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SERIOUS VIOLENCE AND KNIFE CRIME

PARTICIPATION PACK

For professionals working with children and young people



About this guide



This participation pack has been developed to support those working with children and young people to engage them in discussions about serious violence and knife crime.

The toolkit is designed to help you spark meaningful conversations with young people by providing information on what serious violence is, resources, session plans, activities, and guidance on using these tools effectively.

You might consider using this pack if you work in the following:

- Participation Workers
- Youth Workers
- Teachers
- Support Workers
- Social Workers
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Local Authorities

We believe that as professionals who already have relationships with children and young people you are best placed to involve them in this conversation.

Why is it important to have conversations on serious violence and knife crime with young people?

Involving children and young people in discussions around serious violence and knife crime is crucial because they are often the most affected by these issues, either directly or indirectly.

By engaging them in meaningful conversations, we can empower them to better understand the risks, challenges, and consequences associated with such behaviours. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to make safer choices and positively influence their peers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Foreward

02

What is Serious Violence?

03

What is Participation?

04

Trauma Informed Engagement

05

Safeguarding

06

Resources

07

Data

08

Session Plan

What is Serious Violence?

What is serious violence?

Serious Violence includes offences which cause the most harm to our community and includes:

- Murder
- Attempt Murder
- Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH)
- Robbery
- Possession of Weapon
- Violent Disorder
- Riots (Public Order)
- Any Violence with Injury where a bladed item was used

There is no national definition of serious violence but Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton Violence Reduction Partnership have agreed on these as the most serious

What is the serious violence duty?

The Serious Violence Duty makes councils and local services work together to share information and identify activities to prevent and reduce serious violence.

It was introduced under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

What is Participation?



Young people's participation refers to the active involvement of young people in decision-making processes on issues that affect them. It is a process where children and young people are listened to and able to influence decisions about their lives which brings about change and gives them the opportunity to have a say in matters that affect them. Children and young people have a right to be involved about decisions that impact their lives, and their future.

Children and young people are at the heart of what we do at the Violence Reduction Partnership. We work to reduce serious violence in our communities and improve the lives of those living there. Participation gives those impacted the opportunity to shape and influence decisions that impact their lives.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child contains 52 standards that set out the Rights of a Child. Most countries including the United Kingdom have signed up to the convention. Many countries use the standards wholly or in part to promote children and young people's involvement. The standards of most relevance to the participation of children and young people are:

- Article 12: Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 13: Children and young people have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.
- Article 17: Children and young people have the right to receive, seek and give information.
- Article 23: Disabled children and young people have the right to active participation in their community.
- Article 2: Requires all of the rights in the convention on the Rights of the Child to be implemented for every child, without discrimination

Principles of Participation

- Ensure children and young people understand their rights
- It's their choice to be involved, don't force them to take part if they aren't comfortable and make sure they fully understand their involvement
- Make sure they fully understand how their views will be used
- Value all views
- Close the loop, how do you plan to feedback the outcomes of their views being shared.

Benefits and Barriers to participation

Benefits

- Build self confidence
- Empowerment
- Learning of new skills
- Connecting with other children and young people
- Opportunity to influence and have their voices heard

Barriers

- Lack of confidence
- Resources
- Time
- Availability

Trauma Informed Engagement.

Trauma-informed engagement means interacting with individuals, particularly those who have experienced trauma, in a way that is sensitive to the effects of that trauma. The goal is to create a safe and supportive environment that minimises the risk of re-traumatisation and promotes healing and empowerment.

Key principles of trauma-informed engagement include:

- ✓ **1. Safety:** Ensuring physical, emotional, and psychological safety for individuals is paramount. This includes creating environments where people feel secure and respected.
- ✓ **2. Trustworthiness and Transparency:** Building trust through clear communication and transparency in decision-making processes helps individuals feel secure and valued.
- ✓ **3. Peer Support:** Encouraging relationships that support healing, whether through professional support or community-based connections, recognises the importance of shared experiences in recovery.
- ✓ **4. Collaboration:** Acknowledging the importance of partnership, this principle promotes power-sharing and collaboration between service providers and individuals.
- ✓ **5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice:** Empowering individuals by honouring their autonomy and giving them a voice in their care or engagement helps in their recovery journey. This principle emphasises the importance of recognising and building on strengths.
- ✓ **6. Cultural Considerations:** Being mindful of and responsive to cultural, historical, and gender differences is essential in understanding the unique experiences of trauma survivors and ensuring that services are equitable and inclusive.

These principles underpin all aspects of the VRP's interventions and increase practitioners' awareness of how trauma can have long-term negative impacts on individuals and communities. All VRP interventions are designed in such a way to avoid re-traumatisation and address barriers caused by past trauma.



We ask you to take a trauma informed approach when using the activities in this pack. please consider your young people and how conversations about serious violence and knife crime may affect them.

Safeguarding.



In order to ensure the safeguarding of the young people taking part in the activities in this pack we ask you to consider the following:

- ✓ 1. Talk to young people about what confidentiality means and that you may need to share information onwards if there is a disclosure made.
- ✓ 2. Ensure young people understand the content of the activities and that if they wish they do not need to take part or can end their involvement if they are uncomfortable.
- ✓ 3. Consider having a trusted adult available during and after the activities for young people to talk to if they have any concerns or worries about the content of the activities
- ✓ 4. Get consent from the young people stating they are happy to take part in the activity
- ✓ 5. Familiarise yourself with your own organisation's safeguarding policy.

Below are details of local reporting processes and safeguarding resources that you may find helpful.

In an emergency always call 999

Hampshire

Concerns about a child

- phone [0300 555 1384](tel:03005551384) during office hours 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 4.30pm on Friday
- phone [0300 555 1373](tel:03005551373) at all other times to contact the Out of Hours service

Professionals should complete the [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\) for Hampshire](#) or the [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\) for Isle of Wight](#).

Southampton

Telephone number for members of the public: 023 8083 3004

Telephone number for professionals: 023 8083 2300

Email address: childrensresourceservice@southampton.gov.uk

Make a referral to child protection & safeguarding

When it's not an emergency situation but you are worried that a child may be at risk of abuse, harm or neglect, you can make a referral to us. You can do this whether you are a member of the public or a professional.

Online referral form

Portsmouth

You can contact the MASH during office hours on either:

02392 688793 or 0845 671 0271

Email: MASH@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

If it is during out of office hours (5pm – 8am weekdays, weekends and bank holidays) the number is: 03005 551373.

Portsmouth MASH details for professionals

Professionals who work with children in the city can contact MASH by telephone 0845 671 0271

Email MASH@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Isle of Wight

Telephone number: 0300 300 0117. This number is for the general public and runs 24 hours per day.

Professionals should complete the [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\) for Hampshire](#) or the [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\) for Isle of Wight](#).

Be aware that IOW Children's Services works in partnership with Hampshire County Council. This includes Hampshire County Council which provides MASH for the Isle of Wight and manages the complaints process.

NSPCC

The NSPCC Helpline service, is currently available 10am–8pm Monday to Friday.

Call on 0808 800 5000

Email help@nspcc.org.uk

Useful Websites.



The following websites contain further information and resources about serious violence and knife crime. You may wish to upskill your own knowledge around the subject or use resources to further engage children and young people in the topic. We hope you find them useful and informative.

Serious Violence Toolkit

The VRU have produced a serious violence toolkit to support all professionals who work with children, young people, adults and their families. The material is free to access and available to all practitioners from any agency/organisation in the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton areas.

[Click here to be taken to the toolkit](#)

Guide to having 'Honest Conversations'

Having honest conversations with people about knife crime and serious violence can be hard, the VRU have produced some guidance that you might find helpful.

[Click here to download the infographic.](#)

Social media and engagement campaigns

As a VRU we are working towards taking a partnership approach to communications and engagement. To support a coordinated approach to talking about serious violence and knife crime we have developed a campaigns page, a one stop shop to local and national campaigns around serious violence and knife crime.

[Click here to be taken to the VRU campaigns page](#)

Ben Kinsella Trust

The Ben Kinsella Trust is a charity that tackles knife crime through education and campaigning. There are lots of useful resources and information about knife crime on their website.

[Click here to be taken to the Ben Kinsella website](#)

#Not The One

The campaign is led by South Wales Police and the Wales Violence Prevention Unit with funding from the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. It is informed by the advice and experiences of children, young people, and education professionals and youth workers in South Wales.

[Click here to be taken to the #NotTheOne website](#)

Case Studies

Podcast Series "Knife Crime: Real Stories ,Real People ". Launched by the Ben Kinsella Trust " This series explores the personal accounts of individuals affected by knife violence, aiming to raise awareness about the severe impact of knife crime and inspire preventative measures.

[Click here to be taken to "Knife Crime: Real Stories, Real People"](#)

Fearless

Fearless enables young people to pass on information about crime 100% anonymously

[Click here to be taken to the Fearless website](#)

Safe 4 Me

This toolkit aims to support and assist education staff, partner agencies and CYP practitioners in their work with children, young people and families by providing information, advice and links to resources specific to knife crime

[Click here to be taken to the Safe4Me website](#)

Data

In the year March 2023-March 2024 Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton have seen...



1,286

**POLICE RECORDED KNIFE CRIMES
YEAR**

1%

**DECREASE IN POLICE RECORDED
KNIFE CRIMES**

4,966

SERIOUS VIOLENCE OFFENCES

2,239

**NUMBER OF POSSESSION OF
WEAPON OFFENCES**

3%

**DECREASE IN SERIOUS VIOLENCE
OFFENCES**

Each year the VRU produce a Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA). In this you will be able to see current picture of serious violence in the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS) area. It aims to help local partners identify people and groups most at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Outlining the current picture of serious violence across HIPS.

[Click here to download the current SNA](#)

Session Plans

Please note that these sessions are designed with young people in mind but the topic is serious violence and knife crime and some may find discussions hard. Please ensure participants know they don't have to take part and if they do choose to they can step away at any time. Please ensure you have considered all aspects of safeguarding by referring to page 8 and 9 of this pack before starting the activities.

Running the activities.

Each activity has its own session plan which you will find below. These session plans are a suggestions, please feel free to adapt them to best suit your audience.

Audience

The activities have been designed to be undertaken in a group where there two facilitators available and are best suited for young people over the age of 11. Maybe you are...

- Youth Groups
- School Councils
- Brownies or Scouts
- Schools
- Participation Groups

Time: 15-60 minutes.

Each activity is designed to take about 15 minutes and can be used independently of the others.

Resources:

Please use the resource pack to download resource for each activity.

Aim:

The session will take the group on a journey learning about what serious violence is, how communities are affected, myth busting around reasons people carry knives, places to get support and people who can help them.

Introduction -

Preparing for the activities



Time: 15 minutes

Aim: To introduce the sessions, set boundaries and prepare the young people to be at ease and in a place where they feel ready to reflect and talk openly. Please ensure you have considered all aspects of safeguarding by referring to page 8 and 9 of this pack before starting the activities.

Resources:

- None

Step one:

Introduce the group and explain the session

If you need an easy introduction or warm-up exercise, ask them to introduce themselves to the group and share something about themselves:

- *“Tell us all your name and... what film have you enjoyed watching recently?”*

Briefly explain the session. For example say something like:

- *“Today’s session we are going to discuss your views on serious violence – and what you think we can do to stay safe...”*
- *“And it’s going to be a discussion – with everyone encouraged to talk and share your thoughts.”*

Step two:

Set boundaries

It’s important to set out boundaries for the discussions so young people know what is acceptable and so they feel safe to participate. You’ll have your own ways, but consider:

- *“This is a totally open and non-judgemental discussion – and there aren’t really any right or wrong answers,*
- *“We must always respect each other – we’ve all had different experiences and we need to respect what others may have been through.”*
- *“We need to stick to time – so let’s stick to the questions at hand. I’ll let you know when we need to move on.”*

Activity One -

What is Serious Violence?



Time: 15 minutes

Aim: For children and young people to learn and understand what serious violence is. Please ensure you have considered all aspects of safeguarding by referring to page 8 and 9 of this pack before starting the activities.

Resources: - Download from page 17

- Serious Violence Flash Cards

Step 1

Flash Cards

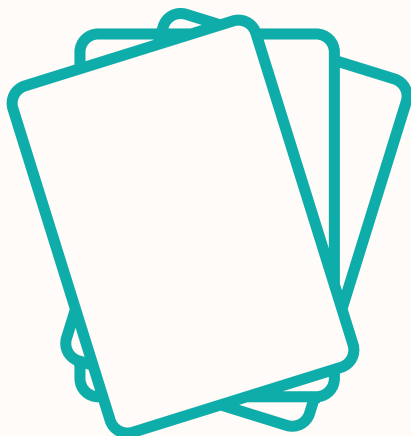
Using serious violence flash cards from the resource pack lay them out in the space you have and ask young people to categorise them as being or not being serious violence based on their knowledge.

Whilst the young people are doing this encourage conversation as to why they think what they do.

Tip - It is important to iterate that all the crimes on the card are illegal and by no means is one better than the other. The activity is looking for the ones that are classes as 'serious violence'

Prompt questions:

- What do you think serious violence is?



Step 2

Answers

Once the cards have been categorised go through each card by turn revealing if it is or isn't serious violence and encourage the young people to think about what this means and how it might impact them.

Tip - Young people tend to be surprised that arson and kidnapping aren't serious violence as they can tend to involve hurting people. This is because if someone is hurt during crime the perpetrator will be charged with two e.g arson and GBH.

Young people are also surprised that possession of a weapon is serious violence. This is due to the 'intent' behind carrying one. Unless you have good reason such as work, normally the reason for carrying one is negative.

Prompt questions:

- How does this make you feel?
- Are you surprised?

Activity Two -

Young people's experiences



Time: 15 minutes

Resources: - Download from page 17

- Flip chart paper
- Pens
- Useful websites infographic

Aim: For young people to think about their experiences of serious violence and how that may have made them feel, how it affects their community and where they could get support. Please ensure you have considered all aspects of safeguarding by referring to page 8 and 9 of this pack before starting the activities.

Step 1

When and where

Using the flip chart ask the children and young people to write down examples on when people may be affected by serious violence. Get them to think about real life occasions they may know about in their community e.g 'I know Tesco was robbed last week'

Prompt questions:

- What types of serious violence have there been in our community over the past month?
- Where do you hear/see things that are going on in our community?
- Where does most of the serious violence happen in our community?

Step 2

Support

Using the other side of the flip chart paper ask the young people to write down places they know about where children and young people can get support for serious violence.

We have provided a useful website infographic to give you some ideas of support available.

Prompt questions:

- What sort of support do people who are affected by serious violence need?
- What services are available to support people affected by serious violence in our community?
- What support do those causing serious violence need?
- How do people access these support services?



Activity Three -

Knife Crime Truth or Lie



Time: 15 minutes

Aim: To bust myths around serious violence and for the young people to feel confident and empowered advocating the truth about the topic. Please ensure you have considered all aspects of safeguarding by referring to page 8 and 9 of this pack before starting the activities.

Resources: - Download from page 17

- Knife Crime Truth or lie questions

Step 1

Truth or lie

Ask the young people to stand in the middle of the room labelling one side 'truth' and the other 'lie'. Read out each card and ask the young people to move to the side of the room they think is relevant for the statement you have read out.

Once each young person has chosen give them the correct answer. Allow the young people to discuss their thought on each one

NB please use the cards in the best way for your group. If doing the activity sitting down would work better. Use your own creative discretion.

Prompt questions:

- Why did you think that one was a "truth/lie"?
- Were you surprised?

Step 2

Speaking out

As a group discuss who young people might tell if they were worried about someone carrying a knife or involved in serious violence

Prompt questions:

- Who might you be able to turn to when you're concerned about your – or maybe a friend's – safety?"
- "If you don't feel comfortable talking to your parent or carer – who else is there that you could speak to?"



Wash-up

Checking in



Time: 5 minutes

Aim: To check in with young people, find out how they found the session, and if they need any support.

Step 1

Considerations for you:

- Have you checked in with the young people?
- How are they feeling?
- Were there any concerns you need to share onwards?
- Do you need to complete a Community Partnership Information (CPI) form?
- What is your role in this - visit our Serious Violence Toolkit.
- What are your next steps - do you need to -run another session / share more resources?

Step 2

Considerations for the young people:

- How are they feeling?
- Do they need further support/ conversations around any concerns?
- Do they have any other questions they need answering?

Resources for you

Click the links below:

- [VRP Serious Violence toolkit](#)
- [Community Partnership Information \(CPI\) form](#)
- [Ben Kinsella Trust - practitioners resources](#)

Please refer to our resources page for more information and support



Activity

Resource Pack

Below you will find the resources you need for each activity. Please download and print in preparation for doing the activities. Please feel free to create your own resources to support the activities.

Please click the links below to download the resources:

01

Serious violence flash cards

02

Useful websites infographic

03

Knife Crime Truth or lie questions

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for taking the time to involve your young people in this important conversation.

Below are a few ways you can keep in touch with the VRP.

Useful Resources



[Violence Reduction Unit Website](#)

LinkedIn



[Hampshire and Isle of Wight Violence Reduction Partnership](#)

Instagram



[@hips_vrp](#)

Newsletter



[VRP Newsletter](#)

If you have any questions about this pack please get in touch with the team at: VRU@hampshire.police.uk