

## News story: Home Office allocates £35 million to police forces for violence reduction units

Violence reduction units will take a multi-agency approach, bringing together police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime and its underlying causes.

The cash is in addition to the recent £63.4 million surge funding to forces across England and Wales that are worst affected by serious violence and knife crime.

Violence reduction units will be responsible for identifying the drivers of serious violence locally and developing a coordinated response to tackle them.

Local areas across England and Wales are starting to take a public health approach to prevent serious violence by addressing the issues that cause violent behaviour in the first place.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Knife crime is taking too many young lives and it's vital that all parts of society work together to stop this senseless bloodshed.

Violence reduction units will help do this – bringing together police, local government, health professionals, community leaders and other key partners to tackle the root causes of serious violence.

National Police Chiefs' Council Chair Martin Hewitt said:

I have consistently made the case that serious violence on our streets is something the police cannot tackle alone. Forces across the country are putting significant effort into addressing the problem, and we are starting to see some positive outcomes.

It is widely agreed that prevention must be the priority, and evidence shows that violence reduction units work in contributing to this effort. The extra funding being provided to Police and Crime Commissioners is therefore welcomed.

The additional investment comes from the £100 million serious violence fund announced by the government in March as part of its continued action to crack down on violent crime.

The 18 local areas will set out plans demonstrating how they will use their provisional allocation to build a public health approach delivering both short and long-term action ahead of being awarded the funding in the coming weeks.

The Home Office will work closely with the violence reduction units to assess how the funding is being used to strengthen the response to serious violence.

Introducing new violence reduction units is part of the government's focus on early intervention, as set out in the Serious Violence Strategy which was published in April last year. In addition to the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund, the government has recently launched a £200 million 10-year Youth Endowment Fund, which will identify and support organisations with a proven track record of diverting vulnerable young people away from violent crime.

The government has also made it easier for officers in seven areas most affected by knife crime to use Section 60 stop and search powers. Section 60 powers allow the police to search people in a designated area without suspicion, where serious violence is anticipated.

A consultation on a new public health duty recently took place and the results will be published in due course. The new public health duty would mean a range of agencies such as police, education and health partners, local authorities, offender management, housing, youth and victim services will have a new legal duty to take action to prevent and tackle violent crime.