

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Strategic Needs Assessment on Serious Violence

A public health approach in response to
the Serious Violence Duty

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*On behalf of the Violence Prevention
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Please note, data has been shared for the purpose of the strategic needs assessment, and any further data sharing should be confirmed with the source prior to sharing further.

Specified authorities:

Cardiff Council
Vale of Glamorgan Council
South Wales Police
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Cardiff Youth Justice Service
Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Service
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Probation Services
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Relevant authorities:

Education (Cardiff Council)
Education (Vale of Glamorgan Council)
Prison services (including HMP Cardiff)
Youth Custody services

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This version of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Strategic Needs Assessment for violence and Serious violence (2023) is the first iteration, and therefore is likely to evolve over time. Due to limitations in timescales and availability, a pragmatic approach to this first iteration was taken, where a predominant focus on crimes categorised as Serious violence was followed. However, it is recognised that there is a significant danger in having a focus only on Serious Violence, because experience tells us that violent actions often accelerate over time.

“It is important to acknowledge that all levels of violence not just those acts defined as ‘serious’, have an impact on our communities. What could be described as ‘lower level’ acts of violence are known to be a precursor to more serious acts of violence in the future. Therefore, it is imperative that we tackle all manifestations of violence, in order to prevent this escalation from happening.”

South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, 2023

When the UK Government declared its intention to make provision for a Serious Violence Duty, the point was made strongly in Wales that there should be a focus on all types of violence. Whilst this document does touch on risk and preventative factors, and other types of violence such as school-related violence, this document should be used in conjunction with other products produced for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan to build the picture of violence overall.

Contents

Acronyms, List of Figures and List of Tables	4-5
Executive summary	6-10
Section 1 – Introduction, Background, Scope and Aims	11 - 13
Section 2 - Methods	14 - 16
Section 3 – National picture of serious violence in England and Wales	17-22
3.1 – 3.2 – The criminal justice service in England and Wales	17
3.3 – How serious violence in England and Wales has changed over time	17 – 19
3.3.1 – The current picture of serious violence in South Wales	20
3.4 – Demographics for serious violence in England and Wales	21 - 22
Section 4 – Current picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	23 - 53
4.1 – Overview and demographics of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	23 - 24
4.2 – The criminal justice service in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	25
4.3 – Types of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	26 – 32
4.3.1.1 – <i>Homicide</i>	28
4.3.2.1 – <i>Knife crime</i>	29 – 30
4.3.2.2 – <i>Gun crime</i>	30
4.3.3.1 – <i>County Lines</i>	31
4.3.3.2 – <i>Gang violence</i>	31 – 32
4.4 – When serious violence is happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	33
4.5 – Demographics for serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	34 - 39
4.5.1 – <i>Age</i>	34 – 36
4.5.2 – <i>Ethnicity</i>	36 – 37
4.5.3 – <i>Sex</i>	37 – 38
4.5.4 – <i>Relationship of attacker</i>	38
4.5.5 – <i>Assault on public sector workers</i>	39
4.6 – Wider effects of serious violence on communities Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	40 – 41
4.7 – Where serious violence is happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	42 - 46
4.7.3.1 – <i>Supported living accommodation</i>	43
4.7.3.2 – <i>Train network</i>	43 - 44
4.7.3.3 – <i>School-related violence</i>	44 – 46
4.8 – The causes of serious violence (Risk and Protective factors)	47 – 53
4.8.3 – <i>Local professionals’ opinions on why violence is occurring</i>	51 - 53
Section 5 – How serious violence is being addressed in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	54 – 58
5.1 – Current use of criminal justice system	54 – 55
5.2 – Current use of other services related to violence	55 – 56
5.3 – Examples of current services	57 - 58
Section 6 – What should be done to address serious violence	59 – 66
6.1 – Published literature on evidence-based approach to serious violence	59
6.2 – Examples of serious violence interventions from other areas	60
6.3 – Evidence on what should be done in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	61 – 64
6.4 – Barriers and challenges to tackling and preventing serious violence	65 - 66
Section 7 – Summary, strengths and limitations and conclusion	67 - 69
Section 8 - Recommendations	70 – 71
References	72 – 79
Appendix 1 – List of multi-agency partners involved in the needs assessment	80
Appendix 2 – Structure of the criminal justice system in Wales	81 – 83
Appendix 3 – Risk and protective factor prevalence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	84 – 86
Appendix 4 - Additional qualitative findings from local professionals	87 - 90

Acronyms

ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences
BCU	Basic Command Unit
CVRPB	Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board
CVUHB	Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
CSEW	Crime Survey for England and Wales
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
ED	Emergency Department
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PCSC Act	Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act
SNA	Strategic Needs Assessment
SWFRS	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
SWP	South Wales Police
UHW	University Hospital of Wales, Heath, Cardiff
UK	United Kingdom
VAWDASV	Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
VPP	Violence Prevention Portal
VPU	Violence Prevention Unit
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIMD	Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Figures

		Pg
Figure 1	The WHO four-step model in how to approach violence (WHO 2023)	14
Figure 2	Population pyramid for victims by age and sex (Home Office 2022)	22
Figure 3	Proportion of emergency department attendances by weapon used (VPP 2023c)	28
Figure 4	Police reported number of possession of article with a blade (VPP 2023a)	29
Figure 5	Maps of rate of Violence Against the Person offences by season (VPP 2023a)	33
Figure 6	Violence Against the Person offences by age of suspect (VPP 2023b)	34
Figure 7	UHW Emergency department assault attendances by month and age (VPP 2023c)	35
Figure 8	UHW Emergency department knife/sharp blade assault attendance (VPP 2023c)	37
Figure 9	Key concepts on the effects of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	40
Figure 10	Type of location where assaults occurred in Cardiff (King P 2023a)	42
Figure 11	Trend of fixed term school exclusions in Cardiff (Cardiff Council 2023)	44
Figure 12	Trend of permanent school exclusions in Cardiff (Cardiff Council 2023)	45
Figure 13	The 12 domains of adverse childhood experiences (Public Health Wales 2015)	47
Figure 14	Individual risk factors for youth violence (WHO 2015)	48
Figure 15	Community and societal risk factors for youth violence (WHO 2015)	48
Figure 16	Relationship risk factors for youth violence (WHO 2015)	49
Figure 17	The wheel of intersectionality power and privilege (Duckworth S 2023)	50
Figure 18	Key concepts on the causes of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	51
Figure 19	Patient outcomes from the Violence Prevention Team (CVUHB 2022)	55
Figure 20	Examples of projects and work to tackle serious violence in Cardiff and Vale	57
Figure 21	Key concepts on what should be done to tackle serious violence	61
Figure 22	Key concepts on what should be done to prevent serious violence	63
Figure 23	Key concepts on barriers and challenges to tackling serious violence	65

Tables

		Page
Table 1	Mid-year population estimates from Census 2021 data by age group (ONS 2023a)	23
Table 2	Sex and gender identity from Census 2021 data (ONS 2023b)	24
Table 3	Service providers in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan	25
Table 4	Most frequently recorded Violence Against the Person offences (VPP 2023a)	27
Table 5	Number of assaults on emergency workers (King P 2023a; 2023b)	39

Executive summary

This report provides a strategic needs assessment of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. It is designed for strategic use by specified authorities of the Serious Violence Duty (the Duty) and partners. Principally, the findings from this strategic needs assessment will be used to inform the development of local strategic delivery plans in Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, to be implemented by January 2024 as a requirement of the Duty.

Background

Serious Violence is a significant criminal justice and public health problem which can have a devastating impact on individuals, communities and the wider population and society. In 2018, the UK Government's Serious Violence Strategy highlighted the importance of making serious violence a key area of focus across different sectors, promoting local multi-agency response to reducing serious violence in their area (HM Government 2018). Following the strategy, legislation has been introduced through the Serious Violence Duty (the Duty), under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (PCSC Act) 2022 (UK Government 2022) requiring local partners across different sectors to come together and co-operate in developing both strategic needs assessments and bespoke local strategic delivery plans to target interventions based on local need.

Scope

This strategic needs assessment covers the local authority areas of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. The purpose of the strategic needs assessment is to provide evidence and information on serious violence affecting Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan to provide a baseline assessment of serious violence in the area.

Serious violence was not defined by the Duty, to allow for local areas to tailor the needs assessment and subsequent strategic delivery plans based on local needs. For this needs assessment, partners agreed to include specific sections on knife crime, gun crime, homicide, county lines and exploitation, gang and public space youth violence, and any other emerging themes. Domestic abuse is not excluded, but not covered in detail due to a separate local strategy (Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan 2018).

Aims of the strategic needs assessment

1. To provide an overview of the evidence relating to serious violence, including the policy and strategic context
2. To provide a baseline assessment (current picture) of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, with epidemiology and views from local professionals
3. To provide a strategic assessment of need relating to serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, with recommendations to inform local strategy development in line with the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty

Methods

A public health approach to the needs assessment has been completed, in consideration of the World Health Organisation four-step public health approach to violence (WHO 2023). Data were collated through an epidemiological, comparative and corporate approach using routine and bespoke data sources, needs assessments and key documents from other areas, and engagement with local professionals through a series of workshops.

Key findings

What types of serious violence offences are occurring in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

- Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan have comparatively lower levels of serious violence compared to some other areas in England and Wales, but serious violence remains an area of focus.
- Most Violence against person offences were for Violence without injury or stalking and harassment offences, with Violence with injury reported to police 3716 times in Cardiff and 890 times in Vale of Glamorgan to year end September 2022 (Violence Prevention Portal (VPP) 2023a).
- Most violence with injury offences leading to attendance to University Hospital of Wales (UHW) Emergency department were due to assault from a fist or blunt objects. Knife or bladed/sharp objects were more commonly reported than gun crime with 68 attendances for knife or bladed/sharp object assaults to year ending September 2022 (VPP 2023c).
- Local professionals perceived knife crime, in particular weapon carrying, to be a significant issue in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan but felt that there were some misperceptions around the level of knife carrying perceived to be higher compared to the true picture.
- Gun crime and homicide were reported in small numbers but the wide-reaching 'ripple effect' on communities for these crimes was recognised.
- Exploitation including County Lines and Gang violence are perceived to be relatively less prevalent than some other areas in the UK but are difficult to quantify. Local professionals reported that they remain a concern, particularly County Lines and potential links to the train network.

Who is involved in serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

- In-keeping with national figures for England and Wales (Ministry of Justice 2021x), most suspects for serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are aged 30-39-years-old, male and White British (VPP 2023b).
- Victims were more likely to be younger (Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2022x) with most UHW Emergency department attendances for assault in 2022 in the 20-24-year-old age category (VPP 2023c).
- Local professionals reported an overall perception that children are first becoming involved with violence at a younger age, a finding consistent with findings in the UK Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government 2018).
- As with national data for England and Wales (Ministry of Justice 2021), ethnicities other than White British were over-represented in the offending population (VPP 2023b) compared to the population demography overall (ONS 2023c), but these were not adjusted for other factors such as deprivation.
- The proportion of male offenders and victims was higher than females (VPP 2023b; 2023c). However, local professionals did perceive that an increase in girls being involved in violent offences was being observed locally with more data required to explore this further.
- Local professionals reported that serious violence has a wide impact on communities in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

Where is serious violence happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

- Supported living accommodation, the train network and school-related violence were all raised as perceived areas of concern by local professionals. Geographical data on violence hotspots has been reported in other work including the violent crime updates for Cardiff (King

P 2023a) and Vale of Glamorgan (King P 2023b), and a wider UK-wide commissioned piece of work each Violence Prevention Unit will complete.

Why is serious violence occurring in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

- Evidence on risk factors for serious violence include Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs - ACE Hub Wales 2022) and can be categorised by individual risk factors, relationship risk factors and community and societal risk factors (WHO 2015).
- A key risk factor for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is deprivation and poverty, with recognised inequalities particularly in the Southern Arc of Cardiff and East of Barry (Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (CVRPB 2022).
- Local professionals reflected the literature that serious violence is multi-factorial, highlighting the lack of deterrent or appreciation of the consequences of serious violence, public perceptions of violence and influence of social media as some factors.

What should be done to address serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

- Multiple evidence-based toolkits are available elsewhere summarising the strength of evidence for interventions to prevent serious violence, referred to on page 59 of this needs assessment.
- Local professionals highlighted key principles for local delivery including continuity, visibility and information sharing.
- Barriers to tackling serious violence locally were reported by partners in themes including data quality and sharing, service capacity, service reach, risk and accountability, and funding.

Summary of key findings

Overall, the assessment provides an overview of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. The findings demonstrate that serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is not limited to children and young people, and that the most common age groups for both suspects and victims of offences related to violence are over 20 years old highlighting the importance of considering all ages, including specific age groups who offend.

The process of the needs assessment identified that there is no clear mapping of current services available, which would be useful for partners in order to raise awareness of what services are currently available and could strengthen partnership working and collaboration opportunities. It would also enable a clearer picture on how services in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are currently delivering evidence-based interventions and identify if there are any gaps to target. In consideration of these opportunities, alignment with evidence-based approaches such as the trauma-informed approach by delivering services in recognition that service users are likely to have experienced previous trauma (ACE Hub Wales 2022) and the value-based approach designing services and monitoring services in a way that ensures they add value, in particular providing outcomes that matter to the service user (Kinghorn F 2022) could continue to strengthen how violence is managed and prevented.

Whilst views from local professionals provided a wider perspective of the picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan than data alone, a limitation of this report is that there was no direct input from service users or those with lived experience. In development of the overall strategy, there should be inclusion of a diversity of community voices including those with lived experience, to ensure equity and that impacts of the strategy are considered for all protected groups. Opportunities such as delivering interventions with people with lived experience and adopting creative approaches was also raised as an opportunity, which could help increase awareness of the consequences of serious violence. Access to data was another limitation in this report, with consistent data sharing between

partners raised as an area of focus. Opportunities to strengthen links between partners and establish data sharing protocols were identified to enhance the multi-agency approach and manage different areas of work such as tackling misconceptions of serious violence such as the level of knife and weapon carrying.

Conclusion

From these findings, seven key themes emerged. Section 4 (page 23-53) discusses the current picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, and identifies the need for: an 'age-specific strategic context' when considering violence; 'assessing the impact' of violence and violence prevention on different groups of people; strengthening 'data, knowledge and intelligence sharing' between partners; raising public 'visibility of the consequences of violence'; and 'understanding and challenging misconceptions' from the public on the extent of violence in the community.

Section 5 (page 54-58) discusses what is currently being done in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan and identifies the need for 'service mapping and identifying gaps' to give all partners a clear picture of what is currently available.

Section 6 (page 59-66) discussed the final two themes, highlighting links to the existing evidence base and promoting an 'evidence-based approach to violence' and in-line with this 'effective evaluation' of interventions linked to violence.

Within these seven themes, nine key recommendations are presented which should be used to inform the development of the serious violence local strategies for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

Recommendations

Age-specific strategic context

- **Recommendation 1:** Partners to consider all ages of those involved with serious violence, and not limit the scope to violence in children and young people only, in development of their strategy.

Assessing the impact

- **Recommendation 2:** A Health and Equality Impact Assessment should be completed at the early stages of strategy development, with engagement with individuals from the relevant protected groups and various stakeholders involved with violence including those with lived experience, to ensure that the strategy does not have any negative or unintended impacts.

Data, knowledge and information sharing

- **Recommendation 3:** Increasing and strengthening links between all partners who are likely to have contact with those involved with serious violence, including sharing knowledge and intelligence between different agencies.
- **Recommendation 4:** All partners to continue to work towards high quality data collection and data sharing through consistent approaches (e.g., through data sharing protocols) and strengthened links between current partners and wider organisations (e.g., the British Transport Police).

Visibility of the consequences of violence

- **Recommendation 5:** Further work with specified and relevant authorities to discuss how to make consequences of crime more visible to the public, and how to make deterrents towards being involved in violence. Including continued work with third sector and others

around lived experience and considering creative approaches to helping young people and others in discussing the consequences of crime.

Understanding perceptions and challenging misconceptions

- **Recommendation 6:** Exploratory work into perceptions of the level of offences (e.g. knife-carrying) with a multi-agency approach to determine the current picture and share findings to provide perspective and challenge misconceptions.

Service mapping and identifying gaps

- **Recommendation 7:** Continue to strengthen partners sharing information on projects, programmes and initiatives that they are currently delivering, through existing channels or through establishing new relationships, so that there is an awareness of what resources are available, demonstrate differences between Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan for those who have service users from both areas, and identify any gaps or opportunities for future intervention.

Evidence-based approach to preventing violence

- **Recommendation 8:** Continue to advocate for and promote an evidence-based approach to preventing serious violence with consideration of risk factors, including raising awareness of and promoting the trauma-informed approach to all relevant partners and agencies delivering services in Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan.

Effective evaluation

- **Recommendation 9:** Encourage all services delivering violence prevention-related activities or programmes to evaluate the interventions in a systematic and meaningful way, to demonstrate whether they are achieving the desired outcomes, with consideration of adopting a Value-based approach.

Section 1: Introduction, background, scope, and aims

1.1 Introduction to the serious violence strategic needs assessment

Violence is a significant criminal justice and public health problem which can have a devastating impact on individuals, communities and the wider population and society. Violence poses challenges for criminal justice and the wider public and third sectors by leading to the widening and deepening of inequalities, hindering individuals' prospects, and impeding the prosperity of our society (Wales Violence Prevention Unit 2022).

'Serious Violence' is an umbrella term including assaults (violence against the person with or without weapon and/or injury), threatening behaviour, exploitation, and other behaviours where there is a high penalty and severe consequences. Homicide, knife crime and gun crime are key aspects of serious violence, as well as exploitation through County Lines, gang violence and public space youth violence. Terrorism is not included within the definition. (Home Office 2022a)

In 2018, the United Kingdom (UK) Government's Serious Violence Strategy highlighted the importance of making serious violence a key area of focus across different sectors, promoting a local multi-agency response to reducing serious violence in their area (HM Government 2018). Following the strategy, legislation has been introduced through the Serious Violence Duty under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (UK Government 2022) to require local partners across different sectors to come together and co-operate in developing bespoke local strategic delivery plans to target interventions based on local need.

This report provides a summary of the current picture and needs for Serious Violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, in order to inform the local strategy development. However, in order to have the most significant impact, it is recommended that partnerships consider a broader range of violence than that limited to violence deemed most serious and to refrain from using the term serious when defining violence (Snowdon L 2023b). Therefore, whilst this report is focussed on serious violence, it is important for partners to consider a wider scope of violence in consideration of their ongoing strategy.

1.2 The policy and strategic context for serious violence and people in contact with the criminal justice system

The evolving nature of violence and the ongoing needs to tackle serious violence across England and Wales was highlighted by the UK Government Serious Violence Strategy in 2018. The Serious Violence Duty is key legislation which places responsibility on multi-agency partners to work together in developing a strategy in how to prevent serious violence going forwards.

In South Wales, the Home Office funded Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) has provided significant support to understanding the picture of violence (including serious violence) and taking a public health approach to preventing violence.

Youth violence has been a specific area of focus recently, with the Wales VPU producing an annual strategic needs assessment for South Wales on violence in children and young people under 25 (Walker A 2023), and a recent all-Wales consultation with young people and professionals in development of the 'Wales Without Violence – A shared framework for preventing violence among Children and Young People' (Snowdon *et al.* 2023a). Wales Violence Prevention Unit Partners also report that strategic priorities from the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government 2018) and the

Home Office have a focus on children and young people. More broadly than just violence, a wider focus on children and young people in Wales is met under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which aims to improve outcomes for children and young people by reducing the risk and impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Relevant frameworks for Children and young people in Wales include:

- [Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales](#)
- [‘Wales without Violence’ framework for youth violence](#)

Whilst violence involving children and young people is an area of interest and an important cohort to approach in both reducing risk factors and early prevention of future violence, the work of Community Safety Partnerships and other relevant authorities is not limited to children and young people.

Examples of frameworks in Wales which should be considered for serious violence beyond just the scope of violence in children and young people include:

- [Female offending Blueprint](#)
- [Framework to support positive change for those at risk of reoffending in Wales](#)
- [The Trauma-Informed approach framework s](#)

A separate strategy for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is also being updated in 2023 (Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan 2018). Whilst this contains specific reference to violence against women, it includes consideration of male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, as these offences are not exclusive to one sex.

1.3 Scope of the strategic needs assessment

This strategic needs assessment will cover the local authority areas of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. The purpose of the strategic needs assessment is to provide evidence and information on serious violence affecting Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan in response to the Serious Violence Duty.

The Serious Violence Duty allows for local definition of violence to tailor the needs assessment and strategy to areas of importance in local areas. The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Regional Violence Prevention Task and Finish group of specified authorities established for this work, hereon referred to as the Task & Finish group (Full membership in Appendix 1) agreed the categories for inclusion:

- Violence against the person (Any)
- Violence against the person (Homicide)
- Violence against the person (Knife Crime)
- Violence against the person (Gun Crime)
- Exploitation (including County Lines and Gang violence)

Domestic violence, sexual violence, serious organised crime and the night-time economy may be referred to within this report, however they are not the main focus due to separate workstreams which already cover these areas in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. Terrorism, self-directed violence and female genital mutilation will not be included in this report.

1.4 Aims and objectives of the strategic needs assessment

Aims of the strategic needs assessment

1. To provide an overview of the evidence relating to serious violence, including the policy and strategic context
2. To provide a baseline assessment (current picture) of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, with epidemiology and views from local professionals
3. To provide a strategic assessment of need relating to serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, with recommendations to inform local strategy development in line with the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty

Objectives (How the aims will be achieved)

- Present a summary of evidence relating to serious violence
- Present quantitative data from routine sources and partners on recorded serious violence
- Present quantitative data from routine sources and partners on service use related to serious violence
- Present qualitative findings from focus groups with local professionals
- Present an overview of key risk and protective factors for serious violence and their prevalence in local areas
- Identify gaps and opportunities from the findings
- Produce recommendations based on the findings

Section 2 - Methods

This strategic needs assessment was undertaken between January – June 2023 following the launch of the Serious Violence Duty in January 2023. The needs assessment was developed by a Specialty Registrar in public health (PCJ) on placement with Cardiff and Vale Local Public Health Team, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. Governance and oversight provided by a Consultant in Public Health and the Task & Finish Group (Appendix 1).

A public health approach was used, with consideration of guidance from the Home Office (2022a) and the Wales Violence Prevention Unit (Snowdon *et al.* 2023b), which was produced specifically for partners in relation to the Serious Violence Duty requirements. These recommend the World Health Organisation (WHO) four-step cyclical model of a public health approach to violence (WHO 2023 - Figure 1). This model refers to firstly describing and defining the scale and nature of violence, secondly understanding the causes of violence and thirdly determining what works to prevent violence. These three steps form the basis of this needs assessment, with the fourth step of implementation to be considered in the subsequent delivery plans and strategy.

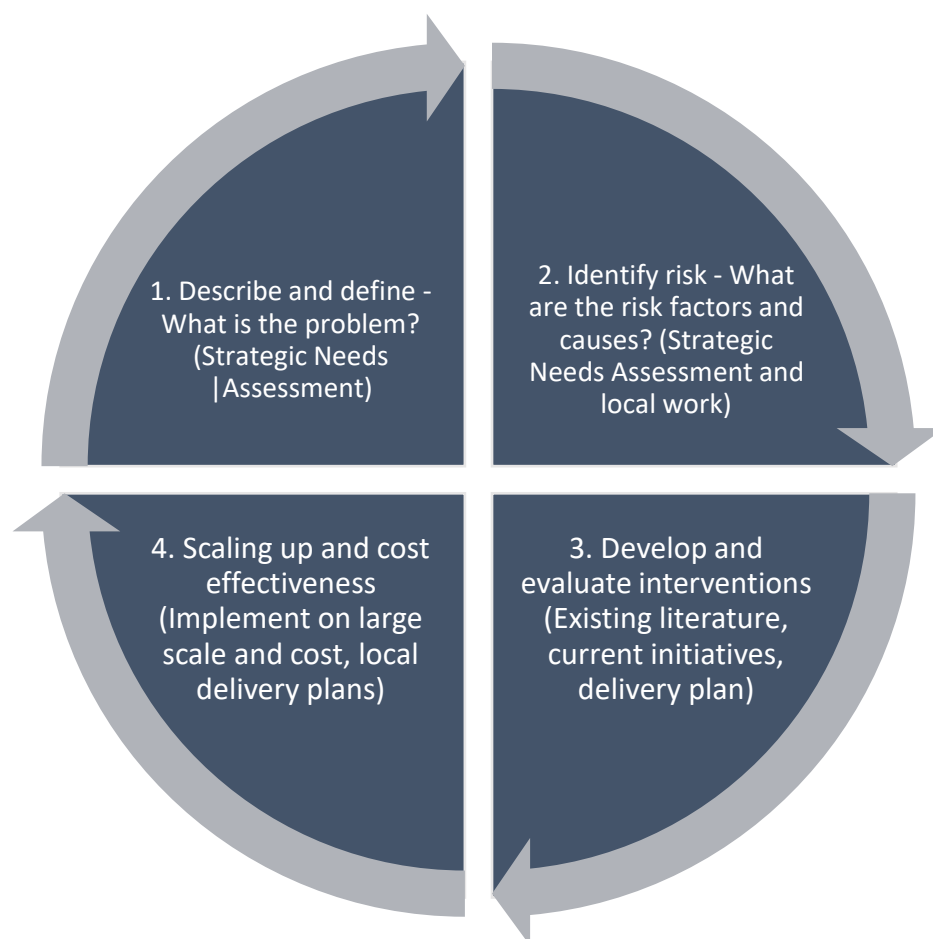


Figure 1: The WHO four-step model in how to approach violence (WHO 2023)

In order to achieve this approach, the standardised methodology to conducting a needs assessment by Stevens and Gillam (1998) was followed. This includes three main components: Epidemiological, Corporate and Comparative.

1. Epidemiological

Providing descriptive data on the current situation, including Time (trends over time), Place and Person

Data were obtained from the sources outlined below. The Task & Finish group agreed the focus of data will be on capturing the current picture in 2022/23, as the COVID-19 pandemic and changing landscape of how data has been captured and recorded means direct comparison is not always possible. However, where routinely available some data will be presented with trends to provide some background context.

Routinely (Publicly) available data:

- Office of National Statistics (ONS)
- Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)

Quantitative data from local partners:

- Violence Prevention Unit – VIP Hub
 - o South Wales Police data
 - o Wales Ambulance data
 - o Health board data on Emergency Department attendances
- South Wales Police
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Cardiff Council
- Vale of Glamorgan Council
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board – Safeguarding and Violence Prevention Team
- Youth Justice services
- Probation services
- Substance misuse services
- Regional Partnership Board (Autism data)

2. Corporate

Gaining views from stakeholders and others involved with or affected by serious violence, to provide a wider picture beyond the data

Between February and March 2023, a series of four workshops (range 38 – 108 minutes; 4-5 participants per session) and one individual interview (41 minutes) were held with 18 professionals from Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan¹. All sessions were held virtually over Microsoft Teams, with PCJ (Specialty Registrar) as facilitator, with support in note taking from Community Safety colleagues in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

The workshops were transcribed through Microsoft Teams software. Results were analysed by PCJ (specialty registrar) by thematic analysis with an inductive approach and are presented within this report by key themes.

The workshop sessions covered local professional perspectives on the current picture of serious violence, causes and effects of serious violence, what is and should be done to tackle and prevent serious violence, and what challenges and barriers might make efforts to tackle serious violence more difficult.

¹ A full list of attendance and content covered in the workshops is available in Appendix 1.

3. Comparative

Comparing the local area to regional and national comparators and comparing evidence-based “best practice” to what is being delivered currently, to identify gaps.

Key sources of information were identified primarily through internet searches and signposting from the guidance produced by the Home Office (2022a) and Wales Violence Prevention Unit (Snowdon *et al.* 2023b). This included review of needs assessments on violence in other areas including Thames Valley (Fahie H 2022), West Midlands (West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit 2021) and North Wales (Wales Violence Prevention Unit 2022). A comprehensive literature search was not conducted as there is a large existing evidence-base, with a list of key relevant sources presented to signpost for further information.

Final recommendations, based on the outcome of the report and identified needs, will be presented under seven categories recommended by the Wales VPU guidance on producing a strategic needs assessment for serious violence (Snowdon L. 2023b). These categories are Data quality, Data sharing, Mapping Existing Services, Inclusion and diversity of community voices, Partnership working, Priorities for action relating to needs in the local area, and Priorities for evidence-based intervention.

Section 3 – The national picture of violence in England and Wales

3.1 The structure of the Criminal Justice System and services related to violence in England and Wales

The Home Office is the overarching body for the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales. Whilst most powers sit with Westminster (such as police, courts, prison and probation), Wales has some devolved responsibility and powers for wider services related to violence such as mental health, substance misuse services, and prison education and health. Appendix 2 provides further information on the structure of services delivered by the specified authorities in Wales.

3.2 How people interact with the criminal justice system and violence-related services in England and Wales

Many people who are involved of or at risk of violence will not have direct contact with the criminal justice services but might have contact with other related services. This includes accessing healthcare for assault-related injuries, being referred to or requiring support from safeguarding, involvement with social care services, needs around housing, education and employment, and accessing services related to risk factors such as substance misuse services. Therefore, in consideration of the needs for serious violence, it is important to not just focus on data from the criminal justice system.

However, where violence has been committed, in England and Wales the age of criminal responsibility is 10 years and from age 18 years people are treated as adults by law (UK Government 2023). For those involved with violence and charged with an offence, the case will be heard in youth court (aged 10-17 years old), Magistrates' court (18 years old and over) or Crown court (any age) for the most serious crime such as murder or rape (Schwappach *et al.* 2021; (Wales Safer Communities Partnership 2023). A range of sentences may be given including community sentences, Detention, and Training orders. Whilst secure estate might be required, many will remain living in the community (Schwappach *et al.* 2021). Probation and Youth Justice services provide key support and diversionary intervention in the community, as well as wider services to reduce the risk of reoffending in the future.

3.3 How the picture of serious violence recorded by the criminal justice system and violence-related services in England and Wales has changed over time

How crime data is collected in England and Wales

There are two main sources of data for national statistics on crime in England and Wales (ONS 2023k). The first is the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which asks a sample of members of the public about experiences of crime over the past 12 months. The second is police-reported crime data where crime or threat of crime have been reported to and recorded by police. In the interest of brevity of this report, only UK data from England and Wales have been included. Key themes identified from England and Wales are summarised below to demonstrate the national picture of serious violence and trends over time.

Overall estimated crime levels have decreased, but more crime is being reported by police

The number of incidents of crime reported by Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data has been decreasing since 1991, with violence offences estimated to be 8% lower in year-end September 2022 (1,135,802 offences) compared to year end March 2020 (ONS 2022b). However, police recorded crime in England and Wales for year ending September 2022 exceeded pre-pandemic levels. There are multiple reasons for possible increases in reported data, including changes to recording processes and

practices, additional offences being recorded, variations in police activity, more victims reporting crime and genuine increase in some types of crime (ONS 2022b).

More violence against the person offences are being reported

Violence against the person offences are defined as “a broad offence group covering a wide spectrum of offending from homicide and serious violent crime through to lower level harm and less serious common assault” (Home Office 2021). Violence against the person offences are therefore a key source of information for estimating the level of serious violence occurring in an area. Across England and Wales overall, police recorded violence against the person offences were recorded 2.1 million times in the year ending September 2022, this was a rise from pre-pandemic year ending March 2020 of 21% (from 1.8 million offences) (ONS 2022b). 1.35% of adults who completed the CSEW for year ending September 2022 reported being a victim of violence, with violence being the fifth most common reason of being a victim of crime (ONS 2022b).

Stalking and harassment is the most common form of violence against person offences

Violence against the person offences are further categorised into the nature of offence committed, including whether injury occurred where an assault has been committed. Stalking and harassment offences make up approximately a third of all violence against the person offences in England and Wales. A year-on-year rise has been observed for stalking and harassment since 2012 in England and Wales (partly driven by Home Office counting rules changes) (ONS 2022b). Estimates from the CSEW showed 11% of adults aged 16 years and over had experienced some form of harassment in the last year (ONS 2022b). Violence with injury offences made up approximately a quarter of violence against person offences. (ONS 2022b).

Violence against person offences accounted for at least 30% of convictions of inmates in 2021

National statistics for England and Wales for 2021 demonstrated an incarceration rate of 131.5 per 100,000 inhabitants (Statistica 2023). 30% of adult inmates were convicted of violence against the person offences, which was a 5% increase on previous years, and over 40% of 15–17-year-old inmates were convicted of violence against the person offences (Sturge 2021).

Homicide levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels

To year end March 2022, 696 victims of homicide were reported in England and Wales which was an increase of 130 from year ending March 2021, and a rate of 11.7 per million population which has overall remained low since the 1970s with a peak in the early 2000s (ONS 2023e).

Knife crime was increasing since 2014 despite the decrease in crime overall

The Serious Violence Strategy highlighted that across England and Wales, from 2014 to 2018 knife crime had been increasing across all police force areas despite a decrease in crime overall (HM Government 2018). However, knife enabled crime was recorded by police 50,434 times in the year ending September 2022 for England and Wales. This was 8% lower than pre-pandemic levels in year ending March 2020 (55,076 offences) (ONS 2022b). The biggest decrease was in knife-enabled robbery offences, a 25% decrease from March 2020 but an 11% increase on year ending September 2021. So whilst still below pre-pandemic levels, the level of offences could be increasing. All knife-enabled violent and sexual offences saw increases except for knife-enabled homicide which decreased by 5% to 260 (ONS 2022b).

Offences of knife crime was lower in South Wales than the average across England and Wales

Across England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police) there were 22,722 knife-enabled assault with injury and assault with intent to cause serious harm, 16,892 knife-enabled robberies, 5,716 knife-enabled threats to kill and 1657 other knife-enabled selected offences (including rape,

attempted murder, homicide and sexual assault) (ONS 2022b). Metropolitan, West Midlands and Greater Manchester Police Force Areas have the highest volume of knife-enabled crime (ONS 2022b).

More people are being found in possession of bladed articles, but it might be better identification

Across England and Wales, police recorded 26,643 offences of 'possession of article with a blade of point' in year ending September 2022, which was an increase of 15% compared to pre-pandemic year ending March 2020 (23,246 offences), and an increase of 17% compared to year ending September 2021 (22,853 offences) (ONS 2022b). It is hypothesised these increases could have been influenced by the increases in targeted policing for tackling knife crime. In addition, new methodology for recording offences including knife or sharp instruments is being rolled out.

Firearms offences are below pre-pandemic levels in England and Wales overall

Nationally across England and Wales, 6,369 offences involving firearms were recorded by police in the year ending September 2022, a decrease of 4% (from 6,618 offences) in year ending March 2020, but a 12% increase since year ending September 2021 (5,672 offences) (ONS 2022b).

Thousands of County Lines have been closed across England and Wales since 2019

The County Lines programme, launched by the Home Office in 2019, has resulted in the closure of 3588 County lines, 10209 people have been arrested and 5727 individuals have been referred by police to safeguarding (Home Office 2023). This highlights the significant burden of County Lines across England and Wales, but due to the significant activity the National Crime Agency estimates of active County Lines have decreased from over 2000 in 2019 (National Crime Agency 2019) to around 600 by April 2021 (Taylor R 2022).

Gang violence is difficult to quantify, but thousands of children and young people are thought to be involved

In 2019, the Children's Commissioner for England estimated that over 310,000 children and young people aged 10-17 years old know a gang member, 60,000 are either gang members or siblings of gang members, and 34,000 know a gang member and have been a victim of violence (Children's Commissioner for England 2019). Of these, only a small proportion (less than 7000) were known to Children's services or Youth Offending Teams indicating a large proportion of those involved with gang violence are not known to authorities (Children's Commissioner for England 2019).

3.3.1 – The current picture of serious violence in South Wales

Some national data is also broken down to regional level, including South Wales. The findings below demonstrate that compared to England and Wales overall, violence in South Wales is in general reported at a lower rate.

South Wales has a lower-than-average rate of all crime reported compared to Wales and England

South Wales Police Force Area as a whole reported lower rates (78.5 per 1000 population) of all crime reported than the average across Wales (87.1 per 1000) and England (91.9 per 1000) in year ending September 2022 (ONS 2022b).

South Wales has a lower reported rate of Violence Against the Person Offences than England and Wales.

Violence against the person offences were reported at a rate of 30.0 per 1000 population in South Wales in was, compared to 37.2 per 1000 in Wales and 35.5 per 1000 in England (ONS 2022b).

Reported knife or sharp instrument offences in South Wales have decreased and are occurring at a lower rate compared to England and Wales overall

For South Wales, a rate of 49 per 100,000 population offences involving a knife or sharp instrument were recorded by police for year ending March 2022. This compares to an average of 82 per 100,000 across England and Wales (ONS 2022c). By year end 2022, South Wales Police recorded 606 knife crime offences. This is a 10% decrease compared to 2021, and an 18% decrease compared to 2019. (Walker A 2023).

Reported gun crime has increased since 2019 in South Wales

For 2022, there were 101 gun crime offences recorded by South Wales Police. This is a 2% reduction compared to 2021, but a 17% increase compared to 2019 (Walker A 2023).

South Wales is not one of the main exporting areas for County Lines, but lines still exist

It is estimated that approximately 80% of all known County Lines originate from London, Liverpool and Birmingham (Taylor R 2022). Exact numbers of lines within South Wales are unknown but the national programme is likely to have impact on South Wales as well as other areas in reducing the number of existing lines.

Extent of gang violence in South Wales is difficult to quantify

Specific data on gang violence is challenging to quantify in South Wales, and we have not identified any routinely reported data relating to gang violence in South Wales at the time of completing this report.

3.4. Demographics of people in contact with the criminal justice system and violence-related services in England and Wales

Demographics of adult suspects in England and Wales

In general, most offences reported are committed by men, with the proportion of women under-represented in the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales compared to the general population, particularly regarding the most serious offence types (Ministry of Justice 2020). 85% of arrests and 95% of the prison population were male in 2019, and a higher proportion of women were first-time offenders (35%) compared to males (22%) (Ministry of Justice 2020). Minority ethnic groups have been identified to be over-represented at many stages of the Criminal Justice service in England and Wales, but due to the limited analysis around other confounding factors (such as deprivation, geography, and offender history) these differences may be subject to bias (Ministry of Justice 2021).

Demographics of children and young people suspects in England and Wales

The Cardiff Youth Justice Health Needs Assessment (Schwappach *et al.* 2021) presented a summary of the demographics of children in England and Wales in contact with the Youth Justice system for year ending March 2020. They identified that across England and Wales, 19,000 children had been cautioned or sentenced, and the majority were boys, aged 15-17 years and white ethnicity. The rate of children cautioned or sentenced in Wales was 32.6 per 1000 children which was relatively low (range across England and Wales 28.2 to 47.6 per 1000). Violence against person offences were the most common offence. However, the report reflects on that due to a number of factors including diversionary work to keep children away from formal criminal justice processes, those who *do* enter the formal criminal justice system are likely to have committed more serious offences. This means this data may not capture the true picture of those involved with committing offences, particularly low-level offences, which might escalate to violence in the future.

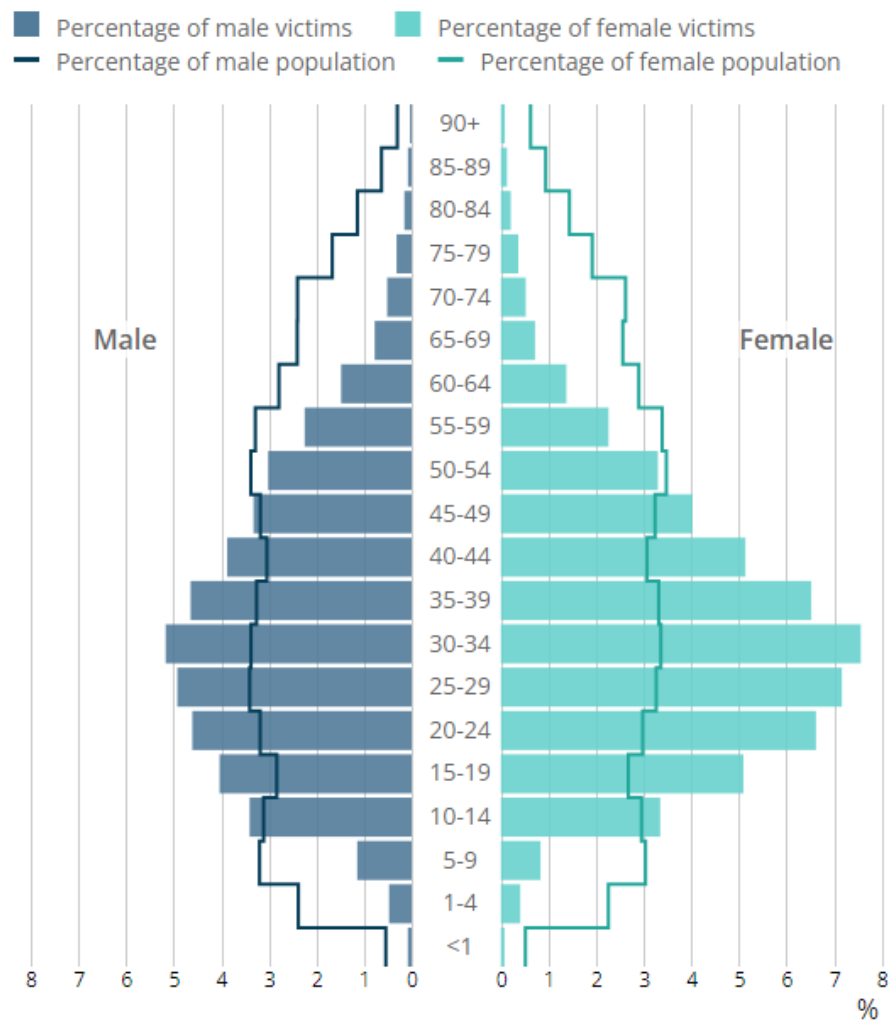
Demographics of Victims

Victim data from telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales (TCSEW) reporting for year ending 2022 on all CSEW crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse), demonstrated victims of crime were across all age ranges, but in general younger ages were more likely to be victims, with 14.8% of 25–34-year-olds reporting being a victim in the past year (ONS 2022e) – a breakdown of victims by age and sex is demonstrated in Figure 2.

People with white British ethnicity were less likely to report having been victims (10.0%), but there were a limited number of responses from other ethnic groups meaning the true picture is not clear (ONS 2022x). Country of birth outside the UK were also more likely to report being victims (13.9% born outside the UK compared to 10.4% born in the UK). Other protected characteristics were also associated with increased likelihood of reporting being a victim of violence compared to the average across all adults (10.9%), including 'separated' marital status (24.8%), disabled (13.3%), Muslim religion (15.7%) and Gay/Lesbian (18.2%) or Bisexual (19.6%) sexual orientation (ONS 2022e).

Figure 2: A population pyramid by age and sex for victims of violent crimes reported by Police in England and Wales (ONS 2022e).

England and Wales, year ending March 2022



Source: Home Office Data Hub

Section 4: The current picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

4.1 - An overview of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are two local authority areas based in the South-East of Wales. Cardiff is the capital city of Wales with four universities, stadiums and venues regularly hosting international sporting and arts events and various licensed premises in the city centre promoting a vibrant night-time economy. Outside of the city centre, multiple residential areas are within Cardiff local authority boundary which have varying degrees of deprivation and need. Vale of Glamorgan has a mixed urban and rural landscape. Barry is the main town within the Vale of Glamorgan, and the Barry Island resort is a key destination for visitors over the summer months. Overall, the population in Vale of Glamorgan is older and experience less deprivation, but there are significant pockets of deprivation and need in the area.

In 2021, the estimated total resident population of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan was 492,046. Of these, approximately 359,512 live in Cardiff and 132,534 in Vale of Glamorgan (ONS 2023a). Cardiff has more urban areas than Vale of Glamorgan, and has a much higher population density, particularly within the Cardiff city centre. In 2021, it was estimated Cardiff had a population density of 2572 usual residents per km² compared to 398 usual residents per km² in Vale of Glamorgan (ONS 2022a). The populations are both expected to continue to grow, leading to an increased demand on services and resources.²

4.1.1 - Demographics of people in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

As Cardiff is a university city, it has a higher proportion of its population at student age (16% - Table 1). Vale of Glamorgan has a higher proportion of older people aged 65 and over (22% compared to 15% in Cardiff – Table 1), but both areas are predicted to see an increase in their populations aged 65 and over which is anticipated to stretch public sector services through increased health and social care needs.

Table 1: Mid-year population estimates by age group from Census 2021 data, number and % (ONS 2023a)						
	0 – 4 years	5 – 15 years	16 – 24 years	25 – 64 years	65 years & over	Total Population
Cardiff	18883 (5%)	47057 (13%)	57108 (16%)	183569 (51%)	52895 (15%)	359,512
Vale of Glamorgan	6806 (5%)	17672 (13%)	11766 (9%)	67074 (51%)	29216 (22%)	132,534

The most prevalent ethnicity in both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan in 2021 was White (British) in 73.6% of residents in Cardiff and 92.0% of residents in Vale of Glamorgan. Cardiff has a higher proportion of ethnicities other than White British (including 9.7% Asian, 5.6% other White, 4.0% Mixed or multiple, 3.8% Black, and 3.3% other ethnic groups) as well as a higher proportion of people living in Cardiff who were born outside of the United Kingdom (ONS 2023c). 83.5% of people living in Cardiff were born in the UK. 94.2% of people living in Vale of Glamorgan were born in the UK (ONS 2023d).

² A full demographic overview of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is available in the Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 (CVRPB 2022).

Both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan have slightly more people registered as female sex than male sex, however Cardiff has a slightly lower proportion of people reporting they use the same gender identity to the sex they were assigned at birth (Table 2).

Table 2: Sex and gender identify from Census 2021 data (ONS 2023b)				
	Registered as male	Registered as female	Report using same gender identity as registered sex at birth	Different gender identity to sex registered at birth
Cardiff	175619 (48.8%)	183893 (51.2%)	92.88%	0.71%
Vale of Glamorgan	63849 (48.2%)	68885 (51.8%)	94.47%	0.36%

A summary of the prevalence of some risk and protective factors related to violence is in Appendix 3.

4.2 – The structure of the criminal justice service and services related to violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Residents and visitors to Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan may be in contact with multiple different services related to violence. The landscape of service providers is variable, with coverage varying from local authority level to regional or even national level. Table 3 outlines some of the key service providers for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan by geographical location. Of note, some services such as the health (emergency department at University Hospital of Wales) and prison (HMP Cardiff) are accessed by residents of both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, as well as wider visiting populations.

Table 3: Service providers in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan			
	Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan	Examples of services provided
Local Authority	Cardiff Council	Vale of Glamorgan Council	Social Care Housing Safeguarding
Police	South Wales Police – Cardiff and Vale Basic Command Unit	South Wales Police – Cardiff and Vale Basic Command Unit	Custody Stop and Search Reactive response to incidents Preventative approach
Health	Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	Emergency Department (UHW) Alcohol treatment centre Minor Injuries Unit (Barry) Substance Misuse Services Mental Health Services Safeguarding
Probation	Cardiff and Vale Probation Delivery Unit	Cardiff and Vale Probation Delivery Unit	
Youth Justice	Cardiff Youth Justice Services	Vale of Glamorgan Youth Justice Services	Diversionary support
Fire and Rescue	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Reactive response Preventative approach
Community Safety Partnership	Cardiff Community Safety Partnership	Vale of Glamorgan Community Safety Partnership	
Prison	HMP Cardiff		Holding prison awaiting charge

Education is another important authority in relation to serious violence. There are 189 schools in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, and 12 colleges/University (CVRPB 2022). 27.6% of people aged five and over are a full-time student in Cardiff and 18.9% of people aged five and over are a full-time student in Vale of Glamorgan (ONS 2023f).

4.3 – The types of serious violence happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

The scope of this report is serious violence including: Violence against the person crimes (including homicide, knife crime and gun crime) and exploitation (including county lines and gang violence).

4.3.1 - Violence against the Person offences (all)

The Wales Violence Prevention Portal data (VPP) presents South Wales Police recorded data on the number and rate of violence against the person offences by local authority area (VPP 2023a). The number of police recorded offences, for the year ending September 2022 were 11844 in Cardiff and 3102 in Vale of Glamorgan demonstrating that there are thousands of incidents reported to police each year in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan (VPP 2023a). These demonstrate a slight increase in Cardiff (from 10562) and similar levels in Vale of Glamorgan (3123) for year ending September 2021, and a similar pattern from pre-pandemic levels with 10973 violence against the person offences reported in Cardiff, and 3066 violence against person offences reported in Vale of Glamorgan, for year ending March 2020 (VPP 2023a). This compares to the national picture of England and Wales which saw a greater increase in Violence against person offences reported overall.

In considering the rate of offences per population, due to the different demographic and geographic landscapes, Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are not directly comparable. However, analysis completed elsewhere and reported in local population crime profiles for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan have demonstrated that both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas have comparatively low rates of violence against the person offences when compared to their most similar³ CSPs respectively (King P 2023a, 2023b) with a rate of 772.1 per 100,000 in Cardiff and 594.4 per 100,000 in Vale of Glamorgan between July-September 2022 (VPP 2023a).

Whilst these findings suggest that Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan respectively have a lower prevalence of violence compared to other areas in England and Wales, it is unclear the reason for this and it could reflect a number of factors such as: a true lower prevalence (e.g., due to the nature of the population or successful interventions and services), a lower proportion of crime being reported to police or identified by services (e.g., data underestimating the true extent), different data reporting mechanisms, or other factors. Whichever the reason, there is still a significant level of violence occurring in both areas which needs exploring further.

Categories of Violence against the person offences

From police recorded data, the top three more frequently reported categories for violence against the person offences were the same for both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan but in a different order; Violence without injury were the most frequently reported offences in Cardiff for year ending September 2022, whereas in Vale of Glamorgan the most frequently reported offences were stalking and harassment which was the most reported category nationally across England and Wales (Table 4, VPP 2023a). This could be a reflection of the different demography and urban-rural differences between the two authority areas, as well as other factors such as how the public report offences.

³ Most similar Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) have been previously determined.

Table 4: The most frequently recorded violence against the person offences, by local authority area, between October 2021 – September 2022

From police recorded data available in the Violence Prevention Portal (VPP 2023a).

No.	Cardiff	Vale of Glamorgan
1	Violence without injury (4278 offences)	Stalking and harassment (1250 offences)
2	Stalking and harassment (3848 offences)	Violence without injury (961 offences)
3	Violence with injury (3716 offences)	Violence with injury (890 offences)
4	Death or serious injury driving (<5 offences)	Death or serious injury driving (<5 offences)
5	Homicide (<5 offences)	Homicide (<5 offences)

Violence without injury and stalking and harassment

Violence without injury has been defined as violence “where the victim is punched, kicked, pushed or jostled with no resulting injury” (ONS 2022f). Stalking and harassment is defined as “where someone repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel scared, distressed or threatened” (Police UK 2023). Violence without injury and stalking and harassment offences might be pre-cursors to more serious violence in the future. This is particularly important as local professionals expressed their opinion that violence is perceived to be escalating and there is a shift towards more weapon-related violence and increasingly severe levels of anti-social behaviour, which could in-turn lead to violence with injury.

In the prison service “seen a real shift from traditional fights, fist fights moving over the last couple of years to weapons, improvised weapons being used...and linking to County Lines”

Prison Services (covering Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan)

“Seeing within the town centre area in Barry, a real high, high increase of anti-social behaviour, but it’s going to the next level... we’ve had a scaffolding pole used as a javelin chucked through a phone box, and vans set on fire...”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Violence with injury

Violence with injury is defined as “all incidents of wounding and assault with injury” (ONS 2022f). Alongside the police reported data, there were 1442 assault-related attendances to University Hospital of Wales (UHW) Emergency Department in 2022, an increase from 1344 in 2021⁴ (VPP 2023c). It is not clear how many of the assault-related attendances to the Emergency department were reported to police, but it demonstrates that a large proportion of violence with injury offences are not likely to result in healthcare intervention. Nevertheless, violence with injury will be a key focus of the report from this point.

These findings indicate that a large proportion of offences occurring in both Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, do not directly lead to injury. This is important, as data from sources such as health (e.g., ambulance and emergency department data) will not capture the full picture of violence. In addition, the data above relies on the offences being reported to police, and therefore the figures are likely to underestimate the true incidence. However, compared to national England and Wales estimates on the proportion of Violence against the person offences that result in violence (approximately 25% - ONS 2022b), in Cardiff there was a higher proportion of violence against the person offences resulting in injury (approximately 31%), and to a lesser extent Vale of Glamorgan (28%). The significance of these results is unclear, and it may be due to reporting, how offences are recorded or reflect a true higher proportion of violence with injury or lower proportion of other offences.

⁴ It is important to recognise that the 2021 figures are likely to have been affected by COVID-19 measures.

Death or serious injury driving

Whilst not within the main scope of this report, a small number of offences relating to death or serious injuries caused by driving have been reported in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

4.3.1.1 – Homicide

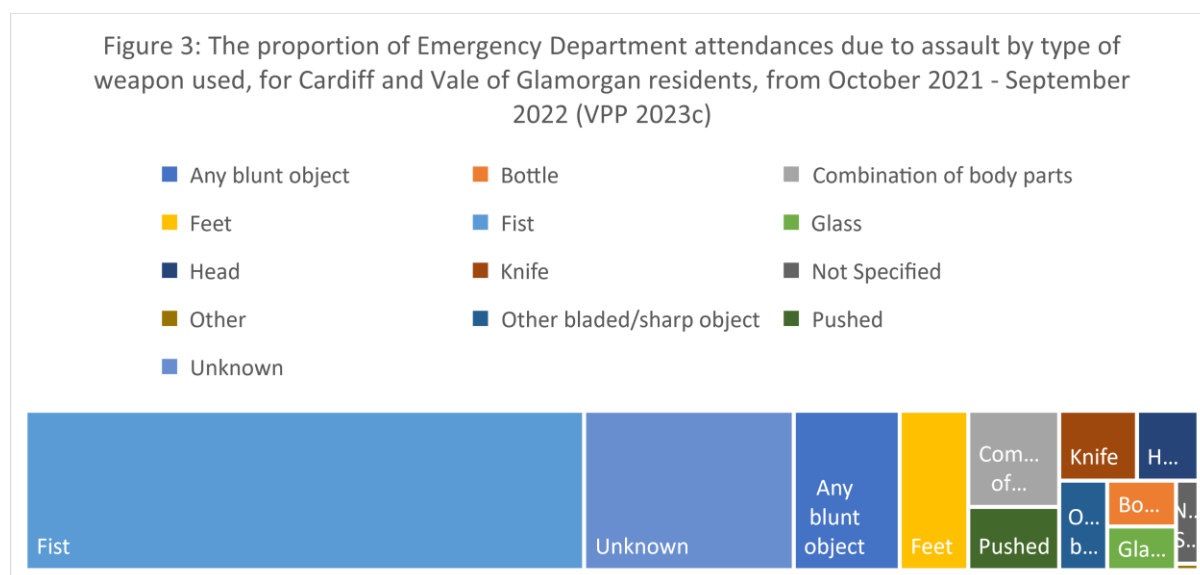
Homicide is a significant and severe form of violence, but levels remain generally low in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. From April 2018 to September 2022, 15 homicides have been reported in police data for Cardiff, and 3 for Vale of Glamorgan (VPP 2023a). In 2021/22, 5 domestic homicide reviews were completed and 7 were ongoing, awaiting publication (CVUHB 2022). This is consistent with the national picture in England and Wales with relatively low rates of homicide reported each year.

However, local professionals reported through the workshops they have observed that the significant consequences of homicides can cause a ‘ripple effect’ into communities and impact those who weren’t directly involved with the incident or victim. The effects can last for many years, and influence behaviours towards serious violence. Therefore, even where homicide levels are low it is important to consider the wider context in how the most serious crimes can affect communities and behaviours. The wider effect on communities is explored in section 4.6.

4.3.2 – Violence Against the Person offences involving weapons

Emergency department data on weapon use

For violence which resulted in injury leading to attendance to the emergency department, the method of assault has been recorded in emergency department data. To year end September 2022, the most commonly reported method of assault in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan residents attending UHW Emergency department was from either attacks using body parts or blunt objects: ‘fist’ (621 attendances), ‘feet’ (76 attendances) and combination of body parts (61 attendances) and any blunt object (118 attendances) - (VPP 2023c - Figure 3). This indicates the importance of not just focussing on violence related to weapon use but taking a wider scope for other forms of assault.



Nevertheless, knife and other bladed/sharp object was seen in 68 attendances to year end September 2022 (VPP 2023c), and due to the potential severe or fatal consequences of use of these weapons, the next section will focus on knife crime specifically.

4.3.2.1 – Violence Against the Person (Knife crime) in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

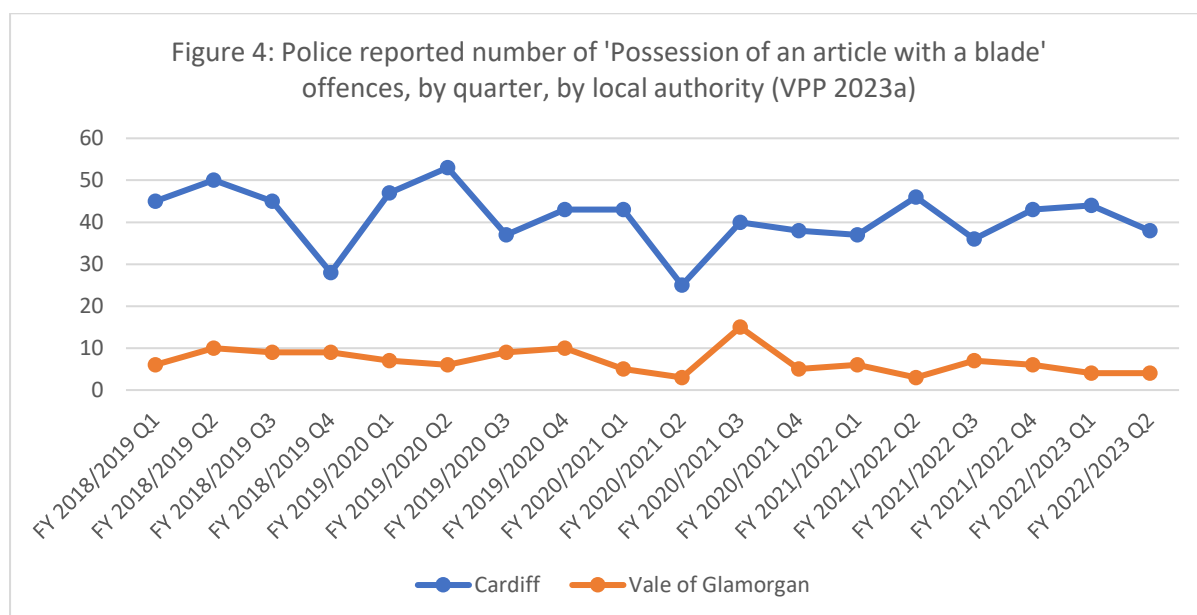
“What strikes me is a sense of increase in violence alongside the use of weapons, particularly in the younger cohorts”

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Probation Services

In Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, data related to knife crime is available through Accident and Emergency attendance for assault by type of weapon (VPP 2023c). Hospital data, for the number of emergency department attendances for ‘Assault with knife’ and ‘Other bladed/sharp object’ demonstrate that the number of reported attendances has varied over time, with the number of knife-specific assaults in Cardiff reaching a peak in 2020-21 (VPP 2023c). In Vale of Glamorgan, small numbers are reported, with most recent data demonstrating more assaults related to ‘other bladed/sharp object’ than ‘knife’ specifically (VPP 2023c). In year ending September 2022, for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan residents there were 76 reported emergency department attendances due to assaults with a knife or sharp object involved (VPP 2023c).

Possession of an article with a blade or point

Police recorded data for ‘Possession of article with blade’ offences in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan has remained relatively stable from 2018 up to end of September 2022 (Figure 4 – VPP 2023a). Between 1st October 2021- 30th September 2022, police data recorded 161 instances of possession of article with a blade in Cardiff, and 21 instances in Vale of Glamorgan (VPP 2023a).



Between 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022, 290 Offensive weapons were identified in Cardiff (13.6% of all stop and searches; 290/2,127) and 57 in Vale of Glamorgan (20.4%, 57/279). This was a decrease in overall number from the previous year Oct 2020-Sept 2021 but an increase in the proportion from 10.2% (447/4365) in Cardiff and 13.1% (87/661) in Vale of Glamorgan (VPP 2023d). School data has also recorded multiple concerns about pupils regarding knives/bladed instruments (Cardiff Council 2023). This data is in-keeping with the national picture which suggests that the number of people identified as being in possession of a weapon has increased (ONS 2022b).

Local professional views in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan regarding knife crime

Carrying offensive weapons, in particular knives, was highlighted as an important issue in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan by local professionals in the workshop sessions. Particularly related to children and young people, there was a perception that possession of knives is increasing.

“Carrying of weapons is increasing...more bladed than anything else. BB guns are disappearing now in the Vale. But the use of knives is becoming more common... the reporting isn’t great”

Vale of Glamorgan Education

Status and power were highlighted as reasons for young people carrying knives:

“The power that young people believe that carrying a knife or being involved with serious violence gives them... young people believe that carrying a knife is going to give them a status”

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Third Sector

However, fear was also raised as a reason that young people were carrying knives, with the recognition this could inadvertently lead to serious injury.

Another theme that emerged from the workshops with local professionals was a general impression that the type of weapons being used is escalating with large blades such as machetes and swords reported in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. Furthermore, local professionals report that many who carry these weapons are also willing to use them.

“Knife crime is a huge issue for us, a lot about young people carry weapons and for protection and they’re not just small knives, they’re literally machete, hunting knives and they’re not afraid to use them”

Cardiff Youth Justice Services

4.3.2.2 – Violence Against the Person (Gun crime) in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Gun crime has not been highlighted as a specific area of concern for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. Between 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022, police ‘stop and search’ found 8 firearms in Cardiff, and 3 in Vale of Glamorgan, a difference from the same period in 2020-21 where 22 firearms were found in Cardiff and none in Vale of Glamorgan (VPP 2023d). Possession of firearms offences were reported 11 times in Cardiff and 2 times in Vale of Glamorgan between Oct 2021-Sept 2022. (VPP 2023a).

Emergency department data relating to attendance due to assault does not include a category for gun-related crime, so it is unclear how many attendances due to firearm injury occurred over this timeframe (VPP 2023c). However, national statistics for Wales showed in the year ending March 2022, 5 hospital admissions in NHS hospitals for assault by a firearm were reported, with a range of 0-3 per year from April 2012-March 2021 (ONS 2022c). Although these statistics indicate that gun crime is not a large area of focus in Cardiff or Vale of Glamorgan, it is important to consider that the data might not capture the full picture in relation to other aspects of gun crime. For example, use firearms in threats where the victims do not report it to the police. In addition, due to the potentially severe consequences of gun crime, it is important to continue to monitor trends and for prevention to include consideration of gun crime.

4.3.3 - Exploitation in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Vulnerable people, particularly children and young people, can be at risk of significant harm from exploitation. Key areas of interest of exploitation include County Lines (use of vulnerable people to carry, store and sell drugs through highly organised criminal networks) (Home Office 2023a) and gang related violence. Contextual safeguarding provides support in the extra-familial context where individuals might be involved in harms associated with exploitation outside the home environment.

4.3.3.1 - County Lines in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are recognised to be affected by County Lines drug dealing, but the extent is difficult to quantify through data. Police data reported 285 instances of 'Trafficking in Controlled Drugs' in Cardiff and 31 instances in Vale of Glamorgan between 1st October 2021-30th September 2022 (VPP 2023a). This is a decrease from pre-pandemic levels to year end March 2020 with 502 instances reported in Cardiff and 57 instances reported in Vale of Glamorgan, and in-keeping with the national picture which demonstrates the National County Lines Programme has been successful in closing thousands of known County Lines (Taylor R 2022).

However, County Lines still remains an area of local concern due to the potential widespread implications, and Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Annual Report 2021/22 recognises that County Lines is a national issue, and report that the health board are working with police and social services to provide assurance that county lines activity is addressed by health services. (CVUHB 2022). Education data from Cardiff Council recorded County Lines and criminal exploitation of children and adults as categories of concern (Cardiff Council 2023). The association between County Lines in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan and the train network in particular was highlighted, with ease of travel for young people between different areas.

4.3.3.2 - Gang violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

In the context of the wider UK picture, Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan have relatively low levels of gang violence.

"We don't have the same level of gang-related violence as some places in the UK orbit...there are examples in Cardiff where County Lines issues have resulted in an upswing in violent defending and the carrying of knives and weapons... That's not the norm across the whole of the city, but certainly wouldn't say we don't have any of it"

South Wales Police

Gangs were frequently identified by local professionals as a cause of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. The relationship between gangs, County lines and drugs, and weapon carrying were noted.

"Gangs from outside the area and infiltrating Cardiff – they are running County lines out of Cardiff. And we know of cases where young people have been given knives by gang members and a motto is "your life is your life"

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Third Sector

"We've got young people being chased with knives and threatened...to become involved and pick a gang...and to become involved in selling drugs where they don't want to"

Cardiff Youth Justice Services

"A serious increase... with gangs coming from all over the place on public transport (To Barry) in order just to fight. And they love weapons. They love knives, they love machetes."

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Figures related to gang violence are limited. In part, this is due to the importance of not over-estimating or over-elevating the position of gangs. Recognition of gangs by professionals could act as an incentive, and therefore where possible this is avoided.

One indicator which provides potential insight into the impact of gang violence is Emergency Department data. Of the 1,442 attendances to UHW Emergency Department related to assault in 2022, whilst 19% had an unknown number of attackers reported, approximately half (50%) involved one attacker (725/1,442), 11% reported two attackers (158/1,442), 20% reported three or more attackers (284/1,442) (VPP 2023c). These results indicated that gang violence is likely to be a contributor to a significant number of assaults leading to injury (VPP 2023c). This is important when considering the national statistics which suggest approximately 11% of those who know somebody in a gang have themselves been a victim of violence from the gang (Children's Commissioner for England 2019), so the extent of gang membership in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is likely to be underestimated from just assault statistics alone.

4.4 - When serious violence is happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

4.4.1 Evidence from local professionals on when serious violence occurs

Overall, serious violence was reported as a concern by local professionals throughout the year. However, the two local authority areas recognised differences in peaks of serious violence throughout the calendar year based on their local demography and landscapes. For Cardiff, as a major events capital, local professionals reported that an increase in serious violence could be predicted around major events, with the nature of the event having an impact on the overall level of violence expected. As these events are ad-hoc, it means that violence levels fluctuate across the year. More predictable episodes of serious violence occur around Student Freshers (September – October) recognising that Cardiff hosts four major universities, as well as around Christmas time due to the large number of bars and restaurants Cardiff has.

For Vale of Glamorgan, local professionals reported that the summer months present a higher demand on services related to serious violence, due to beach resorts such as Barry Island attracting a large number of people from within and from outside Vale of Glamorgan. In both areas however, it is recognised by local professionals that whilst additional resource might be required at those times, serious violence remains a focus of attention throughout the year.

4.4.2 Evidence of seasonality of serious violence from police reported data

In-keeping with the perspectives from local professionals on the seasonality of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, police reported data on Violence against the person offences demonstrates a similar pattern. The following maps (Figure 5) demonstrate the Police reported rates of Violence Against Person Crimes in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, by quarter, as an example of how the pattern of crime location can vary over the course of the year (VPP 2023a). The maps compliment the findings from the stakeholder engagement, with a higher rate (darker blue) in Barry Island during the peak summer months, but Cardiff remains more consistent across the year.

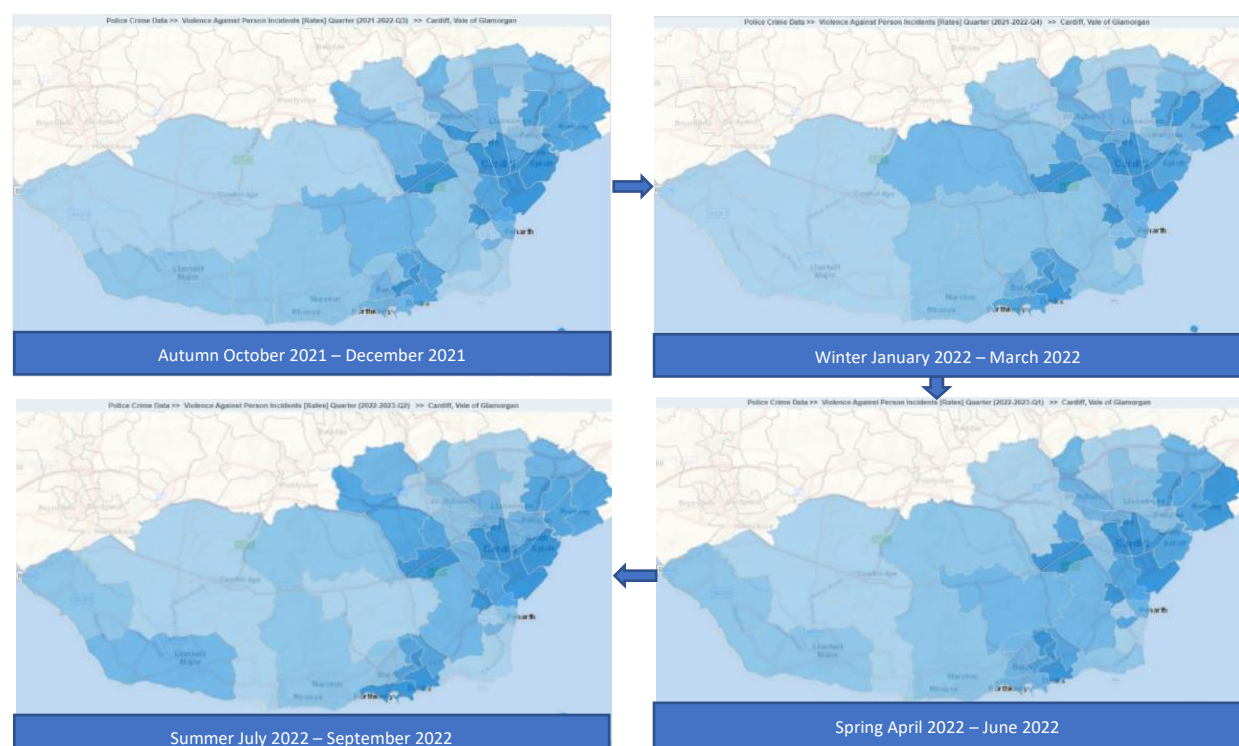


Figure 5: Maps of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, by ward level, by rate of 'Violence against the Person' crimes reported by season Autumn 2021-Summer 2022 (VPP 2023a).

4.5 Demographics of suspects and victims involved with serious violence-offences in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

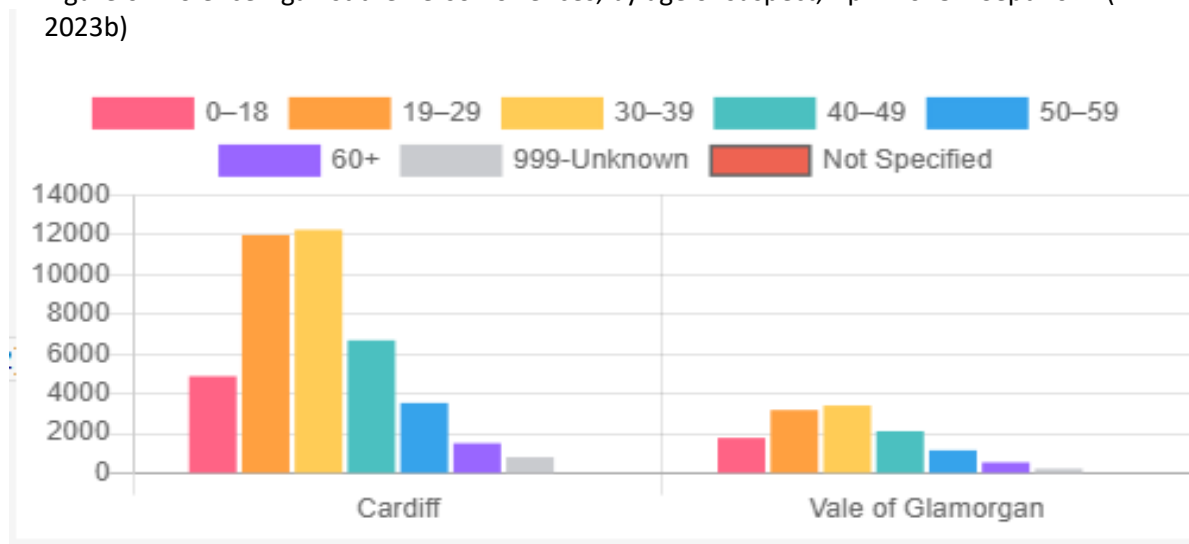
Data on the characteristics of people involved with violence offences was obtained through the Wales Violence Prevention Portal (VPP) which provides police and health data for the South Wales police area and from qualitative data obtained through the workshops and interviews with local professionals.

4.5.1 - Age

Age of suspects/perpetrators of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

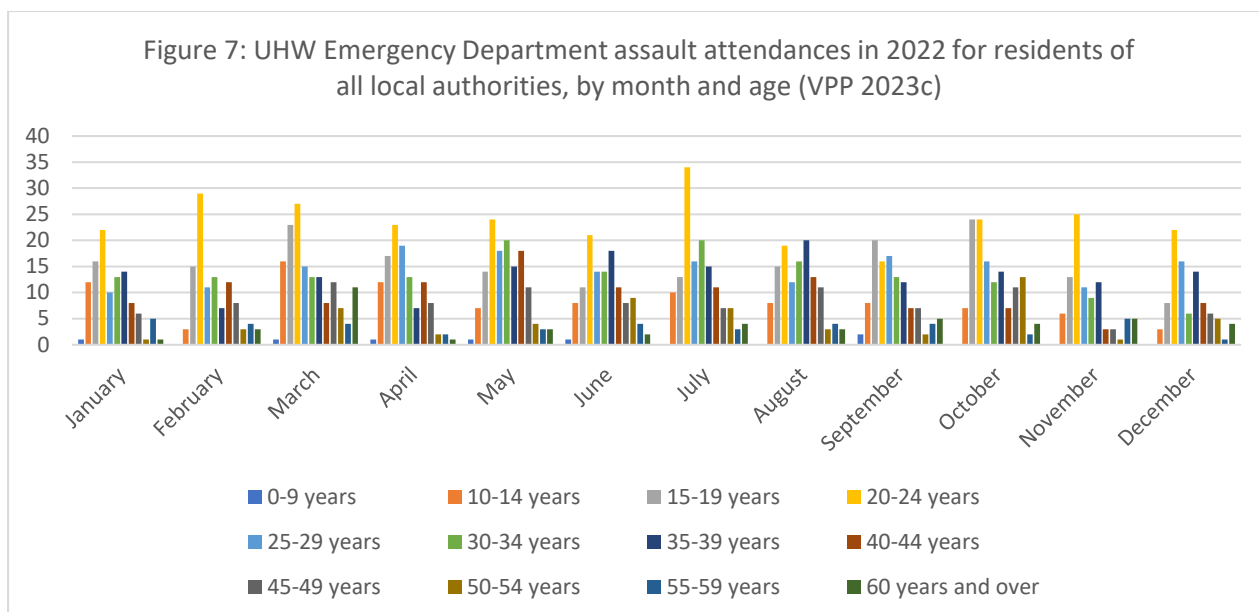
Suspects of police recorded Violence against the person offences in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan span a range of ages from children and young people under 18 years old to those aged over 60 years old, with the majority aged 30-39 years old or younger (Figure 6). This is similar to national statistics for England and Wales in terms of the prison population where 32% of prisoners are in the 30–39-year-old age group (Ministry of Justice 2021a).

Figure 6: Violence Against the Person offences, by age of suspect, April 2018 – Sept 2022 (VPP 2023b)



Age of victims of violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

At the time of writing this report, police reported data on victims through the Wales Violence Prevention Portal (VPP) was not available. However, hospital data on the age of people with assault-related attendances to University Hospital of Wales (UHW) emergency department in 2022 demonstrated a spread of ages but with a skew towards the younger ages less than 40 years old. The 20–24-year-old age category had the highest number of people attending UHW Emergency department (Figure 7 - VPP 2023c) consistent with the national England and Wales data that demonstrate that younger adults are more likely to be victims of violent offences (ONS 2022e).



Although there was variation throughout the year of 2022 regarding frequency of assault attendances by age, with a peak of 20-24-year-olds presenting to the UHW Emergency department in July 2022 (VPP 2023c), the consistency in assault attendance per month indicates that violence with injury remains an issue for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan throughout the year, consistent with the police reported data on Violence against the person offences demonstrating violence is reported throughout the year but with varying patterns depending on the season (Section 4.4.2).

Local professionals' perspective on age

Serious violence involving young people aged 25 and younger was a common theme presented throughout the workshops. In particular, there was a perceived increase in people being first involved with violence at a younger age, a finding consistent with findings in the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government 2018).

"There's a lot of younger children coming through... we've got quite a few 12-year-olds with us now for quite nasty offences."

Cardiff Youth Justice Services

"A new trend is the age of young people...as young as 10 and 11... we've always had a handful who might be younger... but this cohort is a lot younger than we are used to dealing with"

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Healthcare services also reported seeing more children and young people accessing services as a result of an assault/violence.

"About two years ago I saw 3 adults to 1 child. It's now 2 children to 1 adult easily – It's unbelievable how many children I get through the doors"

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

However, it was recognised by local professionals that violence in children and young people is not the only contributor to serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. In Cardiff, violence related to adults such as the night-time economy and associations with supported accommodation were raised as particular areas of focus. For Vale of Glamorgan, they reported an increase in threats or

violence and violence towards local authority staff from those in older age groups, felt to be influenced by wider factors such as the cost-of-living crisis.

“... people that we wouldn’t normally have seen as disgruntled...middle-aged people, older people just because of the frustrations of the social element of life...come in and vent their frustration and anger at staff on the front desks, at enforcement officers, refuse collectors...verbal violence at the moment, the odd push or shove or strike...but if things continue... it may well lead to more serious violence in the near future”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Other cohorts of people involved with violence at older ages were also referred to, including organised crime representing a variety of ages. Specific types of violence are also reported to involve different age groups. For example, alcohol-related violence and domestic abuse.

4.5.2 - Ethnicity and cultural background

Ethnicity of suspects/perpetrators

In both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, similar to the demography of each area, the most prevalent ethnicity reported in suspects was White British. A higher proportion of ethnicities other than White British was reported in Cardiff compared to Vale of Glamorgan, with a higher proportion of suspects recorded as ‘other Black’ ethnicity (6.5% - VPP 2023b) compared to the overall population statistics in Cardiff (4.0% - ONS 2023c). In November 2021, 14% of inmates in HMP Cardiff were from a minority ethnic group (CVRPB 2022). 95.2% of young offenders in HMP Young Offender Institute (YOI Parc) in March 2022 were British, and 42.9% were of White ethnicity, 38.1% of Black ethnicity, 14.3% of Mixed ethnicity and 4.8% unknown (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2022a).

This reflects the national picture in England and Wales which also identified that ethnic groups other than White British, in particular Black ethnicity, were also over-represented compared to the population demography overall (Ministry of Justice 2021). However, almost a quarter of suspects from each area did not have ethnicity stated, which could indicate that some ethnicities are under-reported, and as reflected by the national data there could be many reasons and confounding factors which are leading to this disparity.

Ethnicity of people attending hospital with assault-related attendances

Ethnicity data was “not stated” for all 1442 assault attendances to UHW in the Violence Prevention Portal data, which highlights a key gap in the data for understanding who is attending hospital relating to assaults (VPP 2023c). It is unclear whether this represents issues with data collection, recording or sharing, but is an important omission due to the need to understand the demography of who is attending the Emergency department for assault related injuries to build the wider picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

These findings highlight the importance of data collection on ethnicity data so reasons can be explored further.

Views of local professionals on ethnicity and culture related to violence

A key theme identified in engagement with local professionals was around cultural differences in perception of and approach to violence. In particular, level of acceptance and tolerance was reported to vary between communities. For example, in some communities there is an increased acceptability of using weapons in fights.

“(some people have) grown up in a world where violence is normalised. Some patients...could not see the problem with being stabbed, whereas...we’re like they are massive incidents, it doesn’t happen, it’s not a normal thing”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Reporting of serious violence is also recognised to vary between groups, where some minority ethnic backgrounds may be less inclined to report episodes of violence.

“Different cultural thought process when it comes to offences...very, very much under-reporting from (some) communities in relation to domestic violence...”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

A reflection was that serious violence needs to be considered within the local cultural landscape and that different approaches might be required for different communities.

4.5.3 - Sex

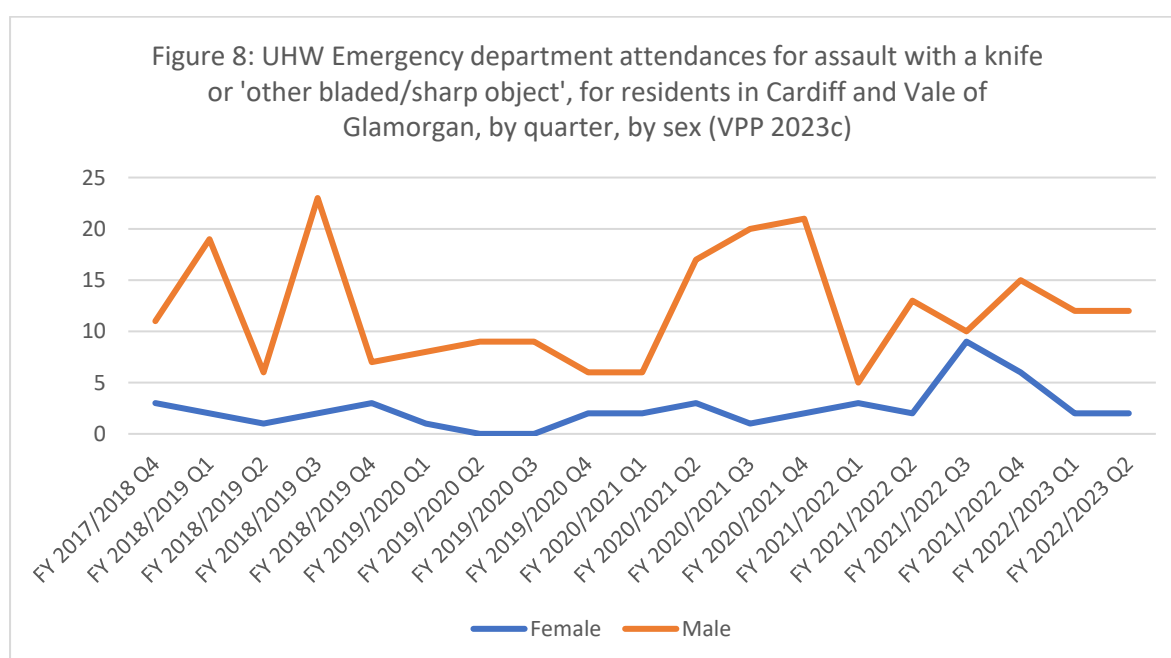
Sex of suspects/perpetrators of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

In 2022, for Violence Against Person Offences, 68% of suspects in Cardiff and 68% of suspects in Vale of Glamorgan were male (VPP 2023b), meaning that males are over-represented compared to the general population demography, however this is in-line with the national picture for serious violence with male sex known to be an individual risk factor (WHO 2015).

Sex of victims of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

In 2022, of the 1442 total attendances for assaults to UHW Emergency Department, 994 (69%) were male and 448 (31%) were female, with the proportion of males even higher when looking specifically at knife and other bladed/sharp object assaults: from January 2018 – September 2022, 196/228 (86%) from Cardiff were male, and 33/47 (70%) from Vale of Glamorgan were male (VPP 2023c).

Whilst males have consistently presented in a higher number than females, there has been fluctuation over time, and in Quarter 3 of 2021/22, there was a peak of females attending with this type of injury (Figure 8 - VPP 2023c).



Local professionals' views on people involved with violence by sex

Overall, when referring to violence local professionals typically referred to perpetrators and victims of the male sex. However, local professionals did highlight a perceived trend with increasing numbers of girls and young women being involved with violence.

"An escalation in violence amongst young women and the level of violence between girls, this is something that's happening in high schools in particular, but also the community."

Cardiff SAFE partnership

"Girls have become just as violent sometimes"

British Transport Police

The trend of increasing violence involving girls and young women has been observed through the education sector, where increased proportions of girls are now requiring referrals for their behaviour.

The pupil referral unit "going back 5-10 years, we wouldn't send girls there – 1 girl amongst 30 boys. And now we're seeing very similar equal numbers."

Cardiff Education

There was also a perspective that girls might be disproportionately punished for behaviours, compared to boys who perform similar offences.

"...another pattern – a lot of girl violence. 3-4 girls on one. They've been quite harshly punished for those offences, more so than boys"

Cardiff Youth Justice Services

However, national Youth Justice statistics for England and Wales to year ending 2021 reported that the number of girls as a proportion of the total number of children who received a caution or sentence (for any crime) fell to its lowest level at 13%, down from 15% to year ending 2020 (Youth Justice Board 2022). Only 6% of proven offences for girls deemed most serious (Gravity score 5-8) compared to 17% of proven offences by boys (Youth Justice Board 2022). Whilst this does not provide information on the appropriateness of offences, it does indicate that although boys are more frequently involved in offences, there is still a cohort of girls who are involved in serious offences that might require further monitoring and support.

4.5.4 - Relationship of attacker to the victim

The most common relationship of the attacker to the person attending the UHW Emergency Department with an assault-related attendance was 'stranger' (746/1442 51.7%). However, local professionals reported a perceived reluctance of victims to report or share information about their attacker so this may not be a true representation of the overall picture. The next most common relationship reported was an acquaintance or friend, reported in 21% of cases (303/1442) (VPP 2023c).

4.5.5 - Assault on public sector workers

An area of concern raised by local professionals in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is around violence experienced by public sector workers from members of the public. This includes attacks on police, on other emergency responders (such as fire and rescue, and ambulance service), teachers, enforcement officers, and other council workers who have a public-facing role.

Between 2018-19 to 2022-23, in Cardiff 20 Attacks on Fire and Rescue crews were reported, with the most common attack being “objects thrown at firefighters/appliances” (60%), as well as Verbal Abuse (30%), Harassment (5%) and Physical Abuse (5%). Between 2018-19 to 2022-23 in Vale of Glamorgan, 7 attacks on Fire and Rescue crews were reported, including Verbal Abuse (57%), Other acts of aggression (29%) and Objects thrown at firefighters/appliances (14%) (SWFRS 2023).

Data from April-January 2022/23, compared to the same period of 2021/22, looking at assaults on constables and other emergency workers from Police data, has shown similar or reduced levels of violence in both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan (Table 5). However, this data only demonstrates the reported incidents, so may not capture all assaults experienced by emergency workers during these periods.

Table 5: Comparison of Police data covering April-January 2021/22 to April-January 2022/23 on the numbers of assaults on emergency workers in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan (King P 2023a and 2023b).						
	Cardiff			Vale of Glamorgan		
	2021/22	2022/23	Difference	2021/22	2022/23	Difference
Assault with Injury on a constable	72	72	0	10	7	-3
Assault without injury on a constable	176	164	-12	19	22	+3
Assault on emergency workers (other than constables)	25	13	-12	18	12	-6

Whilst no specific data is presented in this report due to time constraints, prison officers and staff are another important group vulnerable to assaults to be considered by partners.

In the stakeholder workshops, whilst Cardiff partnership were not aware of any increases to assaults on staff, representatives from Vale of Glamorgan council highlighted that staff employed by the council were experiencing increasing levels of threats of violence and violence, with the impression that the cost-of-living crisis is having a profound impact on the public’s tolerance levels and restraint.

Regarding service users and violence against council staff “People are coming into the offices and demanding answers... violence starting at verbal aggression is creeping up... threat and risk and the potential of leading to serious violence is on the cards”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

These findings indicate the importance of promoting and supporting the safety of public sector workers, and also highlighting the need for a focus on evidence-based approaches towards preventing violence looking at risk factors such as how to support people experiencing poverty or deprivation so that their behaviours don’t escalate to violence.

4.6 Wider effects of violence on communities in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Evidence on the wider effects of serious violence on communities in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

It is not just the perpetrator and victims who are affected by serious violence. Indirect impacts of violence include individual factors such as financial loss, physical harm, and impact on communities and wider society such as fear of crime and increased use of services for support such as health and victim services (Stripe N 2022). Harm from crimes can be considered in terms of the harm level (individual, community, institutional or societal level) as well as the type of harm (physical, emotional or psychological, financial or economic, community safety, and privacy) (Stripe N 2022).

The South Wales Serious Youth Violence SNA presents the crime harm score index for South Wales, which indicates the harm caused by offending within a particular area, rather than just the overall volume of crime. This estimates that for both domestic violence and non-domestic violence occurrences, overall Cardiff has the highest crime index compared to other local authorities in South Wales, and Vale of Glamorgan one of the lowest (Walker A 2023). The reasons for this are likely to be multi-factorial and include aspects such as the differences in demography between the two populations and the nature of the settings between urban and rural.

Evidence gathered from local professionals on the effect of serious violence on communities in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Local professionals in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan reported from their own experiences and perceptions that serious violence has a far-reaching impact and recognised the effect on those who are directly involved with the violence but also the wider community.

The most commonly referred to concepts in the engagement sessions with local professionals (Figure 9) included the effect of serious crime on perception of an area, feeling unsafe, and the wide-reaching impact on the whole community.



Figure 9: The most frequently referenced concepts identified by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan professionals in the SNA workshops when asked “What are the effects of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?”

Further detail by theme demonstrates the breadth of impact on communities, as perceived by local professionals. This includes wider factors such as housing and education.

Wide-reaching impact

- The impact is felt on the whole community.
- Incidents of serious violence have a “ripple-effect” with the effects potentially spreading very wide to other communities outside of the area and can be driven by word of mouth but also by the media.

Perception of violence

- Even with just a small number of incidents of serious violence, the perception of violence by a community has a big impact on how others see the area.

Safety and fear

- Serious violence leads to others feeling unsafe, leading to “no-go areas” or avoidance of key areas, which can in-turn perpetuate violence in those areas.
- Serious violence generally causes fear amongst people, this includes those who have been involved with or witnessed serious violence with a reluctance to report, and more generally in those who have heard about the violence.

Economic impact

- There is an effect on the economy from serious violence, including the effect on house prices in areas associated with violence, impacting local people’s ability to get insurance or raising insurance premiums, and affecting local businesses and trade.

Impact on education

- Education is affected by serious violence, and in particular it has been noted that a younger cohort than previously seen is engaging in serious violence.

Potential positive impact

- There are potentially positive impacts where serious violence in an area can lead to increased investment and support in an area, leading to more positive outcomes for the community.

These findings indicate the importance to consider how to continue to and strengthen support to communities who are involved in violence, through an evidence-based approach, as the effect of violence is not limited to just the perpetrator and direct victim. Part of this work involves identifying hotspot areas for violence where intervention could be targeted or prioritised.

4.7 – Where serious violence is happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

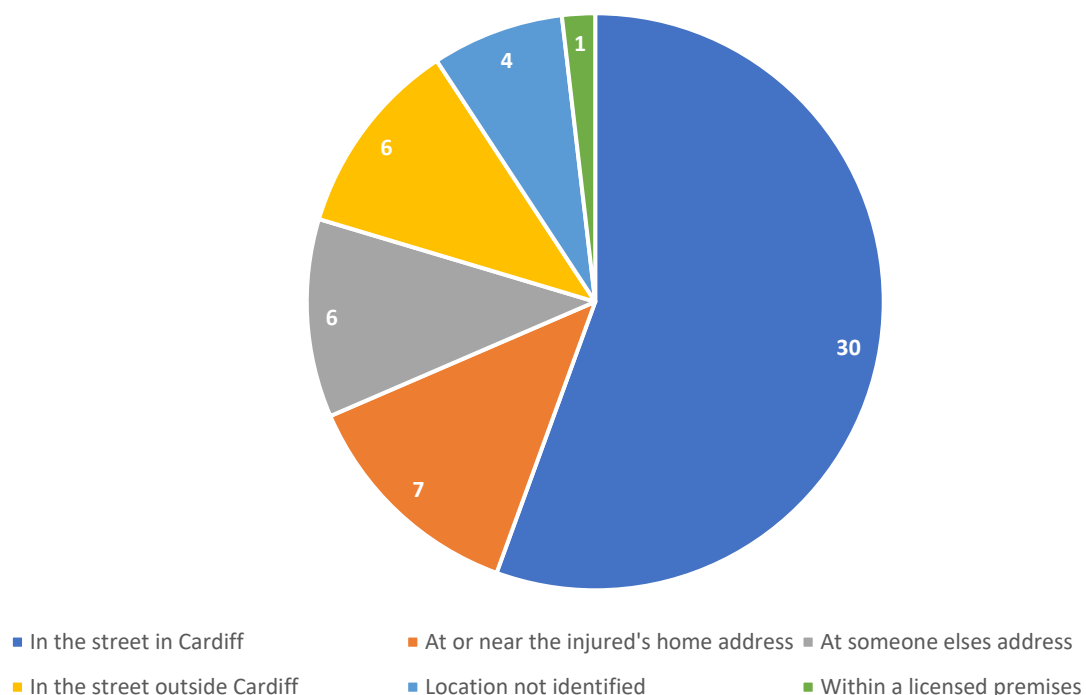
4.7.1 - Information on the location and hotspots of serious violence offences in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Work on hotspots of violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan has been conducted elsewhere. Local crime profiles (King P. 2023a and 2023b) have provided partners with hotspot areas at street level, based on cross-referenced police and healthcare data along the principles of the 'Cardiff Model'⁵ (Shepherd J 2023). A commissioned piece of work is also being completed on identifying violence hotspots to a 400m² area - a UK-wide initiative which all Violence Prevention Units need to complete. Overall, hotspots of violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are predominantly located in more urban areas and are more prevalent in areas with higher levels of deprivation (WIMD 2019).

4.7.2 Type of places where serious violence offences are occurring in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

In Cardiff, most assaults have occurred in public on the street (Figure 10 – King P. 2023a). In Vale of Glamorgan, the proportion of incidents by type of location is not known, but multiple hotspots by street level have been identified in local crime profiles (available to relevant partners on request – King P. 2023b).

Figure 10: The type of location/area where assaults in Cardiff April 2022-January 2023, which resulted in injury caused by knife or sharp object, took place, derived from UHW Emergency Department data (King P 2023a)



⁵ The Cardiff Model follows the principle that “the majority of violent incidents which result in emergency hospital treatment are not reported to police”, recognising the value in healthcare data as well as police data for recording violence-related incidents. (Shepherd J 2023).

4.7.3 - Evidence gathered from local professionals on types of location where serious violence is occurring in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

During engagement through the workshops, local professionals also highlighted some areas perceived to have higher incidences of serious violence or areas of concern. These included:

- areas around supported living accommodation
- the train network between the Valleys, Cardiff and Barry
- school-related violence

4.7.3.1 Supported living accommodation

Supported housing is recognised to accommodate “some of the most vulnerable people in our society” (UK Government 2020). Homelessness is recognised to be associated with increased risk of serious violence offending or re-offending, as well as associated with many other risk factors such as substance misuse and mental health issues (WHO 2015; CVRPB 2022). There are strong links working links with Probation services in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan when perpetrators are released from prison (CVRPB 2022), with an estimated 47% of people released from HMP Cardiff in 2019 without a home to go to (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 2019). However, areas around supported living accommodation were still highlighted as a perceived area of concern from local professionals. This is likely to reflect the complexity of risk factors many people accessing supported living accommodation face, including the increased likelihood of having experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences. This highlights the importance of adopting an evidence-based approach towards violence prevention through a trauma-informed approach, and further exploration through the hotspot work conducted elsewhere to whether the reported levels of crime are in-keeping with this perception.

4.7.3.2 The train network between the Valleys, Cardiff and Barry

Multiple local professionals highlighted the public transport network, specifically the train lines as an area of concern. This included a focus on Barry Island (end of the trainline) as a hotspot for violence, attracting young people from Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff and beyond to engage with serious violence and violence-associated behaviours particularly over the summer months. This is important for both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, as whilst the violence might be occurring in Barry, the people involved in the violence are from all areas.

“We had a large number of issues with the kids in Barry Island and the Train System... deal with the aftermath of the Barry Island fights”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

“Train stations where you’ll see antisocial behaviour. The link then from antisocial behaviour into violence then increases because it’s so easily accessible... literally young people from all over will descend onto Barry”

Cardiff and Vale Third Sector

British Transport Police also highlighted that the train lines are a significant focus regarding serious violence. There was a perception that the landscape of violence associated with the train lines has changed over time, with an observed change from predominantly alcohol and drug intoxication-related violence more focussed in central locations such as Central Cardiff to increased youth and gang-related threatening behaviour and violence tending to occur on the Valley and Barry Island lines.

The British Transport Police are already linked in with various Violence Prevention workstreams in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, but the issue of data and intelligence sharing was highlighted as an area and opportunity to strengthen established links.

“...there’s a lot of these people don’t drive – so how do they get around? The transport network. So it’s a good likelihood that we’re going to have issues with these kids as well or they will come into contact with us. And I think people forget that. I think sharing of information definitely could be better between all agencies”

British Transport Police Representative

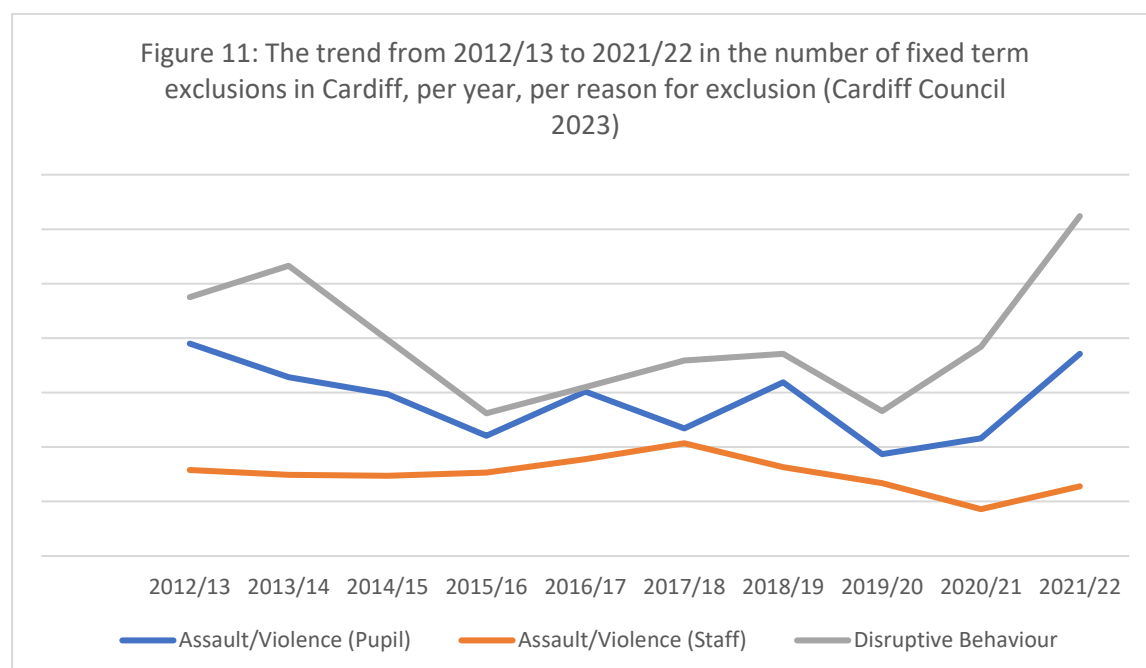
4.7.3.3 School-related violence

School-related violence was highlighted as an area of concern by local professionals. This was reported by those who engage with children and young people through a variety of settings including Cardiff and Vale third sector, Cardiff Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and Criminal Justice Services. Whilst it reportedly involves a relatively small proportion of pupils, it was felt that the effects can be far-reaching.

Data on school-related violence is limited. The reasons for this include that many children and young people may be reluctant to report violence, that violence may often be managed within the school setting with the records not shared more widely, and that some aspects relating to violence for example carrying weapons and selling vapes can be hard to quantify. Quantitative and qualitative data therefore feed into the information below.

Evidence on school-related violence from data on School exclusions

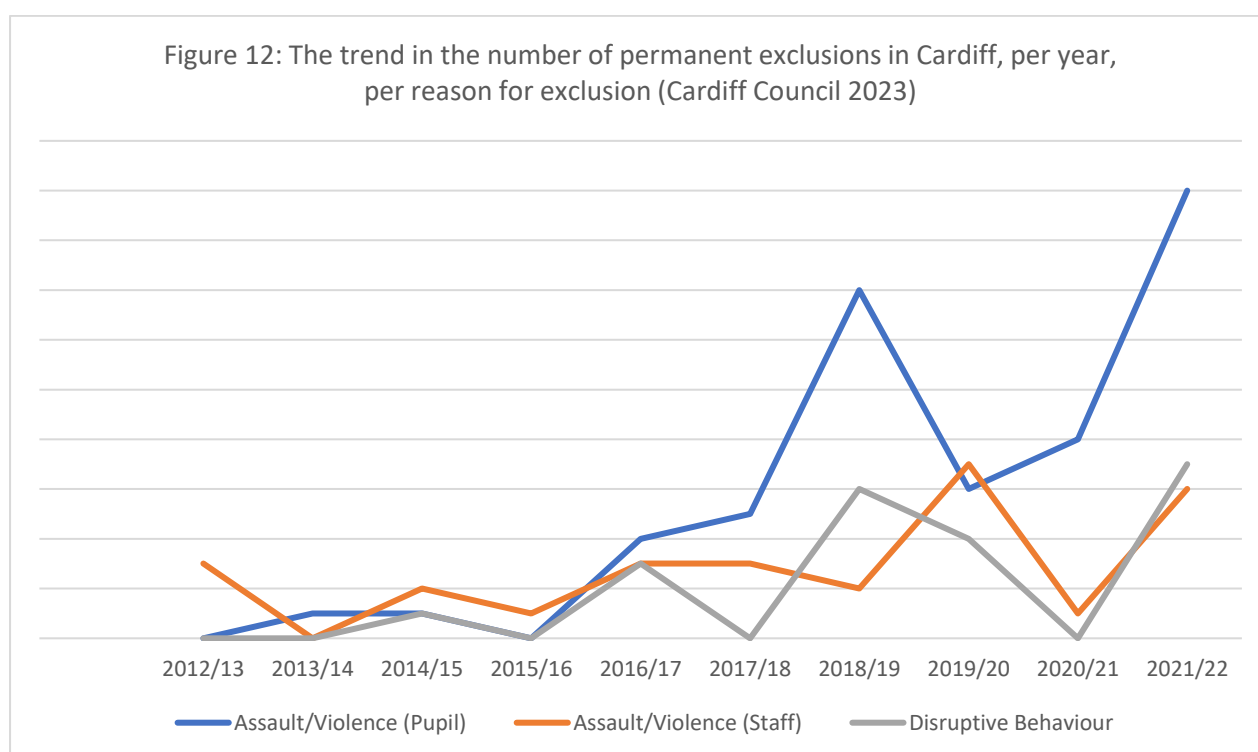
School exclusion data can indicate the level of violence occurring in the school setting, although detail on the nature of the violence is limited (e.g. whether a weapon was involved or injury occurred). In Cardiff, the number of school exclusions both fixed term and permanent have overall been increasing with the three main causes being disruptive behaviour, assault/violence against other pupils and assault/violence against staff (Figure 11). Equivalent data from Vale of Glamorgan was not available at the time of writing this report.



Disruptive behaviour was the most common reason for fixed-term exclusion in Cardiff in 2021/22. This is in-keeping with the picture in England, where 41% of fixed-term exclusions were due to persistent disruptive behaviour (GOV UK 2022) and Wales in 2020/21 where 22.9% of fixed-term exclusions of five days or less were due to persistent disruptive behaviour (Welsh Government 2022a).

Permanent exclusions in Cardiff were at the highest level in 2021/22 since 2012/13 (Figure 12). Assault/violence against another pupil was the most common reason for permanent exclusion, with a sharp increase in 2021/22 following a previous smaller peak in 2018/19. All Wales data from 2020/21 also recorded 'physical assault against a pupil' the most common reason for permanent exclusion (34.4%), as well as the most common reason for fixed-term exclusions of five days or more (25.4%) (Welsh Government 2022a). Additional data on exclusions by type of school is available up to 2019/20 (StatsWales 2022a).

These findings support the general perception by local professionals that school-related violence does appear to be increasing overall. However, to gain a more accurate picture of what is happening within the school settings there could be added value in strengthening the sharing of data between schools and relevant partners.



Evidence gathered from local professionals on school-related violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Perceptions on school-related violence and risks included:

- The perceived increase in weapon carrying by children and young people
- Increase in school-related injuries being seen in the Emergency Department
- Selling of vapes and the links to exploitation, Drugs and County Lines.

Weapon carrying in schools

Weapon carrying in schools was one of the most common reasons for schools to record 'concerns' in Cardiff. 'Knife/bladed instrument' was the most commonly reported weapon of concern (Cardiff Council 2023). Public Protection Notices (PPNs) for incidents involving young people and weapons in

Cardiff were most frequently reported for knives/bladed instruments and increased from 2021 to 2022 (Cardiff Council 2023). Whilst equivalent data was not available for Vale of Glamorgan at the time of completing this report, similar perspectives from Vale of Glamorgan local professionals were raised that there is an overall perceived increase in weapon carrying in young people. However, as this is just a perception, it might not represent the true picture of prevalence overall.

“An increase in young people carrying knives into school...seen through facilitation held in schools around knife awareness, and also information received from young people we work with”

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan third sector

Emergency department attendances for school-related assaults

The Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Violence Prevention Team saw 192 patients under the age of 18 in 2022, of which just under half reported their injuries were from school-related assaults (patient reported the assault took place on school property or on the way to/from school), but no schools were named as the assault location (Walker A 2023).

“School-related violence has gone through the roof”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Selling vapes and risk of exploitation

E-cigarettes and vape pens were expressed as a growing area of concern by local professionals. Some examples of children and young people involved in possession of and selling of vape pens were shared, which local professionals were concerned might act as a gateway into other criminal activities, and that there had been some observation of vapes being sold on school premises by school-aged children in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

“Increase in use of vape pens...Children are going to school and selling vapes...knock on effect...exploited by others giving them vapes in payment for selling drugs instead of money...they then sell them in schools and get the money that way. Again that’s going to have a knock on effect and increase violence” **Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan third sector**

It was also recognised that use of e-cigarettes and vape pens, and smoking in general, is known to be associated with multiple risk factors linked to serious violence, including mental health problems, alcohol and other substance misuse, and other health conditions. The causes of serious violence are considered in the next section.

4.8 – The causes of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

4.8.1 What the published literature tells us about the causes, risk and protective factors for serious violence

It is well acknowledged that the causes of violence are multi-factorial, and there is no one simple explanation for why violence occurs. However, there are factors and circumstances which might mean that violence is more or less likely to occur. Data has shown that those who commit an offence related to violence often have multiple risk factors for violence.

In Wales, there has been a significant focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), a collection of 12 factors which can occur in early childhood, which can have a profound effect on later life (Figure 13).



Figure 13: The 12 domains of Adverse Childhood Experiences (Public Health Wales 2015)

Awareness of adverse childhood experiences and providing services with a 'Trauma-informed lens' has been highlighted as a key area of importance in Wales (ACE Hub Wales 2022). The Trauma-Informed approach considers how to support people accessing services who might have experienced previous trauma by taking into account that anybody could have experienced trauma, seeking to avoid retraumatising through behaviours and interactions, and providing a supportive environment so that person feels safe and connected with the service (ACE Hub Wales 2022).

However, not all risk factors are limited to early childhood. The South Wales Serious Youth Violence Strategic Needs Assessment provides an evidence summary of key risk and protective factors for serious violence, building on adverse childhood experiences and considering wider determinants (Walker A 2023). These can broadly be considered under the socio-ecological model categorised by: Individual, Community and Societal, and Relationship factors.

Individual risk factors

Individual risk factors most strongly associated with serious violence linked behaviours (weapons carrying or use, and gang conflict), determined by two UK-based studies, are: male gender, number of siblings in the household, having experienced child maltreatment, lack of self-control, early puberty, experience of victimisation, frequency of truanting, bullying, self-harm, risk taking/gambling, feeling isolated, and having previously committed minor violence, theft, public disorder and/or cybercrime. (Smith and Wynne-McHardy 2019). The World Health Organisation also analysed data on risk factors for violence in children and young people and demonstrated that risk factors vary depending on age/stage in life course (Figure 14).

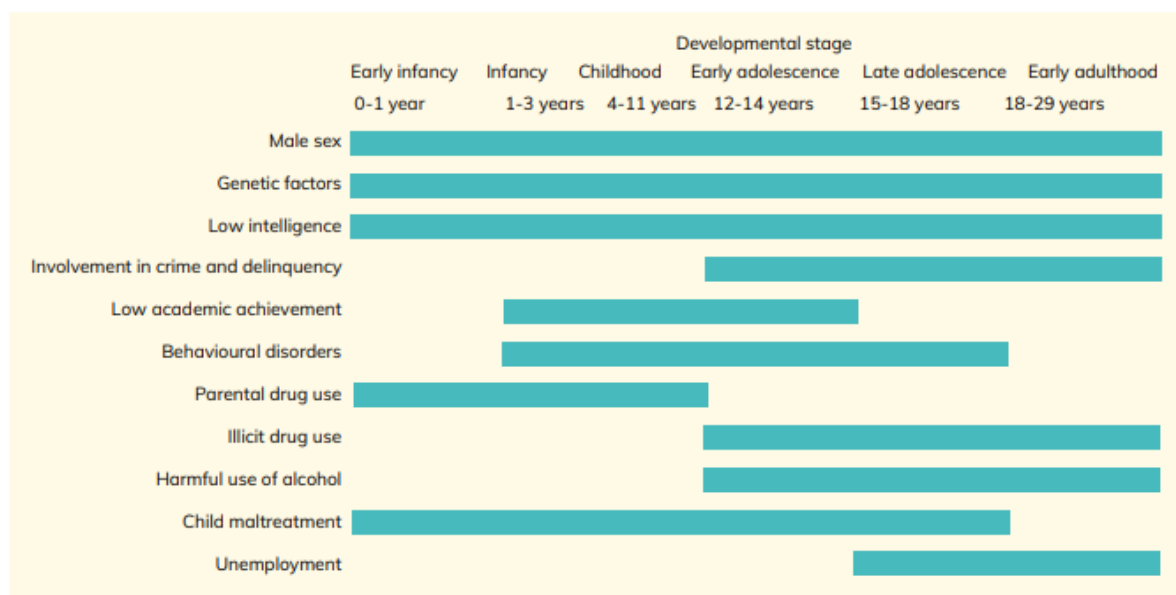


Figure 14: Individual risk factors for youth violence by developmental stage (Adapted by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit from WHO 2015).

Community and societal risk factors

Community and societal risk factors are reported to have a more consistent effect throughout childhood to early adulthood (Figure 15).

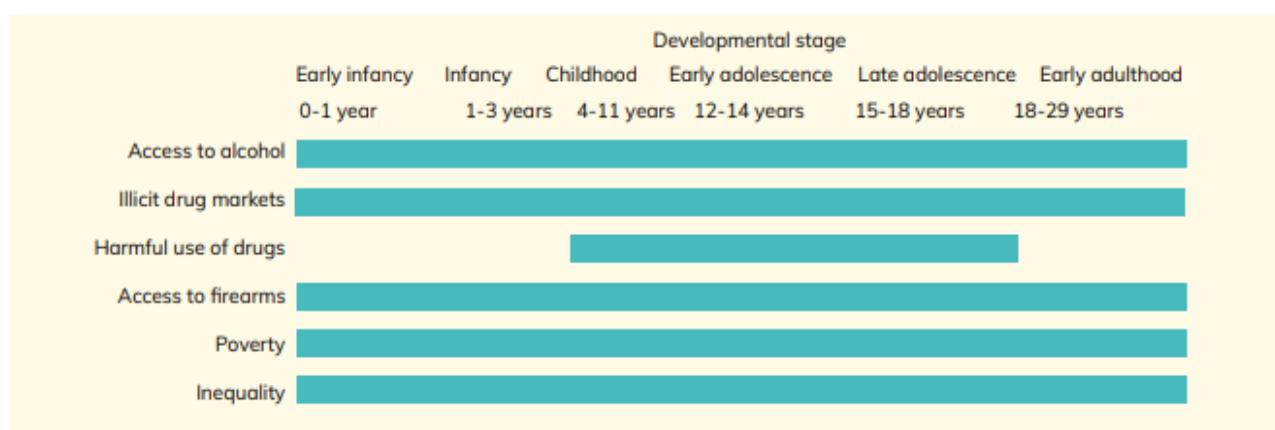


Figure 15: Community and society risk factors for youth violence by developmental stage (Adapted by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit from WHO 2015).

Relationship risk factors

Parental factors and family dynamics have a significant role in being risk or protective factors against involvement in violence in later life, particularly at the earlier stages of childhood and adolescence. (Figure 16). As age increases, the interaction between and influence of peers becomes more important.

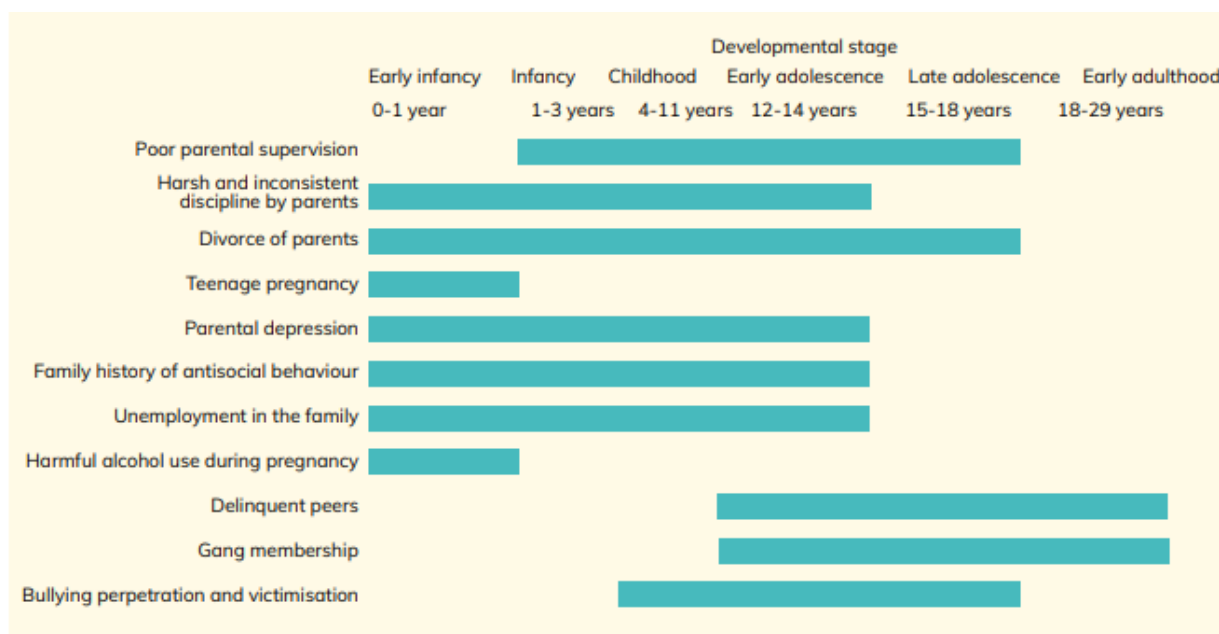


Figure 16: Relationship risk factors for youth violence by developmental stage (Adapted by the Wales Violence Prevention Unit from WHO 2015).

4.8.2 Prevalence of risk and protective factors for serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

A comprehensive overview of the demography and factors affecting the population of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is available in the recently published Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 (CVRPB 2022), which provides an in-depth insight into the wider needs for the population in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan including for Children and Young People in general, Children looked after, Adult Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, and Secure Estate. A summary of the prevalence of some risk factors in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is available in Appendix 3.

A key societal aspect to consider for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan include consideration around poverty, inequality, and deprivation, recognising that there are areas of established inequality across Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. Inequalities and deprivation are associated with most other risk factors for serious violence and wider health and social care needs. In particular, areas in the Southern Arc in Cardiff and East of Barry experience higher overall levels of deprivation, but deprivation is not exclusive to this area (CVRPB 2022; WIMD 2019). Partners working with and strengthening the collaboration with local public health team colleagues could enhance the response to reaching the areas most in need.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality considers the fact that an individual's risk for serious violence should be considered not only in terms of risk or protective factors present, but also how different factors may interact and link together. It can be a complex picture but comes down to some key principles of inequality of power, interaction of social identities and how the wider systems that we live in can influence how much a risk factor might affect us (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017). The Wheel of Power/Privilege highlights some key components that contribute (Figure 17).

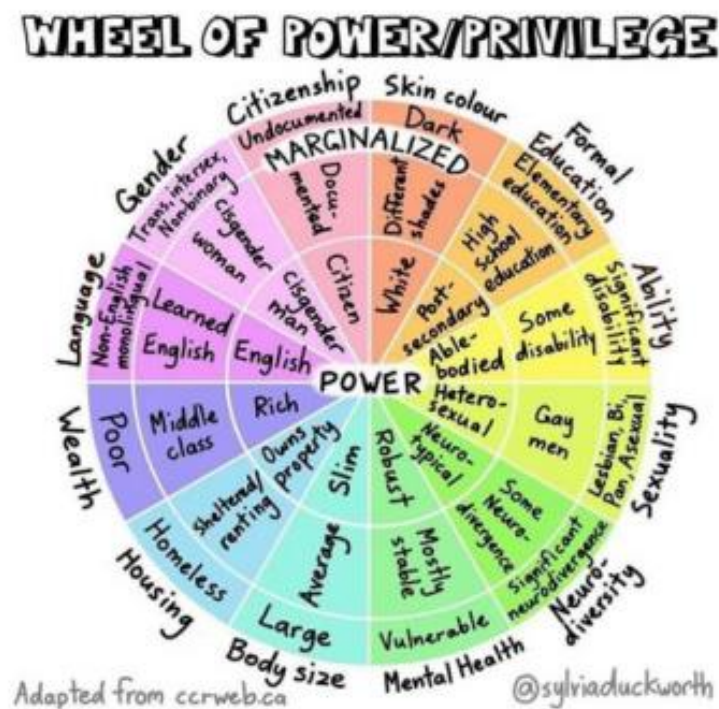


Figure 17: A demonstration of intersectionality using a wheel of power/privilege

It is important to note that the presence of a risk factor(s), or absence of a protective factor(s), does not mean that violence will definitely occur, and many people with multiple risk factors go on to not be involved with violence. Similarly, some people who have no risk factors will go on to commit offences (Smith and Wynne-McHardy 2019). Nevertheless, understanding and reducing risk factors is likely to have a beneficial effect at a population level.

4.8.3 - Evidence gathered from local professionals providing opinions of why violence is occurring in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

As well as the prevalence of risk and protective factors in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, the views of local professionals on why serious violence is occurring provides valuable insight into the local landscape and potential opportunities for future action. The word-cloud below (Figure 18) summarises the most frequently referred to concepts which emerged from the workshops including drugs, culture, lack of services and mental health.



Figure 18: The most frequently identified concepts by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan professionals in the SNA workshops when asked “What do you think the causes of serious violence are in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?”

Through discussion of the concepts raised (Figure 18), local professionals provided their opinions and some local examples to help build the picture on what is causing serious violence locally, which could provide opportunity for action.

Sense of belonging

Local professionals also recognised that where a child or young person does not find a sense of belonging in the community or within their family, they might find this within the setting of a gang. This indicates that some young people might actually have a perceived benefit to being involved with violence and wider behaviours.

“Home life has become more challenging for a lot of families...I think lots of young people seek identity and comfort from their gang”

Cardiff Council

“... a lot of young adults, young kids are facing maybe broken homes, problems within social care, and becoming part of the gang culture is a sense of belonging”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

A wider issue around the lack of 'safe spaces', reduction of youth club provision and places in general for people to go to and feel part of a community was raised from the perspective of some local professionals. Whilst this may not be a generalisable finding, it highlights that mapping existing services and provision could support partners in identifying what is available and identifying gaps for future provision through a collaborative approach.

Perspectives of violence

Local professionals highlighted there is a perceived lack of perspective on the reason for the violence in the first place in some of those perpetrators of violence, with a perception that over time the reaction to trivial factors has escalated, in particular in the context of weapon carrying.

"...somebody insulting or disrespecting you and an expectation then backed up by your peers that you need to do something to deal with that... even if it's a trivial petty insult over a computer game...the sort of thing that people ought to be in a position to brush off, I think sometimes younger people don't rationalise it in the same way. And when you have the risk of people carrying weapons and put those two alongside each other, you can see how you get a disproportionate level of harm resulting from things that maybe 20 or 30 years ago would have been a punch up in a playground or outside school"

South Wales Police

Following the release of the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government 2018), former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick commented that there were "lots of reasons for an increase in violent crime, including the drug markets, changes in people's financial and economic circumstances, the glamorisation of violence, and the role of social media in encouraging gang violence" (Lipscombe *et al.* 2018). There is also a general perception, influenced by factors such as media reporting, that homicide is more common than it is.

"...social media and public perception...it could be one isolated incident, but actually the perception would be it's happening all the time"

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Perception of serious violence could have wider repercussions, such as an increase likelihood of wanting to defend yourself in case of violence. A mismatch between perception of violence and actual levels of violence were reported in 2016 using Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) data. At that point, they identified that most people perceived that violence was at a higher rate than what was actually reported to police (ONS 2017). This highlights the importance for partners to continue to work together in obtaining the most accurate picture of violence locally and sharing this with the public to reduce the risk of any misconceptions.

No deterrent for violence

Although interventions work towards preventing an individual being 'criminalised', it is recognised that there are some potential downsides to not formally recognising the crime and level of violence, including that it may act as incentive for others to commit violence where there are no consequences to their actions:

"I don't think there's an outright deterrent. I don't think the way we deal with certain crimes is strong enough... I'm an advocate for not criminalising young people, but there's certain lines and when you cross that line you've got to understand there's a consequence."

British Transport Police

Lack of criminalisation of violent incidents and behaviours can also have an impact on the estimated need of an area, which filters into the funding and resource for an area:

“Maybe some of these young people do need to be criminalised to actually identify that there’s a wider issue, which opens you up then to more funding...that you might need more staff to staff that. It’s almost like a hidden picture”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Social media

“School related violence...from the doorstep, school, walk home...organized attacks via social media. And it’s just getting worse unfortunately... and a high prevalence of ours don’t report to the police. That’s the problem.”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Whilst social media and video game use have not been explicitly reported as a risk factor for serious violence by most prominent sources, the influence that social media and video games can have on violence was raised as a particular area of concern in the stakeholder engagement. The role of social media in influencing violence in children and young people has been reported in several national reports (Irwin-Rogers and Pinkney 2017; Müller and Schwarz 2018).

There was a perception that the landscape of violence is shifting, with increasing violence in schools, gang-related violence involving young people and a change in the culture of young people with external influences such as social media, computer games and television having a significant influence.

Some children and young people in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan were felt to lack perspective on the severity of violence and the consequences of their actions. Social media, television and computer games were highlighted as contributing factors.

“Normalisation of violence now through the media...television, computer games... it’s almost taken the drama and realism out of it. They’ll spend hours on the Xbox and then walk outside and there’s no differential between the world. They’ve just been immersed on a computer screen or TV to picking up a knife and stabbing somebody or slashing somebody – there’s no differential”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Section 5: How is serious violence currently being managed and addressed in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?

5.1 Evidence on how the Criminal Justice System in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is currently used in relation to serious violence

Youth Custody

The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 provided an estimate of children and young people entering the Criminal Justice system in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan (CVRPB 2022). Approximately 10-21 young people aged 14-18 years per year from Cardiff, and up to 6 per year from Vale of Glamorgan, were in custody between 2016-2020 (CVRPB 2022). There are no Young Offender Institutes (YOI) within Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, with young offenders from the area attending Parc Prison Young Offender institute in Bridgend.

Adult prison population for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 provides an overview of HMP Cardiff and the characteristics of prisoners (CVRPB 2022). As of February 2023, HMP Cardiff was at overcrowded capacity with a population of 760 men, where uncrowded capacity is for 534, but under the operational capacity of 779 (MOJ 2023a). Whilst this is not limited to usual residents for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan and is not limited to just violence-related offences, this does indicate that the demand for prison spaces is currently outweighing the number of spaces the prison was initially designed for. This could be a reflection of the increasing population size, improvements in identifying those who have committed offences, or other factors relating to changes in the population and criminal justice landscape.

There are currently no prison facilities for women in Wales, so any female who needs to be incarcerated is sent to a facility in England. This was raised as an important issue as it means that support structures in place, to help with reintegration back into the community and society, are not always established.

“The lack of provision for female prisoners in Wales is poor...it cuts all your family ties, and without that support work both in custody and out in community – I think that is something that’s needed for all people released from prison”

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Third Sector

“Having more provision in Wales around that (support work in custody and community) would help our female population especially”

Prison Services covering Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

For female perpetrators, in the 5 months of July - November 2021, 55 women were released from HMP Eastwood Park to Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan and 9 more women released directly from court after a period of remand in HMP Eastwood Park (CVRPB 2022). This indicates that whilst below the volume of males in secure estate from Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, there are still a number of women who are subject to the additional challenges of being incarcerated further from home. Prison services themselves are not devolved, and therefore the delivery is outside of the scope of what local partners can deliver. However, wider services in the community supporting women should be in consideration of the additional challenges faced by spending time in secure estate out of the area.

Youth Offending Teams

Local professionals working in Youth Justice Services provided their perspective that there was currently a high level of workload for supporting young people in the community, and that there were a lot of young people requiring support leading to the services being stretched:

“It does feel it’s becoming a bit unmanageable in Cardiff at the moment”

Cardiff Youth Justice Services

The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 reported that the most important need identified in children accessing youth offending teams was emotional well-being and mental health, with other needs including substance misuse support, speech and language provision, and health promotion (CVRPB 2022).

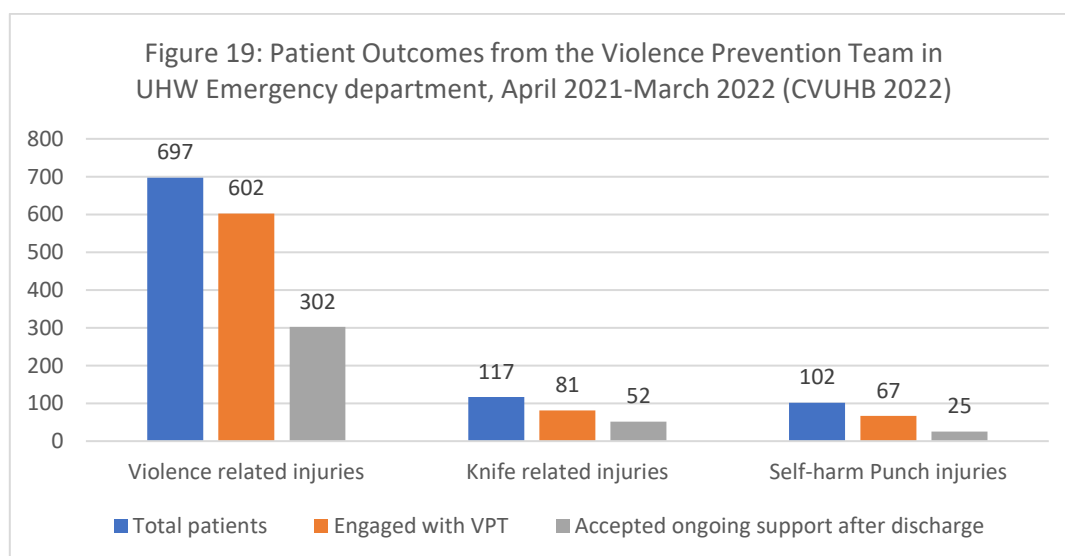
Probation services

For adult probation services, local professionals also raised the fact that there is a large demand for services and reflected on the challenges discussed above around women being incarcerated outside of Wales and therefore providing some additional challenges for supporting these women. The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 (CVRPB 2022) also conducted some focus groups with service users who were homeless and spent some time in prison, who had reported a lack of continuity between the probation service and housing services raising the risk of homelessness and re-offending (CVRPB 2022). This highlights the need for continued work around consideration of wider factors associated with risk of violence through an evidence-based approach.

5.2 Access to universal and targeted provision for services outside of the Criminal Justice system for when violence occurs

Emergency department Violence Prevention Team

The Violence Prevention Team in University Hospital of Wales Emergency Department pro-actively identify people attending the emergency department with assault-related injuries and are able to provide support to these individuals. Figure 19 demonstrates that most people who presented with injuries related to assault engaged with the Violence Prevention Team, and many received some ongoing support after discharge. 337 patients had subsequent MARFS (Multi-Agency Referral Forms) or AS1 (Adult at risk) referrals submitted from April 2021 to March 2022 (CVUHB 2022), demonstrating that preventative action is being promoted at the hospital front door.



Safeguarding

A full report of safeguarding services for children and adults at risk in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is produced on an annual basis by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB). The most recent report, from 2021/22 (CVUHB 2022) is available from the health board on request. Safeguarding data provides some of the picture of children experiencing adverse childhood experiences in the area. Overall, approximately 4550 safeguarding children referrals and 289 safeguarding adult referrals were made through the health board in 2021/22 (CVUHB 2022), indicating a high number of people in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan who could have risk factors towards serious violence.

Cardiff Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

All agencies within the MASH report an increase in the number of referrals and calls made to the MASH in each consecutive year. “An increase of cases discussed has been apparent during this period with up to 10 child strategy meetings per day, 10 high risk daily discussions per day as well as up to three adult strategy meetings held” (CVUHB 2022) highlighting there is a growing demand for services.

Contextual safeguarding

High-risk panels to help address Contextual Safeguarding (extra-familial risk factors) are run weekly in Cardiff, driven by Children’s services with partners including Safeguarding, youth offending services, adult services, police, children’s services legal team and education. Young people, aged 18 years and under, are referred in if they are identified as being at imminent or high risk of serious harm. These are part of the SAFE (Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation) model, which was established to ensure a multi-agency response. Locality operational groups have also been piloted to focus on areas of concern, with input from local schools, local police (e.g. PCSOs), children’s services, Media Academy Cymru, Neighbourhood Housing and Early Help.

National Referral Mechanism

The ‘National Referral Mechanism’ (NRM) is “a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support” (Home Office 2022b). In 2022, there were 286 NRM referrals within the South Wales Police Force Area, including 58 from Cardiff Council and 12 from Vale of Glamorgan Council (Home Office 2022c). Other referrals were from South Wales Police (59), Home Office UK Visas and Immigration (43) and Home Office Immigration Enforcement (22), and other local authority areas in South Wales. Nationally in the UK in 2022, around 9 out of 10 referrals receive ‘positive reasonable grounds’ and 87% of adult victims and 92% of child victims received ‘positive conclusive grounds’ (Home Office 2023c).

Third sector support

Multiple third sector organisations provide support to potential and actual perpetrators or victims of serious violence. Organisations include: St Giles Trust, Action for Children, and Media Action Cymru.

Other services and interventions

There are many other examples of services and processes available in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan which are not described here, and there is currently no one place where all services and interventions are mapped. In order to support partners going forwards, a mapping exercise to provide an overview of available services would strengthen awareness of what is available. However, during the process of engaging with local stakeholders, some examples of what services are currently being delivered was shared to start to build the wider picture om Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan.

5.3 - Evidence gathered from local professionals on current examples of services for serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Engagement with local professionals gave recognition of lots of drive and ambition towards reducing violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. A full mapping exercise has not been conducted as part of this needs assessment, but it is recognised that wider awareness of what other services are delivering could be beneficial for partners. Some specific examples of work being conducted in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan relating to serious violence is summarised in Figure 20.



Figure 20: Some examples of projects and work in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan where local professionals were asked “What is currently been done to tackle serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?”

Factors which local professionals perceived to make an intervention more effective included having past offenders and people with lived experience contributing to interventions and using creative approaches to engage people in interventions such as a VR experience. Whilst evaluation of these interventions is not available for this report, the perception from professionals that these are useful ways to engage people in violence prevention services could be explored further.

5.3.1 What the evidence tells us about how effective violence-related service provision is in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

The scope of services involved with violence-related service provision in Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, is vast. Individual services monitor the effectiveness of their service through key performance indicators and internal mechanisms. It can be challenging to build an overall picture of effectiveness of violence-related services due to the complex and inter-related nature of different partners, the evolving serious violence landscape and the multi-factorial nature of violence itself. Therefore, a joined-up approach between different partners will continue to help demonstrate effectiveness through data sharing and links between services.

Section 6 – What should be done to address serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

6.1 What the published literature tells us about an evidence-based approach to serious violence

There are broadly two main areas for opportunity regarding serious violence, as highlighted in the Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government 2018). The first is around managing serious violence that is occurring ensuring adequate resource and support is available for a proportionate and appropriate response. The second is around prevention of serious violence occurring, which includes preventing initial violence from occurring, preventing other behaviours escalating into serious violence, and preventing reoffending if serious violence has already occurred. The two areas are interlinked, and all authorities play a valuable role in both components.

There is extensive evidence available on serious violence and violence prevention. The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) has produced evidence-based reports relating to the prevention of violence, and toolkits have been produced which provide evidence of interventions assessed by quality.

Reaching those who need it most with interventions should be a balance between using risk factors to target those at most risk with ensuring the interventions have enough reach to those who might not have risk factors but could benefit from the intervention. Evidence suggests a non-targeted approach delivering an intervention to all 14-year-olds regardless of any risk factors would result in just 3.5% of the intervention 'spend' going to those genuinely 'at risk', increasing up to 50% if multiple risk factors are used (Smith and Wynne-McHardy 2019).

It is recommended that local research and data are used when determining how to target interventions, identifying those with the strongest combination of risk factors to reach those who are most at risk rather than one or two criteria. However, considering the type of intervention and cost involved per participant will determine the extent risk factors need to be considered. Where cost per participant is low (for example a multi-media campaign), the intervention can be less targeted to have a wider reaching effect (Smith and Wynne-McHardy 2019).

There is a substantial evidence-base available which details what interventions are currently known to work to prevent or reduce the risk of serious violence. Key resources which present the evidence include:

- [The Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit](#)
- [The Early Intervention Foundation Guidebook](#)
- [College of Policing Crime Reduction Toolkit](#)

The Wales Violence Prevention Unit (VPU) have also completed some evidence assessments, including on what works to prevent [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(VAWDASV\)](#).

Some key themes that emerge through all the guidance and toolkits regarding recommended interventions is the recognition that serious violence is complex, and that a holistic and supportive approach is required to support people at risk of offending or reoffending. This relates back to the trauma-informed approach and ensuring that any services delivered should be done so in recognition that many people could have experienced previous trauma.

6.2. Examples from other areas on work against serious violence

There is a vast amount of work and examples from other areas in relation to serious violence, and serious violence prevention. The full extent will not be presented in this needs assessment, however a few key texts which outline and highlight examples from other areas are signposted to below:

- [A report from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners \(APCC\)](#) with 11 examples of how serious violence is being prevented across Police and Crime Commissioners in areas across England and Wales.
- [Another report from APCC](#) which includes some examples of prevention interventions in other areas
- [A 2020 report from APCC](#) on all the violence reduction units in England and Wales.
- [A Local Government Association report](#) with case study examples of interventions to reduce serious violence in England through a public health approach.

6.3 Evidence on what should be done to address serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Enforcement and criminal justice-based activity is a critical part of a public health approach towards tackling serious violence, with valuable and vital work carried out by police and other partners in the Criminal Justice Service and beyond to identify and support those who have been involved with serious violence (Home office guidance dec 2022). The public health approach should therefore be complimentary to the work of the police and other partners in relation to enforcement and criminal justice-based activity. (Home Office guidance Dec 2022) In respect of this, there are two broad areas of focus for serious violence:

1. What should be done to tackle current or future serious violence that is occurring?
2. What should be done to prevent serious violence?

6.3.1 Evidence gathered from local professionals' opinions on what should be done to tackle serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Overall, local professionals felt there were a number of ways in which serious violence could be tackled in Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan. The most frequently emerging concepts were around providing continuity and long-term sustainability of service delivery, visibility of services and authority presence in the community, adopting a trauma-informed approach by recognising that those who have offended and are accessing services are likely to have experienced multiple examples of trauma in their past, and providing early intervention so that those who have offended receive quick support and help to reduce the risk of reoffending in the future (Figure 21).

Looking in more detail with the engagement from the local professionals, the following factors were raised as areas for consideration, which have been grouped into themes below. As these are local professional opinion, they may not be more widely generalisable however they offer valuable perspective on what some local professionals see as key priorities for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. The themes are relevant to both local authority areas, and therefore have not been presented separately by local authority area.



Figure 21: The most commonly referenced terms identified by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan professionals in the SNA workshops when asked "What could be done to tackle serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?"

6.3.2. Key themes identified by local professionals as priorities and opportunities for tackling violence when offences have occurred in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Data quality and sharing

- Information and intelligence sharing so that it builds the bigger picture

Service operation and capacity

- Increasing on the ground resources and visibility of the police and other authority figures to act as a deterrent and also feeling of safety for the community
- Reducing the backlog on services, particularly the courts (so that offences can be managed more quickly, victims receiving more reassurance the violence is being taken seriously and perpetrators seeing a consequence of their actions sooner)

Service reach

- Providing consistent and regular support to people, particularly children and young people, helping them get out of the cycles of reoffending they are in
- Reaching children and young people who aren't in school and education
- Raising awareness of what services are available for residents of both Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, where there are differences in how services are delivered to ensure an equitable offer is available regardless of where a person lives.
- Developing ways to support people who don't meet the threshold for current services but are at risk of future escalation if not managed early. This includes a higher focus on precursors to serious violence, for example graffiti, arson and cruelty to animals.

Service delivery

- Diversionary activities, including those who have been known to services previously or have not managed to change behaviours to date, to reflect that some people have ongoing needs and it is not just the those new to services who need support.
- Increasing preventative and sustainable programmes rather than shorter term or more reactive programmes due to funding
- Recognition that there is no quick fix. Society has been changing and need to try at multiple levels to break the violence cycle.

Whilst some factors are not devolved to Wales and/or represent wider processes such as Police capacity and operation of Courts and waiting list issues, other factors offer opportunity for partners in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan in consideration of how to design and deliver local services. In particular, reaching those who need the support most, establishing and delivering services which are consistent and sustainable, and sharing information across partnerships are all aspects which should be considered.

Some specific examples from local professionals related to how current services are delivered in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is available in Appendix 4.

6.3.3 Evidence gathered from local professionals' on what should be done to prevent serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

In consideration of the risk and protective factors, a holistic approach is required for meeting the local needs to prevent future episodes of serious violence. Local professionals recognised this as an approach to preventing violence, highlighting the need to look at the root causes of violence, raise awareness of risk factors for serious violence, provide early intervention, diversion and long-term support. The most frequently referred to concepts in the engagement sessions with local professionals is presented in Figure 22.

An overarching theme that emerged from the engagement exercise was around taking a broader perspective of violence, and not looking solely at violence but instead the root causes, patterns of different behaviours, exposures and risk factors that could lead to violence and awareness of different traumas and triggers that people might experience. A second theme that emerged was around how prevention could be achieved, including not taking a universal approach as “one size doesn’t fit all” and providing a range of support from parental support, safe spaces in the community, support with housing, employment and other opportunities with recognition that wider factors all contribute and that diversion (not specific to violence but more general) have a role in preventing future violence.

The final main theme was around the sustainability of support and recognising that a structured approach with long-term support is needed rather than a short-term or one-off intervention. Whilst these are expert opinions of local professionals' only and might not be generalisable or represent all views of professionals and service users affected by violence, these key concepts are in-keeping with recommendations from other areas around prevention for serious violence such as those outlined in the Wales Without Violence Framework (Snowdon L. 2023a).

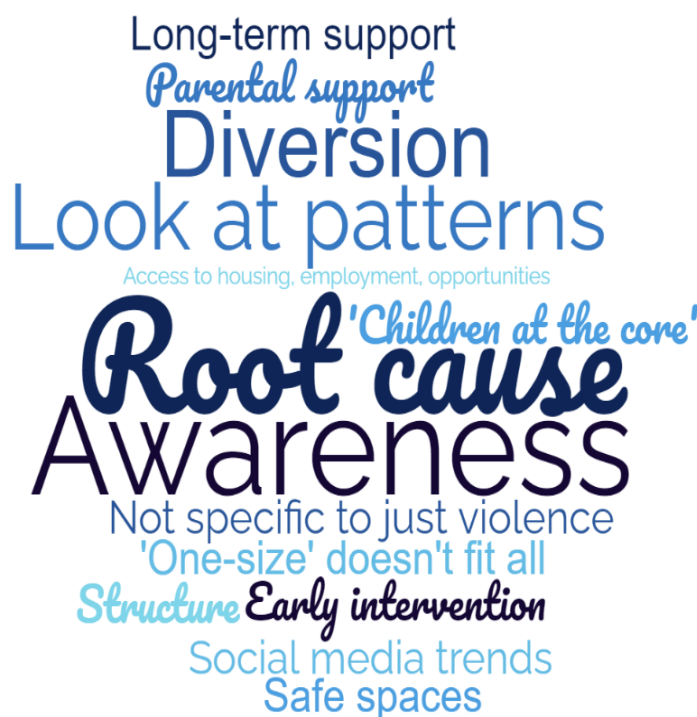


Figure 22: The most common concepts identified by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan professionals in the SNA workshops when asked “What do you think will help prevent serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of

6.3.4 Evidence from others providing qualitative data on what should be done to tackle and prevent serious violence

In a recent regional forum, Children and Young people in South Wales shared their views on what they felt should be done to help make South Wales safer, with results summarised in the South Wales Serious Youth Violence Strategic Needs Assessment 2022 (Walker *et al.* 2022). They also identified the importance of visibility of police and enforcement, but also identified key factors around wider support on accessibility in how to access information and report concerns:

- Increased police presence in local areas, as well as in schools and youth clubs for engagement with children and young people and build positive relationships
- Avoid automatic assumptions the young person is doing something wrong and promote 'friendly chats' with police officers and young people
- Promote how young people can report concerns for example through 101 or online reporting tools
- Emphasise the importance of reporting all offences, even low-level offences, and ensure these are taken seriously
- Ensure that information is accessible to children and young people, such as the South Wales Police website.

These findings provide wider views of service users. Whilst from children and young people, this offers a further perspective from that of the local professionals alone and emphasises the importance that service users need services to be widely accessible, as well as professionals to be approachable and supportive.

Section 6.4: Barriers and challenges to tackling and preventing serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

The findings in the report have demonstrated the current picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan through both data on what is happening, and the expert opinions and views of local professionals who work across multiple agencies involved in preventing and tackling violence. Whilst many examples of good practice have been shared, the opportunities to continue to improve and develop the response to serious violence in both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan have been raised throughout the report. In order to consider how to bring these opportunities together into practice, an important aspect is the potential barriers or challenges that Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan could face. Potential barriers were explored with local professionals as part of the engagement workshops for this report.

6.4.1: Evidence gathered from local professionals in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan on the key barriers and challenges to tackling serious violence

The most commonly referred to concept by local professionals in response to the question around barriers and challenges to tackling serious violence was around inconsistency. In the opinion of multiple professionals in Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, the lack of a consistent approach to many different elements of services involved with serious violence was an area of concern, ranging from funding to data sharing to how services themselves were delivered in different areas. Resources were also an area of concern, with multiple references to issues with funding, workforce and general provision of services in the current climate. The most common concepts are presented in Figure 23.

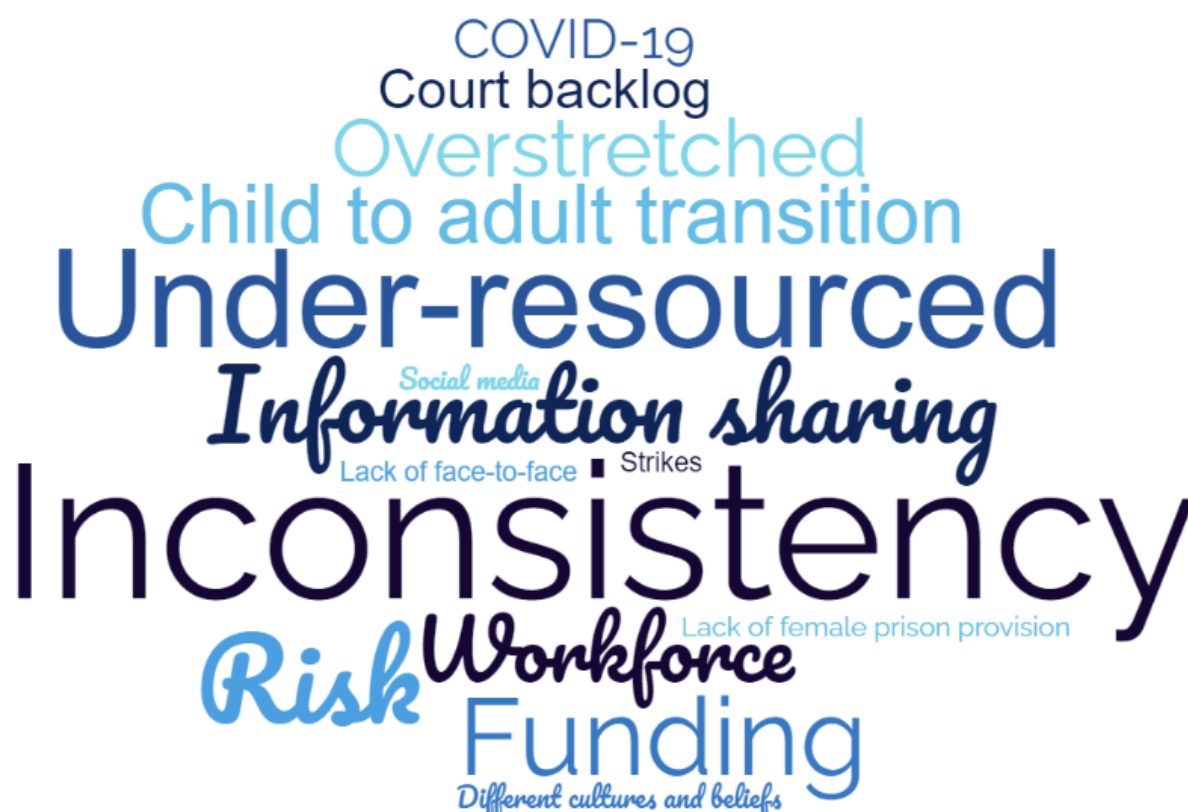


Figure 23: The key concepts identified by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan professionals in the SNA workshops when asked “What are the barriers to tackling serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan?”

Relating to the overarching concepts, the following key themes emerged relating to challenges in tackling and preventing serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan:

Data quality and sharing

- Inconsistency in how data is recorded and reported across different organisations
- Different approaches to data sharing between different organisations, with some reluctance to share data due to lack of certainty around GDPR. This included different practices within the same organisation (For example, a local professional reported that depending on who picked up the phone would vary their experience in whether data would be shared).

Service capacity

- Services overall feel under-resourced and over-stretched to meet the needs of people involved with serious violence
- Waiting lists were identified as an issue, in local professionals' opinion, as they can impact throughout the pathway of serious violence, from reducing chances for early prevention (e.g. delays in neurodiversity diagnostic pathways) to reducing the chances for reoffending and confidence in victims of the Justice process (e.g. the court backlog).

The public sector is "overworked, lack of staff...at the moment in 2023 it has been leading to for a long while – it's just a perfect storm...everything has come together now with emergency services facing a whirlwind of escalation that's been brewing for some time"

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Service delivery

- The child to adult transition in services was highlighted, with a feeling that on turning 18 years old, many services just drop off despite youth violence being defined as up to 25 years and can be a challenge for professionals to know where to refer for extra support, so wider mapping of services would be beneficial to identify what is available to professionals and any potential gaps to address.
- The impact of high-risk environments on the workforce was also considered, with many risking burnout or choosing alternative work.

Service reach

- Inconsistent approaches in some referral processes between Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan due to different structures of services. Whilst the different structures themselves may not be an issue, for professionals referring service users into either area, the process was highlighted as confusing. Raising awareness of what services are available will support partners in knowing what is available and identifying any potential gaps to address.
- Diversity in cultures leading to different perceptions and beliefs on acceptability of violence, and therefore different behaviours in offending, reporting and accessing services.

Funding

- Funding is inconsistent and short-term, making longer-term planning and maintaining of staff challenging.
- Lack of long-term funding was reported to divert focus away from evaluating and further developing existing initiatives, and instead looking for the next funding.

Risk and accountability

- It was felt that risk and accountability should be shared across multi-agency partners but felt that often the risk lands on one organisation and emphasised the importance of strengthening links between partners.

Section 7: Summary

The report has demonstrated that serious violence is an important public health issue for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, and although there are some differences between each area, there are also many opportunities which are relevant to both areas. With some partners covering both areas, there are opportunities for collaborative working as well as each local authority area targeting support to where it is needed most.

A key finding is that serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is not limited to Children and Young People, and that the most common age groups for both suspects and victims of offences related to violence are over 20 years old. Interestingly, during engagement with local professionals there was a tendency to focus on children and young people. Whilst this would have been partly due to the range of local professionals who attended the sessions (including education, youth justice services and third sector who work with young people) which could have introduced bias into the discussions, but it also reflects a national perspective and focus on children and young people. Whilst children and young people are an important group to support, this report has highlighted the need for strategy development to not exclusively consider these younger age groups, as there may also be opportunity for supporting adults aged over 25 years as a key cohort committing violent offences and for preventing violent crimes in these older age groups.

The evidence-based approach towards violence prevention is also an important element for partners to continue to consider and deliver. Extensive work has been completed elsewhere on the evidence towards effective violence prevention services and intervention, but this report highlighted challenges in identifying all the services which are currently being provided and also how effective these services are locally. This raises a number of opportunities and areas of development locally: firstly, by promoting the mapping of existing services so that all partners are aware of what is available, what potential gaps there are and also identifying if the services that are currently being delivered align with evidence-based practice; secondly, the importance of advocating for and promoting evidence-based approaches when partners identify potential new interventions to deliver; and thirdly, where interventions and services are delivered to continue to strive towards effective evaluation of services so partners know they are delivering what they should and make changes if they aren't. In consideration of these opportunities, alignment with evidence-based approaches such as the Trauma-informed approach (delivering services in recognition that service users are likely to have experienced previous trauma) and the value-based approach (designing services and monitoring services in a way that ensures they add value, in particular providing outcomes that matter to the service user).

A valuable aspect that emerged through the process of this strategic needs assessment was the shared learning opportunities between partners through engagement with the Task & Finish Group and through the workshop sessions. This reinforces the opportunity around strengthening links between partnerships, which was also an emerging theme throughout the report. These links include sharing knowledge and intelligence from both a data perspective but also 'on the ground' knowledge such as awareness of new apps young people are accessing and common terminology for new drugs that are emerging. This sharing of expertise could improve continuity between services and enhance the work of partners.

The report demonstrates that there is a vast amount of data available, and this report provides a snapshot of what is collected and reported. However, a limitation of the report was being able to access data that is not routinely available (such as service delivery data) in a timely manner. There were many reasons for this, including limited timescales for this report to be completed, timing of the report around the end of the financial year and annual leave period, but also the competing pressures felt by many partners in prioritising workload. There were also some limitations with the amount of

data which could be shared between partners, such as for education data, which was not available at school level. This identified that there is further opportunity for partners to work together in improving how data is shared and considering how to establish a consistent approach e.g., data sharing protocols. The report identified opportunities for strengthened links between partners, such as the British Transport Police and other partners, which could be explored further by partners.

The importance of data is particularly important due to the emerging theme raised by local professionals around the perceptions of violence and how that can influence behaviours and likelihood of future violence. Further exploratory work by partners, through a multi-agency approach, could continue to strengthen the data on the current picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, and be able to challenge misconceptions relating to serious violence and influence future behaviours.

7.1 Discussion of strengths and limitations

The starting point for this strategic needs assessment was the identified need to provide an overview of violence within Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, in order to develop bespoke local delivery plans as a requirement of the Serious Violence Duty. Due to existing work undertaken by partners and from the Wales Violence Prevention Unit in relation to Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, this strategic needs assessment is a supplementary product to provide further detail and clarity on violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan from a public health perspective. This strategic needs assessment has been developed in partnership with representatives from the specified authorities and wider partners in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan by a specialty registrar in public health (PCJ) with oversight from a Consultant in Public Health (LB). PCJ and LB provided specialist public health knowledge and skills, with topic knowledge provided by the Task and Finish Group and other partners.

This is the first assessment to be developed in this format for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, it has been developed through a multi-agency approach using information from a variety of sources including guidance from the Home Office and the Wales Violence Prevention Unit on development of a Serious Violence strategic needs assessment, but also in consideration that additional products are in the process of being produced for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. Taking a public health perspective, the intention for this needs assessment was to provide a wider perspective on serious violence through a public health lens with wider context and discussion rather than a descriptive piece.

A limitation of this report includes that due to limited timescales the extent of engagement with wider partners and stakeholders was restricted. Ideally, a wider range of partners could have been invited to be engaged with the process and provide comments and feedback on the development of the report. Furthermore, the lack of input from service users and those with lived experience is recognised as a key omission, which was due to a pragmatic approach and tight timescales. However, it is recognised as an important factor that in development of the overall strategy, there should be inclusion of a diversity of community voices including those with lived experience. This is particularly important when considering the potential impacts of the strategy and recognising the potential for unintended negative impacts. Completion of a health and equality impact assessment involving a range of community voices, as part of the strategy development, will identify any potential risks and mitigations. The role of those with lived experience could also provide valuable support in delivering interventions and helping to raise awareness of the consequences of violence. Partners working together collaboratively with service users who have lived experience is also an opportunity for both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, helping them to increase the visibility of the consequences of violence and identifying creative approaches to tackling and preventing serious violence.

The inclusion of qualitative data from local professionals sharing their views and depth to compliment the data on current violence within Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan, has added a richness to the data.

However, it is important to note that these are individual views and expert opinions which may not be generalisable to all professionals. In addition, due to availability Vale of Glamorgan were better represented than Cardiff in the workshops. Whilst the report has attempted to deliver a balanced discussion between the two local authority areas, this has not always been possible. In addition, due to a variety of reasons including tight timescales and challenges in identifying relevant participants, the decision was made to not include service users within the development of this strategic needs assessment. Whilst this limits the findings in this report, and should be interpreted within this context, the findings will still have utility in informing the strategies and ongoing action for serious violence in both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

7.2 Conclusion

Overall, this strategic needs assessment supports existing evidence in that whilst Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are seen as relatively safe areas compared to other most similar areas, there are still multiple aspects of violence which will benefit from further exploration by partners.

In Section 4 (Page 23-53), the current picture of serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is explored including the types of serious violence happening, when the violence is occurring, who is involved with or impacted by serious violence, where serious violence is occurring, and what could be causing serious violence to be happening in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. From these, some key themes emerged including: the 'age-specific strategic context' – recognising that people committing and affected by serious violence offences span a variety of ages, and that a focus on youth violence alone will not address the wider picture of violence locally; 'Assessing the impact' – recognising that the effects of serious violence can be far-reaching and affect many different communities, and that any proposed changes should consider how it will impact others; 'data, knowledge and information sharing' – recognising that there were some gaps in data available and that there are opportunities for increased collaboration with partners across different agencies and sectors for strengthening how data is shared; 'visibility of the consequences of violence' – expert opinion identified that some people at risk of or involved with serious violence do not clearly see the consequences of violence and deterrents; and 'understanding perception and challenging misconceptions' – recognising the importance of working together to collect data from a variety of sources to build the current picture, and sharing these findings to challenge any misconceptions.

In Section 5 (Page 54-58), how serious violence is currently being managed is explored with examples from some services within and outside the criminal justice service. The need to capture the complex and wide scope of services being delivered is recognised under the theme 'service mapping and identifying gaps' – emphasising the need for a joined-up approach between partners to understand what is currently been delivered and opportunities for future collaborations.

Section 6 (Page 59 – 66) builds on what is being done, with recommendations on what should be done referring to the published literature and building on the theme of an 'evidence-based approach to preventing violence' – recognising the substantial existing evidence base on interventions against serious violence, as well as wider evidence-based concepts such as the Trauma-informed approach. In addition, it considered barriers and challenges towards preventing serious violence including challenges in evaluating current services, leading to a theme on 'effective evaluation' – promoting the need for ongoing work strengthening how services are evaluated and linking to the theme on evidence-based approaches, considering adopting a value-based approach to measure outcomes that matter most to people.

Following these seven key themes identified, nine recommendations have been developed in collaborating with partners in order to inform the serious violence strategies for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. These are summarised in section 8.

Section 8 - Recommendations

The findings identified in the strategic needs assessment have led to the development of nine key recommendations under seven themes. These recommendations should be used to inform the development of the serious violence strategy/delivery plans for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

Age-specific strategic context

- **Recommendation 1:** Partners to consider all ages of those involved with serious violence, and not limit the scope to violence in children and young people only, in development of their strategy.

Assessing the impact

- **Recommendation 2:** A Health and Equality Impact Assessment should be completed at the early stages of strategy development, with engagement with individuals from the relevant protected groups and various stakeholders involved with violence including those with lived experience, to ensure that the strategy does not have any negative or unintended impacts.

Data, knowledge and information sharing

- **Recommendation 3:** Increasing and strengthening links between all partners who are likely to have contact with those involved with serious violence, including sharing knowledge and intelligence between different agencies
- **Recommendation 4:** All partners to continue to work towards high quality data collection and data sharing through consistent approaches (e.g. through data sharing protocols) and strengthened links between current partners and wider organisations (e.g. the British Transport Police)

Visibility of the consequences of crime

- **Recommendation 5:** Further work with specified and relevant authorities to discuss how to make consequences of crime more visible to the public, and how to make deterrents towards being involved in violence. Including continued work with third sector and others around lived experience and considering creative approaches to helping young people and others in discussing the consequences of crime

Understanding perceptions and challenging misconceptions

- **Recommendation 6:** Exploratory work into perceptions of the level of offences (e.g. knife-carrying) with a multi-agency approach to determine the current picture and share findings to provide perspective and challenge misconceptions.

Service mapping and identifying gaps

- **Recommendation 7:** Continue to strengthen partners sharing information on projects, programmes and initiatives that they are currently delivering, through existing channels or through establishing new relationships, so that there is an awareness of what resources are available, demonstrate differences between Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan for those who have service users from both areas, and identify any gaps or opportunities for future intervention.

Evidence-based approach to preventing violence

- **Recommendation 8:** Continue to advocate for and promote an evidence-based approach to preventing serious violence with consideration of risk factors, including raising awareness of and promoting the trauma-informed approach to all relevant partners and agencies delivering services in Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan.

Effective evaluation

- **Recommendation 9:** Encourage all services delivering violence prevention-related activities or programmes to evaluate the interventions in a systematic and meaningful way, to demonstrate whether they are achieving the desired outcomes, with consideration of adopting a Value-based approach.

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Appendix:

Appendix 1: Multi-agency partners who contributed to the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment 2023

Regional Violence Prevention Task and Finish Group

Cardiff Council Community Safety
Vale of Glamorgan Council Community Safety
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Accident and Emergency
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Local Public Health Team
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Safeguarding
Wales Violence Prevention Unit
South Wales Police Partnerships and Safeguarding
South Wales Fire and Rescue service
Cardiff and Vale HM Prison and Probation Services
Youth Offending Service
Youth Justice Service
South Wales Police Analysis

Workshop and 1:1 contributors

Cardiff SAFE Partnership
Cardiff Council Education
Vale of Glamorgan Council Education
Vale of Glamorgan Council Human Resources
South Wales Police
British Transport Police
Cardiff and Vale HM Prison and Probation Services
G4S Harm Reduction HMP and YOI Parc
St Giles Trust
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Safeguarding
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Violence Prevention Team
Vale of Glamorgan Council VAWDASV
Vale of Glamorgan Council Enforcement (visible services and transport)
Vale of Glamorgan Council Illegal Money Lending

Appendix 2: The structure of the Criminal Justice system and services related to violence in Wales

In the United Kingdom (UK), the criminal justice system is complex. There are three separate criminal justice systems: England and Wales (Home Office), Scotland (Scottish Government), and Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Government) (Institute for Government 2020).

Powers including counter-terrorism, firearms, extradition, misuse of drugs and legal safeguards for human rights sit with Westminster for all regions in the UK, whereas devolution of other powers varies between the different countries. For Wales, responsibility for the police, courts, prisons and probation rests with the UK parliament and Government, but the Senedd is able to make laws in devolved areas, as well as having powers that intersect with the justice system such as mental health, substance misuse services, prison education and health, skills training for rehabilitation of offenders and provision of housing in the community for resettlement of offenders. (Institute for Government 2020). Consequently, where recommendations regarding serious violence are made, these will be in consideration of the wider political landscape.

Police force areas in Wales

In Wales, there are four police force areas (Figure A): North Wales Police, Dyfed Powys Police, Gwent Police and South Wales Police. Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan are located within the South Wales Police footprint.

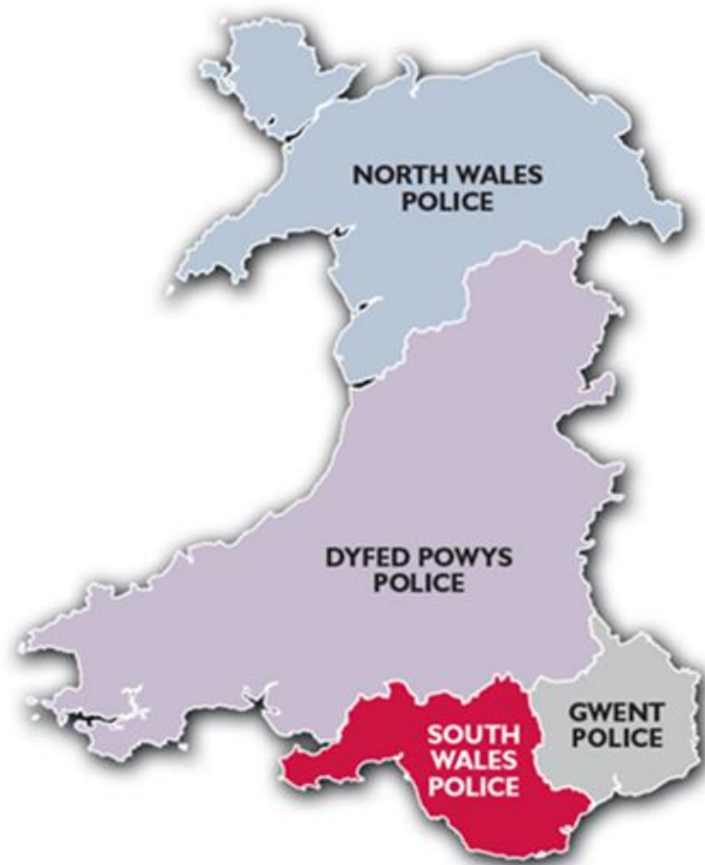


Figure A: A map to demonstrate the geography of the four police force areas in Wales (Walker A 2023)

South Wales police force area serves 42% of the population in Wales (1.3 million people) and 63 of the 100 most deprived communities in Wales. The force has almost 3000 police officers and over 2200 police staff (South Wales Police 2023). Police reported crime statistics are released regularly by the Office of National Statistics for England and Wales, as well as available from local partners and through the Wales Violence Prevention Portal. The role of the police includes reactive work in addressing crime, and proactive preventative work in preventing violence and supporting those who are at risk of violence through wider partnership working.

Youth Justice Services in Wales

In Wales, there are 15 Youth Justice Services (also known as Youth Offending Teams (YOT), whose role involves supporting children and young people who are either at risk of entering or already in the formal youth justice system, with an estimated 50% of workload accounting for prevention or diversionary work (Schwappach *et al.* 2021). These include the Cardiff Youth Justice Service (Cardiff Council 2023), and Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Service (Vale of Glamorgan Council 2023).

Secure estate and Youth Offender Institutes for children and young people in Wales

There are no Young Offender Institutes (YOI) within Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, with young offenders from the area attending Parc Prison Young Offender institute in Bridgend (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2022b). Other secure estate include secure training centres (STC) or secure children's homes (SCH) such as the Hillside Secure Children's Home in Neath (Schwappach *et al.* 2021).

Probation and Prison Services for adults in Wales

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) carry out sentences given by the courts, in custody and the community, and support people by rehabilitation with education and employment (HMPPS 2023). In Wales, there are approximately 25 probation contact centres, including three in Cardiff and one in Vale of Glamorgan (HMPPS 2021).

There are five prisons in Wales, with three situated within the South Wales footprint: His Majesty's Prison (HMP) Cardiff, HMP Parc and HMP Swansea. HMP Cardiff is the only prison within Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan and is a shorter-stay prison for adult males who are remanded in custody in South Wales. For female perpetrators, there is no prison provision in Wales so adult females from Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan usually go to HMP Eastwood Park in South Gloucestershire, England (CVRPB 2022).

Other services related to serious violence

Fire and rescue services

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) are one of three Fire and Rescue authorities in Wales and cover both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan footprints. The SWFRS offers reactive services in response to incidents such as deliberate fires, as well as a proactive approach to prevention of fires and injuries (such as protecting at risk domestic residences from arson attacks), and work with the community safety partnerships to contribute to the community safety agenda (Welsh Local Government Association 2023).

Local authority

There are 22 local (unitary) authority areas in Wales, including Cardiff Council and The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council (Law Wales 2021). Community safety partnerships sit within each local authority, with councils working with multi-agency partners to deal with community safety issues such as through strategy and policy work, regulation and licensing standards, and emergency planning (Local Government Association 2023). Multiple services related to wider risk factors of violence, including housing, education and social care services are also based within the local authorities.

Health

There are seven local health boards in Wales which provide health services to the local populations. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board covers both Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan areas. Relation to violence include front-door emergency services for those with assault-related injuries in the emergency department (based in University Hospital of Wales), safeguarding services and other bespoke services such as the Alcohol Treatment Centre in Cardiff. Multiple services related to risk factors of serious violence such as substance misuse services and mental health services are also delivered by the local health board.

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Appendix 3: An overview of prevalence of some key risk and protective factors for serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- 84% of the youth offending cohort in Vale of Glamorgan in 2021 had experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE), with 45% having experienced four or more (CVRPB 2022).

Deprivation

- 19.5% of households in Cardiff and 16.6% of household in Vale of Glamorgan are deprived in at least two dimensions (ONS 2023g).

Child Poverty

- An estimated 28,500 children resident in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan were estimated to be living in poverty in 2020/21, ranging from 20.6% of children living in Cardiff North to 38.6% of children living in Cardiff South and Penarth (End Child Poverty Coalition 2022)

Substance Misuse

- 200-300 regularly injecting drugs in public in Cardiff City Centre and Butetown each year (Emmerson C 2020).
- Cocaine was the most common substance detected in Bridewell Custody Suites Drug Testing April 2021-February 2023 (SWP 2023)
- 47% HMP Cardiff inmates reported a substance misuse problem (CVRPB 2022)
- Half of Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Cohort had used substances in 2021 (CVRPB 2022)
- Substance misuse services in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan received 6,611 referrals and treated 3,084 people during 2020/21 (Cardiff and Vale Substance Misuse APB 2021).
- In children and young people in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan in 2020/21, Cannabis was reported as the main problematic substance, followed by alcohol. (Cardiff and Vale Substance Misuse APB 2021).

Alcohol

- In Vale of Glamorgan, 22.7% drinking above guidance, compared to 20.1% in Cardiff and the Wales average of 17.9% (2020-21, persons aged 16 years and above) (PHOF 2023).
- Average annual alcohol consumption (units) is 489 units (Wales), 482 units (Vale of Glamorgan) and 442 units (Cardiff) (PHOF 2023).
- Alcohol was the most prevalent main problematic substance used by people over 18, followed by heroin, cannabis, and cocaine.

Mental health

- The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 provides an overview of adult and children's mental health in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.
- 47% of inmates surveyed in HMP Cardiff reported they had a mental health condition (CVRPB 2022).
- Half (53%) of Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Cohort in 2021 had current or previous involvement with the CAMHS service, and 21% have disclosed that they have self-harmed (CVRPB 2022).

Housing

- One-quarter (23%) of young people involved with Youth Offending Services in Vale of Glamorgan in 2021 had identified housing problems (CVRPB 2022).

- Overcrowding was reported in 3.9% of 147,300 households in Cardiff, and 1.6% of 57,500 households in Vale of Glamorgan. This is equivalent to 5,744 households in Cardiff and 920 households in Vale of Glamorgan that are overcrowded (ONS 2023i).

Homelessness

- Vulnerable groups are at higher risk of experiencing homelessness than the general population.
- In Wales, from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, 301 care leavers experienced homelessness (as defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) (Welsh Government 2023b).
- A 2019 inspection of HMP Cardiff identified that 47% of people had been released without a home to go to, and there was inadequate follow up of individuals following release as to their accommodation.
- Homelessness is known to be linked to reoffending risk (HM Inspectorate 2019).

Neurodiversity, Autism and Special Educational Needs

- Speech, language and communication difficulties in early childhood are more common amongst young offenders (CVRPB 2022).
- Indexes for recording the number of children with neurodiversity, autism and special educational needs reported 806 children registered in Cardiff, and 823 registered in Vale of Glamorgan. However, it is felt these underestimate the true number (CVRPB 2022).

Bullying

- National statistics have highlighted that an estimated 20% (1 in 5) children aged 10-15 in England and Wales have experienced at least one type of online bullying behaviour (ONS 2020).
- 32% of school children aged 11-16-years-old in Wales reported being bullied in school in the past couple of months, including 9% who were bullied at least once a week (Page *et al.* 2023).

Children's services

- The majority of young people in contact with Youth Justice Services were known to Children's services (50% in Cardiff, and 85% in Vale of Glamorgan) (CVRPB 2022).

Children Looked After

- Children Looked After are identified as "one of the most vulnerable groups of children in modern society" (CVUHB 2022).
- Up to a fifth of young people in contact with Youth Justice Services are Children Looked After (CVRPB 2022).
- There has been a consistent increase of children in care, within Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. This has increased from 840 children in care in 2017, to 1,070 in 2019, to 1,275 as of March 2022 (CVUHB 2022).
- In 2021 under a pilot scheme, 39 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were received in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, and there were plans for another 50 to be received. (CVUHB 2022).

Unemployment

- 57% in HMP Cardiff had a job prior to prison (CVRPB 2022)
- 89.47% of young people in Cardiff and 92.31% of young people in Vale of Glamorgan are in full time education, employment or training, compared to the Wales average of 89.34% (Vale of Glamorgan Council 2023b).
- 16.3% aged 16 and over in Cardiff, and 15.6% aged 16 and over in Vale of Glamorgan have no qualifications

Gambling

- Gambling is associated with domestic violence and crime (Ashman and Beynon 2022)
- Male category B prisoners identified a prevalence rate of problem gambling of 14.5%, much higher than the estimated general population 0.7%(Ashman and Beynon 2022).
- Children involved with gambling behaviours are more likely to have other risk factors for violence, including consuming alcohol, taking drugs or smoking (PHE 2019).
- Areas with higher estimated prevalence such as Cardiff have a lower reported demand for support than Vale of Glamorgan with a lower prevalence, indicating a mismatch between need and demand (GambleAware 2023).

Physical health

- The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment 2022 provides an overview of adult and children's health in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
- 25% of inmates surveyed in HMP Cardiff reported they had a long-term health condition (CVRPB 2022).

Appendix 4: Examples of what local professionals see as the key opportunities for preventing serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Evidence gathered from local professionals about needs related to tackling and preventing serious violence that is occurring in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

During engagement with local professional stakeholders, a number of perceived gaps or needs were discussed. Whilst these are the opinions of the stakeholders in the sessions and might not be generalisable to wider stakeholders and Cardiff and/or Vale of Glamorgan as a whole, there are some areas which could warrant further exploration as outlined below.

Needs related to Criminal Justice Services

Different provision if identified as victims of exploitation rather than perpetrators

In Cardiff Youth Justice Services, have identified that some young people who do not meet the criteria for Youth Justice Services still need support. For example, where they have been identified as a victim of exploitation rather than a perpetrator, the case is dropped so they no longer fall under Youth Justice services and could potentially be lost to the system.

"I think it's that real fine line between victim, perpetrator, isn't it? And I think in a lot of these situations where we see with kind of young people being coerced into gangs and all of that, I think that's where the lines are blurred then... to get the provisions for those people that ultimately are victims that have then kind of crossed over that line into being a perpetrator"

Prison services (covering Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan)

An example of how local partners are trying to ensure those who have been involved in crime, but have been identified as victims rather than perpetrators, is the 'Turnaround' project which is helping to support young people who don't have access to other services. Raising awareness to partners of services such as the 'Turnaround project' will be important to ensure that partners know what is available locally for individuals who do not fit into 'formal' service provision.

Challenges in accessing support where thresholds are not met

Linked to the point above, some local professionals reported that there are circumstances where people have become involved in serious violence that could have been prevented if there were more early interventions and support available. There was a perception that whilst early involvement in instances and attendances to services (e.g. healthcare) may not have met the thresholds for support, there is potential for more preventative work to be done so that escalation is less likely to occur.

"we get some really nasty assaults, but there's no-one to support them. There's not a lot of services for young people after they've been assaulted if they don't hit county lines, criminal exploitation...early intervention we don't really have...but the problem is we're getting young people who came in 2-3 admissions ago with an assault and now six months down the line are coming in with knife assault, but there's no one six months ago to pick them up because they weren't triggering those high risk incidences"

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

This is another example which indicates that exploration is needed to identify what current services are available from all partners (including third sector) to map what is available, share knowledge on support people involved with crime can access and to identify if there are any gaps for further development of services to meet the needs of the local population.

Perceived differences in safeguarding provision between Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

The Cardiff Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) process was discussed in the stakeholder workshops, where it was recognised as an efficient and useful process. However, some professionals felt that this led to an overall different delivery of services between children and young people resident in Cardiff compared to those resident in Vale of Glamorgan where a similar structure is not in place.

Violent injuries in children “get dealt with very differently in the Vale to Cardiff... in Cardiff they would go into MASH and they would be looked at in multi-agency straight away... Vale...they don’t always do that.”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Similarly, regarding contextual safeguarding some local stakeholders perceived that services such as the Cardiff SAFE partnership were not replicated in the Vale of Glamorgan, so felt there might be a gap in how children and young people were offered support around contextual safeguarding:

“The issue...social services only deal with the home life. So if the home life is ok, they don’t deal with contextual safeguards...meet with young people...home and lifestyle absolutely fine they’re not even being open to social services when the real issue is what’s going on, on the streets. The social services won’t work with them”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

There was also a perception that children at risk of exploitation would also receive less support in the Vale of Glamorgan compared to Cardiff where established teams are in place.

“In Cardiff they have Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) teams that go out and pop in on high-risk kids, CSE kids. You don’t have that in the Vale. They don’t have exploitation teams at all. There’s nothing for them... it stops at the border (of Cardiff) and in the police, in general in most services it stops at the border”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Whilst these are the perspectives of a small number of stakeholders, and so may not be generalisable and representative of all views, this does highlight a potential gap in equality of access to services between Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan, or a lack of awareness of what current mechanisms and services are in place to support. Therefore, it is important to identify and explore what services are currently available, share learning and knowledge between partners and if gaps are identified through the exploratory work then to consider how to meet the needs locally.

Evidence gathered from local professionals on health and social care needs for preventing serious violence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Mental health services and lack of targeted support

“They get lost in the world of just general mental health issues”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Local professionals reported that they are not aware of any specialist mental health services in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan specific to criminal exploitation or County Lines. This is in comparison to other extreme traumas where recovery toolkits and specialist trauma counselling are available. The need for increased mental health support specific to the traumas caused by criminal exploitation and County Lines was raised.

“They just have to go through general routes of mental health with general population... When you look at county lines... they don't have the support to back up those traumas that they've experienced. We really struggle with that with our young people because mental health don't see it as a form of trauma. But actually, sometimes they're trauma is more it's so significant and so horrific that they have PTSD...but because they weren't directly involved or it's not sexual violence, it's not domestic abuse or they don't have a mental health issue, they get lost in the world of just general mental health issues”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

The significance of mental health support was emphasised by partners, recognising that without sufficient support available people can turn to other behaviours such as violence.

“Mental health is obviously a massive issue... increase in the lack of support for mental health...people just haven't had that help and support so as a consequence turned to other extremes”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Mental health services were also raised as a key area for consideration in the Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment (CVRPB 2022), with recommendations around improvements of access to mental health services and promoting and advocating for people with mental health conditions. Whilst there will be no quick fix for mental health services due to the service demands and extensive work already exploring this area, there may be opportunity for local partners to explore with health how some mental health and other healthcare services could be tailored towards specific issues (such as exploitation) using sharing knowledge and expertise across sectors and agencies.

Neurodiversity assessment

In addition to mental health, neurodiversity assessment was perceived to be an area of concern for some local professionals, in particular due to the local waiting lists and pressure on services could leading to miss opportunities to prevent violence from occurring.

“there's a two year wait for... a child to be diagnosed with ADHD or any neurodiversity. And two years is too late for a lot of our young people...I see it every time they've been on the waiting list...they're no longer in school provision, they're behaviours deteriorated. They're now involved in antisocial behaviour, in knife crime...you can see it from the two years ago, where they started to deteriorate”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

The Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment (CVRPB 2022) recommended that waiting list times needed to be reduced for Autism assessments, so this is an already recognised issue. However, there may also be the wider opportunity for partners to explore (through mapping existing services) if there are other ways that early intervention can be achieved whilst formal diagnosis is awaited.

Transitioning from children's to adult's services

After a gap was identified for 16- and 17-year-olds who were seen in adult emergency departments rather than paediatrics, the adolescent safeguarding meeting has been running since September 2018 on a fortnightly basis (CVUHB 2022).

However, the transition from children to adult's services was highlighted as a key area of interest in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan relating to violence, as although youth violence is considered in children and young people up to age 25 years old, most traditional services see a transition at age 16 or 18 into

adult services. This means there are potentially young people who still need support but losing access to valuable services.

“If you look at youth violence especially it’s under 25’s, how we can say we’ve got a youth violence provision when we stop at 18 in most services is unbelievable.”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Similar concerns were raised by local professionals around other aspects such as the transition from child to adult’s social care services, and the post-16 transition from formal education towards employment or further education.

The impact of this is not clear, and further exploratory work with children and young people who have then transitioned to adult services, as well as data exploration on the level of re-offending or escalation of offences in those who were first identified as children or young people involved with violence could be conducted. However, it is important to consider in the wider context of the local needs due to the evidence suggesting that the most common ages for people committing a violent offence in Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is 20-39 years old meaning that they will not be reached by children’s services. Therefore, partners should not focus on children and young people alone.

Evidence gathered from local professionals on issues and opportunities related to education

Evidence from local professionals on perception of safety of staff and exclusions

Whilst evidence has demonstrated that exclusions from school and education are associated with poorer outcomes for young people in the long-term, including increased risk of exploitation and serious violence, there is an alternative perspective where exclusions are an important aspect of keeping staff safe.

Stakeholder engagement included discussions around the difficult decisions in keeping staff safe.

“School isn’t necessarily the best place for them because I’m probably adding to the exclusions and the debate at the moment because I can’t sit back and let teachers get battered...there needs to be somewhere else they can go to be educated”

Vale of Glamorgan Council

It was also raised how many teachers may not be aware of the significance of school exclusions on a young person in the medium-long term, and therefore raising awareness of the impact of exclusions could be an important aspect to consider.

Teachers can “see the young person is disruptive they feel they need to be excluded, but they don’t realise there are long-term effects. We need to change perspectives, but it’s not straight-forward”

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

The importance of the impact of school exclusions on a child or young persons’ outlook has been explored in the literature previously. Therefore, the role of partners promoting and sharing knowledge of the potential impacts of school exclusions to a range of professionals involved in education is important to ensure that an informed approach is followed around decisions for school exclusions.

Opportunities for strengthened partnership working

“I think if we came together more as partners on how our projects are doing, we could strengthen it from all areas and build it together and fund it together”

Cardiff Council