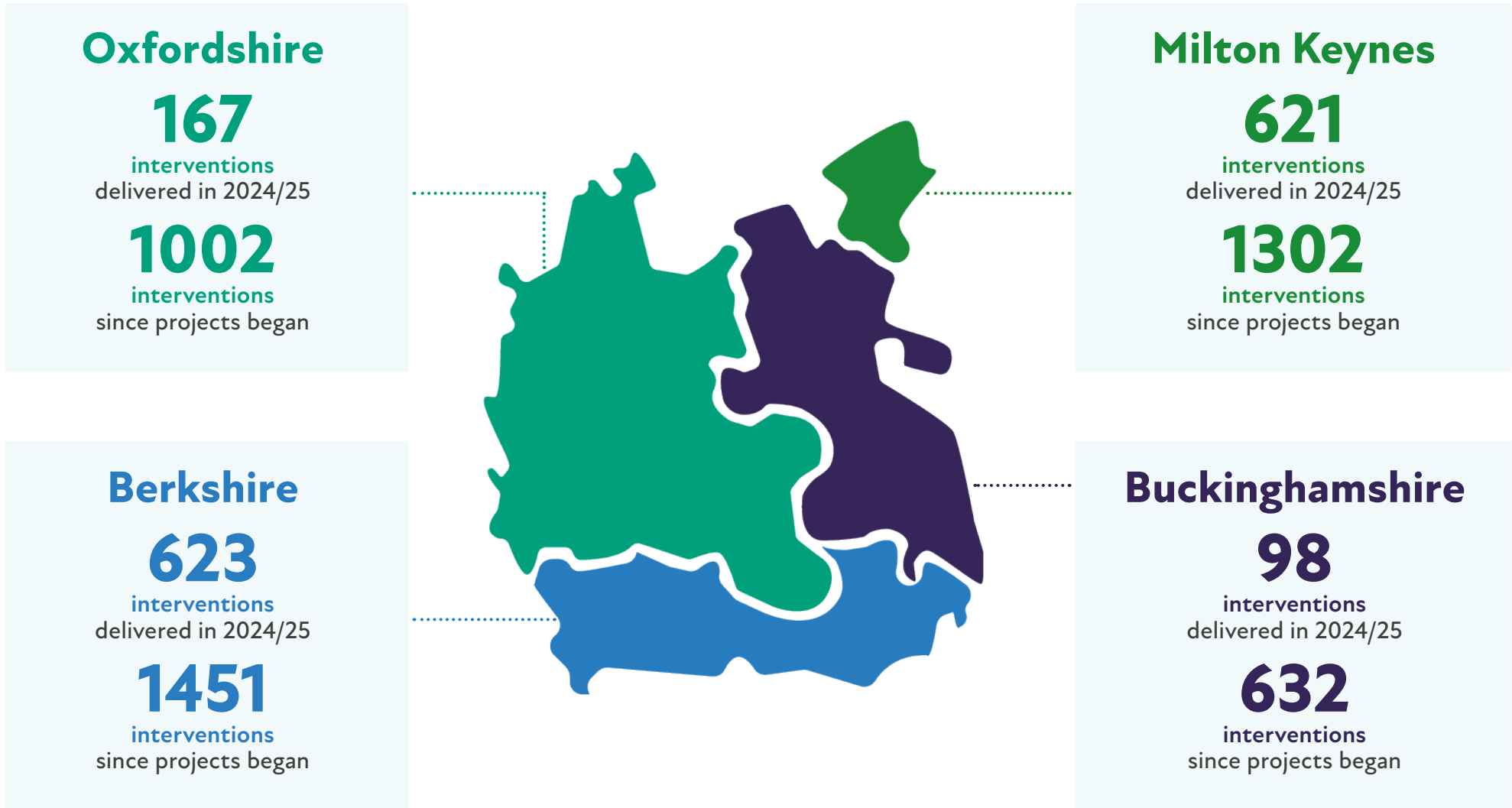
Total trained so far in 2024/2025

▶ **851**

Intervention	Delivery 2024/25	Since projects began
 Hospital Navigators	439	1695
 Custody Coaches	158	341
 Schools Navigators	336	540
FD Focused Deterrence	45	90
 Sports & Inclusion	425	425
 Operation Paramount	69	153
 Stay True to You	2374	2424

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. Does not include training numbers.

VPP intervention updates

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.

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)

There have been very positive discussions with regard the funding for the scheme at Wexham Park Hospital, and YMCA MK hope to be able to continue to deliver their scheme through use of local grants and other funding streams.

While there is no clarity yet, there is reference in the government's Safer Streets Mission to ED Navigator schemes, and this will be monitored closely as to whether there will be central funding for 2025-2026.

By hospital site	Delivery 24/25	Delivery since project began
Milton Keynes	41	280
Buckinghamshire	47	501
Oxfordshire	89	141
Berkshire – Reading	59	218
Berkshire – Slough	243	555



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 Reading FC Community Trust continue to work in two suites covering Berkshire. A scheme delivered by MK Dons has now completed and is no longer operational.

▶ **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.

Since the conclusion of the nine-month randomised control trial in September, a six month follow-up period is being observed until the end of February, at which point an analysis of the impact can be undertaken, with a full "What Works" evaluation report being published in March/April.

It has been decided that Custody Coaches as an intervention will cease at the end of March, with Reading Football Club Community Trust offering their mentoring until the end of February, to allow for any follow-up.

We would like to thank everyone at the Trust, particularly Richard, Paul and Keith for their incredible efforts to support young people, always looking to go the extra mile to make a difference.

By custody suite	Delivery 24/25	Delivery since project began
Milton Keynes	17	57
Berkshire – Loddon Valley	79	162
Berkshire – Maidenhead	62	122



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.



A "What Works" evaluation report was published and a partnership webinar held in early December to share the evidence. The report and a recording of the webinar is available via the [VPP website](#).

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

From the start of the new academic year in September, constraints on the delivery of the model due to the randomised control trial design were removed. The scheme was recommissioned, still working with SOFEA, but expanding across 11 schools to give increased benefit to more young people.

There have been very positive and ongoing discussions with school leaders in Milton Keynes on how to sustain the provision through local budgets when the VPP funding ends in March.

▶ 336 pupils have now benefited from the Schools Navigators this financial year

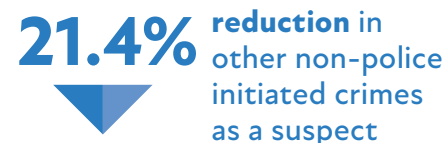
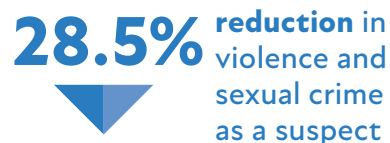
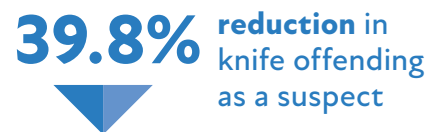
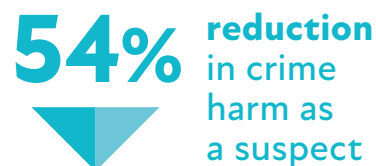
FD Intervention update Focused Deterrence

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.

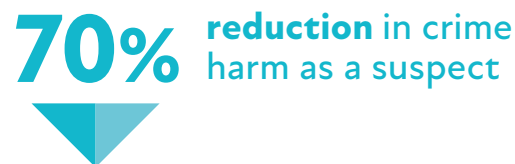
The full "What Works" evaluation report was published in November and a webinar held to discuss the findings. The report and a recording of the webinar are available on the [VPP website](#).

The intervention is no longer being delivered, but the VPP will explore if future grant funding can be secured to extend the initiative.

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

At a national level, Streetgames UK is involved in a new policy group, the Sport for Development Coalition. The group is working to develop the contribution that sports can make to the government's wider Safer Streets Mission.

More locally, StreetGames continues to work with partnerships particularly to help navigate the uncertainty as we approach year-end and without clarity on VPP funding.

In September, StreetGames published the [1,000 Voices research](#), based on insights from young people. The framework segments young people based on their desire to participate and the barriers they face in sport. StreetGames is now working with eight organisations to identify ways to engage each segment and improve access. This has included UDOIT Dance in Milton Keynes, working with those facing the highest barriers to participation, driven by low self-esteem and for some, mental health problems.

Work continues in partnership with Reading Borough Council to secure YEF funding by participating in a multi-site trial funded by the Positive Activities Fund. If successful this could secure £150k - £250k to the local area as part of the largest randomised control trial via sports interventions in the UK. Also in Reading, the University of Loughborough is working with Reading FC Community Trust to evaluate how sports volunteering contributes to a young person's engagement in education, training and employment. The study is working with the 18-25-year-old project funded by the VPP.

In Milton Keynes, StreetGames and the local partners are seeking to secure investment via Sports England to expand the VPP-funded MK Movers sports consortium with another "test and learn" project exploring participation amongst young people with complex vulnerabilities.

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 90 new individuals joined one of the provisions for the first time over the past quarter, with the seven projects having provided positive activities for nearly 430 young people since 2022/2023. All interventions are committed to delivering their interventions into 2025 as we continue to explore opportunities to sustain both the interventions and new place-based ways of working.

Provider	Total Participants
Reading FC Community Trust	83
Street Games – Milton Keynes City Council	176
Street Games – Slough Borough Council	33
The Project PT – Oxford (over both provisions)	51
Wycombe Wanderers Sport & Education Trust	31
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	51
Total	425



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 rolled out the process across the force area.

The VPP is undertaking two evaluations of the initiative which will be published. The first is a review of data provided by Oxfordshire County Council of a cohort of around 200 children who have been identified as having had a parent imprisoned, allowing for analysis of factors such as reliance on Free School Meals, school attendance, exclusions and other risk indicators. This will be the first analysis of its kind and will share insight into the broader impact of parental imprisonment.

The second evaluation is a wider "natural experiment", scrutinising the process, interviewing practitioners and parents, to provide a broader insight into the application and potential benefits of early recognition of children with a parent imprisoned, and support being offered.

2024/25	Number of young people supported
Oxfordshire	27
Buckinghamshire	20
Milton Keynes	6
Reading	12
West Berkshire	1
Bracknell	3
Total	69



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 continues to provide a hub for resources, hosting the original research insights, practitioner toolkit and workshop guide, posters and training dates.

During the past quarter, three further online training sessions were delivered for both parents and for practitioners, reaching a further 146 adults.

Working in Slough, commencing in October, we have commissioned local alternative education provider The Storry Group to deliver STTU assemblies in both primary and secondary schools. Using their dynamic team to engage young people they have explored the key themes of the approach, seeking to empower young people in their own decision making and to reach out to their trusted adults.

This model has helped delivery to young people directly, while also delivering training sessions for school staff/teachers.

In addition, an art project which draws inspiration from the previous Knife Angel visit to Slough has been delivered, with young people making their own pledge, working with the Stay True to You principles.

Over 2,000 young people have attended a school assembly exploring knife crime and the STTU principles this past quarter



Intervention update **Ignite Mentoring**

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 December, we published a “What Works” paper presenting a review of existing evidence in relation to mentoring schemes which support those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to engage with positive activities.

The findings have been used to design this new mentoring scheme, which has been branded Ignite Mentoring (although we hope no fires are started!).

Eight volunteer officers and staff from the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service have been trained by Starting Point Mentoring. They will be matched with eight young people referred by Brighter Futures for Children.

Vetting of mentors is underway and Starting Point have begun a "getting to know you" process with the eight young people to better understand their interests, needs and expectations as well as to identify any safeguarding matters.

It is hoped that in February, each will be matched to a mentor who best suits them, aiming to create an enduring relationship up to a year as required.

The Fire Service is covering all expenses for their staff and the refreshments of mentoring sessions. The VPP has funded Starting Point's training sessions and their ongoing support. It has also provided a £100 personal budget for each mentee to be used to fund activities as part of their mentoring sessions.

An evaluation will be undertaken to complement the previously published “What Works” paper.

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's core programme team has been working to support our widest partnership with the design and delivery of training products to help build local capacity.

The training team delivered child exploitation training to over 420 professionals over the past quarter, including sessions run in West Berkshire, Oxford, Banbury and High Wycombe. In early 2025 we will be delivering sessions in Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest.

These sessions explore emerging issues and trends in child exploitation, including child sexual exploitation, county drugs lines, modern slavery and online harm. By the end of the sessions, practitioners should feel confident to identify concerns in relation to exploitation and their role in supporting young people. We highlight the importance of partnership working and information sharing and have led some excellent discussions.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and everyone who has attended have stated they would recommend it to a colleague.

“Really useful course, good pace of delivery. Makes me think of specific children and what else we can do to support”

(Engagement manager at a school)

“Very interesting and informative, enjoyable course” (Social worker)

We have also commissioned the production of two videos aimed at parents to increase awareness of child exploitation and online harm. Thames Valley Police and OxfordHealth NHS Foundation Trust (CAMHS) have supported us in this work. Filming for the first video took place in December and should be finalised by early February 2025. A third video aimed at professionals on the subject of Professional Curiosity will also be released in the next quarter. These are in addition to the new training videos associated with the Stay True to You resource.

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.

Strong interest was shown by a group of inmates from HMP Bullingdon who attended an information session on completing a Personal Track Safety course which would enable employment with rail infrastructure employers. 11 of 12 eligible went on to complete the DWP-funded (one was transferred to a different prison) and SJ will work closely with them as they approach release to continue their training and find employment. The scheme is to be expanded to HMP Aylesbury and potentially also Springhill.

Improved links have been made between the VPP's Hospital Navigator schemes and local DWP contacts, strengthening the support offer with regard employability opportunities.

SJ continues to strengthen relationships with Probation, with local Job Centres, and to identify new potential employers who will support those vulnerable to violence and offending.

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



Sarah Harvey

DWP Buckinghamshire, seconded to the VPP



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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)

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