

**Subject: Home Office consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence**

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**Executive Summary**

On 1 April, the Home Office launched a consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. Consultees are asked to consider three options which are set out below.

The consultation document stresses that a successful approach to tackling serious violence will depend on a coherent and effective multi-agency response to tackling and preventing harm. In Wiltshire, the strength of our local partnerships has meant we are already working innovatively across agencies to ensure a public health approach to tackling violent crime, led by the Community Safety Partnership.

The strength of our collective response to violent crime is demonstrated in our draft response to this consultation, which is included below for the consideration of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

**Proposal(s)**

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Supports the draft response to the Home Office consultation included below
- ii) Recognises the ambitious and forward-looking nature of our approach to ensuring that our partnership working is effective
- iii) Agrees that, by developing our own local response, we will be able to ensure our system meets local needs and that it uses our combined resources intelligently
- iv) Asks the Community Safety Partnership and the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) to keep the Health and Wellbeing Board informed work which enables a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence

**Reason for Proposal**

The consultation sights Health and Wellbeing Boards as an example of multi-agency working arrangements which have a significant role to play in preventing and tackling violence, in collaboration with Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and other local partners. It is therefore essential to the work of both the CSP and the SVPP that the HWB supports this response to the consultation.

**Tracy Daszkiewicz**  
**Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and Director of Public Health**  
**Wiltshire Council**

**23 May 2019**

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### **Purpose of Report**

To brief the Health and Wellbeing Board on:

- Home Office consultation to introduce new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence

### **Background**

- The consultation opened on 1 April 2019 and closes on 28 May.
- It highlights the Government's support of a multi-agency or 'public health' approach to tackling serious violence through the introduction of a new legal duty.
- The consultation document stresses the importance of a multi-agency approach, and early intervention.
- All options support a 'public health' approach to tackling violent crime, involving:
  - o Different organisations working together through (existing) partnerships to prevent and tackle serious violence as a priority.
  - o Consulting with communities, especially those most affected, and young people.
  - o Regular sharing of data and intelligence, to prevent and tackle serious violence and to identify those most at risk of becoming affected.
  - o Using that information to develop a programme of early interventions.
  - o Partnerships un-constrained by organisational, professional or geographical boundaries.
  - o Partners working together to agree joint funding for services.
  - o Using evidence including relevant evaluations to inform decision-making.
  - o Organisations being held accountable for their work on serious violence, e.g. inspections or joint inspections.

### **What options are being consulted on?**

- **Option 1: New duty on specific organisations to have due regard to the prevention and tackling of serious violence.**
  - o A new legal duty under primary legislation for specific organisations (including Local Authorities, senior criminal justice figures, education, child care, health and social care and the police) to be focussed on and accountable for preventing and tackling serious violence.
  - o Each body would decide how they would comply with this, alongside government guidance.
  - o An assessment of cost implications is requested as part of this consultation but the lack of detail around any potential changes would make completing an assessment extremely difficult.
  - o It is suggested that the relevant inspectorates covering the organisations subject to the duty or joint inspections may be able to check how far agencies are complying with the new duty, or, in respect of democratically elected authorities, held to account by their electorates.

- Option 1 is the Government's preferred option however it is recognised that in some areas strong and effective partnerships already exist.
- **Option 2: New duty through legislation to revise Community Safety Partnerships**
  - New legislation to ensure CSPs have a strategy for preventing and tackling serious violence.
  - Statutory CSP membership would be inclusive of all the relevant agencies who work to tackle and prevent serious violence. This would commit a greater range and number of agencies to be involved in the work of CSPs.
- **Option 3: A voluntary non-legislative approach**
  - To encourage areas to adopt voluntary measures to take part in a multi-agency approach, rather than a statutory duty.
  - The Government would facilitate the sharing of best practice and provide guidance.
  - The success of this option relies on someone taking a leadership role to drive this work and bring partners together.

## **Wiltshire's Draft Response**

### **Response to the Serious Violence Legal Duty Consultation tendered on behalf of Wiltshire's Community Safety Partnership**

In Wiltshire, we are developing a local public health approach to tackling violent crime in our county. That approach and our response to this consultation has been considered in partnership. Our response to this consultation, as set out below, has been collated from the feedback of the Community Safety Partnership members and wider multi-agency forums.

A full list of agencies whose views are represented here is included below and this response is submitted on behalf of the Partnership. In light of our decision to reply as a partnership, Parts 1 and 2 of the consultation do not apply. In relation to other questions posed:

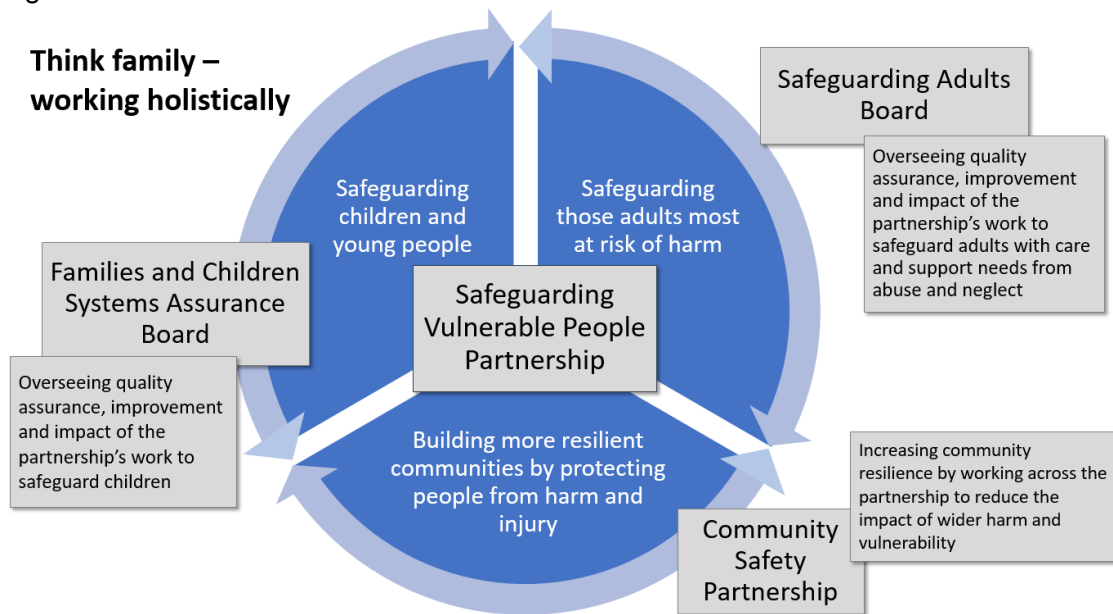
Part 3, 8-14:

In Wiltshire, we have spent the last two years ensuring that our partnership arrangements will allow us to work effectively across agendas. This work supports our belief that:

*Children, young people and adults live in families and local communities; these can be sources of support and safety or of danger and risk. Our approach to safeguarding and protecting our community is focused around where people live and with whom – it's an approach which has 'Think Family, Think Community' at its heart.*

Our partnership arrangements work as set out below (Figure 1). It involves a strong component of independent scrutiny and is aided by one support team, funded by the partnership. As part of the Department of Education's Early Adopter Programme, we stood down our Local Safeguarding Children Board and instead constructed a Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership. This partnership group brings together those who lead Wiltshire's services to safeguard children, young people and adults and to improve community safety.

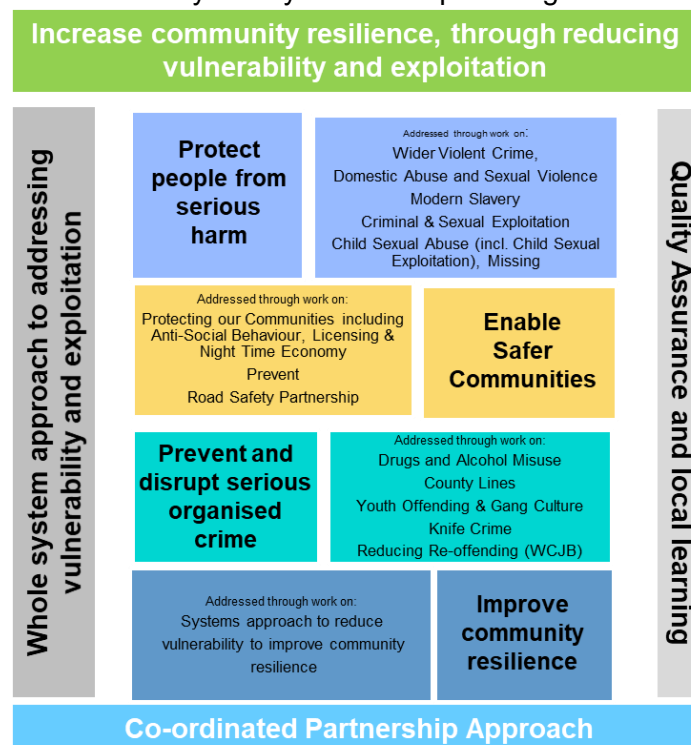
Figure 1.



The strength of our Community Safety Partnership, alongside our Local Safeguarding Adults Board and our new Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership, is allowing us to work innovatively to prevent harm and reduce the likelihood and impact of violent crime.

The strategic framework presented in figure 2 (below) identifies the thematic priorities for the Community Safety Partnership. The work governed and delivered through the partnership is underpinned by the adoption of the vulnerability framework. This approach focuses on 'prevention' and tackling root causes, reducing the risks and exposure to negative experiences from happening in the first place. Acknowledging there will be occasions where 'it will happen', work will seek to improve resilience, to enable both individuals and communities to be better equipped and skilled to deal with adversity and make healthier life choices.

Figure 2. Wiltshire's Community Safety Partnership Strategic Framework



These strong partnership arrangements will allow us to deliver on our commitment to developing a local public health approach to reducing serious violent crime. Wiltshire has established a Violent Crime Executive, a sub group of the Community Safety Partnership. This brings together colleagues from education, policing, health, criminal justice and emergency justice to deliver pan-Wiltshire, multi-agency strategies to tackle violent crime and Serious and Organised Crime (SOC).

Operationally we have two Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) - one that accommodates a team of staff from across agencies to focus on safeguarding children and young people, and a second which was recently introduced to allow us to better safeguard adults at risk. Alongside these hubs we are pooling multi-agency data to inform our new Vulnerable Adolescent Safeguarding Panel and to collect intelligence on a vulnerability tracker which maps those young people most at risk. Alongside MASH arrangements, we are now part of the Contextual Safeguarding Scale-Up Project (CSSU) by the University of Bedfordshire. We we're one of a small number of areas who have been successful in our bid to be a development site. The CSSU Project will create an operational Contextual Safeguarding system in Wiltshire.

The drive and impetus of our work across agencies demonstrates the strength of our partnership and of our determination, not just to respond to, but to prevent violent crime.

The intention set out at option 1 is to ensure information and intelligence sharing and to ensure that all agencies have due regard for our need to work collectively to prevent violent crime. We support the wider intention of this option. However, we would urge against the introduction of prescriptive guidance on how partners should work together, which would potentially deflect from the work we are already doing by introducing greater complexity and bureaucratic burden. Whilst Alan Wood's review focused on the effectiveness of LSCBs, his comments are highly relevant in considering how we respond as a collective to violent crime:

[“...on a scale of prescriptive to permissive arrangements, the pendulum has locked itself too close to a belief that we should say how things should be done as opposed to what outcomes we want for children and young people..... Too much of practice leaders' time is taken up in servicing the architecture of multi-agency arrangements. Examples given by Police and Crime Commissioners and other leaders show that the wide range of Boards, Committees and other bodies established to consider similar issues as the LSCB, compounds a growing demand on officers to attend meetings and produce reports.”](#)

(Woods Review, 2016)

At this stage in the development of our local response, we are keen to ensure that we have flexibility and are not locked into new, and potentially prescriptive and costly, multi-agency duties that make our existing and evolving arrangements less effective.

For us, the introduction of new legal duties has the potential to detract from the fact that prevention of violent crime cannot be done in isolation - that means that we have to work as a partnership but also that we cannot identify, respond to or prevent violent crime without regarding it as connected to our work to safeguard children and adults, and make our communities more resilient.

We do though acknowledge that it is pivotal for all agencies to understand, accept and wholeheartedly play their part in helping to tackle violent crime. To ensure that practice reflects this reality, we would recommend that new statutory guidance commits Community Safety Partnerships to reporting on an annual basis to evidence effective partnership working to reduce serious violent crime.

We would ask that:

- Community Safety Partnerships submit an annual report evidencing local work to evidence the multi-agency response to tackling serious violent crime.
- In this report, all localities are asked to evidence connectivity between their statutory partnership arrangements - to safeguard adults, children and to improve community safety.
- That all agencies that form part of the Community Safety Partnership are, by statute, asked to share information and intelligence where this enables the partnership to undertake work to prevent serious violent crime in the future.

## **Funding and resources**

In relation to Part 4 questions 4-29, it is not believed that the recommendations we have made above would have significant cost implications, but it is essential that Community Safety Partnership are resourced to carry out new functions. In the case of LSABs and new partnership arrangements to safeguarding children, local partners have been asked to agree and meet any funding requirements. It should be recognised this detracts from the focus of partnership work, often leads to one agency having primacy in terms of ownership and can weaken the support for essential work to strengthen local multi-agency work and training.

A relatively small amount of Early Adopters funding has allowed us to recruit a Criminal Exploitation Pathways & Risk Analyst to triangulate and analyse data from across our partner agencies to inform and support the introduction of our multi-agency Vulnerable Adolescents Contextual Safeguarding Panel. The panel is ensuring multi-agency information and intelligence is gathered and shared to identify children and young people who are vulnerable to exploitation. As a consequence, we are now able to map hotspots, trends and risks in missing episodes, identify victim and perpetrator information and target criminal activity involving children, including County Lines. This informs the work of the partnership and supports development of strategy and an operational response.

Funding, alongside statutory guidance, is required to enable effective and intelligent data sharing and analysis. Well targeted resources will be vital to ensuring that the concept of taking a public health approach to tackling violent crime makes a difference, not just a policy position.

We would add that the cost implications of Option 1 are potentially far more significant. That cost would be borne by not only by those agencies with new legal duties, Local Authorities, health agencies and schools, but by the police in supporting those agencies and facilitating new reporting mechanisms. Meanwhile in Wiltshire, effective reporting mechanisms already exist across agencies.

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