



Decision Reference: 2023 2024 – 0037

THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CLEVELAND

DECISION RECORD FORM

REQUEST: For Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) approval.

Title: CURV: Sustainability Projects with Cleveland Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector

Executive Summary:

In April 2022, Cleveland were notified that they would be in receipt of 3-year Violence Reduction Unit funding from the Home Office. In Cleveland the unit is known as CURV - Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence.

In January 2023, the UK Government introduced the Serious Violence Duty via the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022 – which requires named (specified) authorities to work together to reduce serious violence through approaches including data sharing, and collaborative development and delivery of a response strategy. In Cleveland CURV has been designated as the focal point for data sharing and response coordination under the Duty.

VCSE and the Serious Violence Duty

Although not named, the government's statutory guidance on the Duty confirms the importance of inclusion of the Voluntary and Community Sector (Also known as the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector) in any violence reduction strategy; highlighting their:

- existing presence and access to local communities experiencing serious violence
- trusted relationships used to deliver violence reduction interventions
- notable skills, knowledge, and expertise.

To achieve 'collaborative working' and 'better outcomes', the guidance recommends that 'statutory partnerships and VCSE organisations should work together to build effective working relationships'.

CURV's response strategy echoes this approach, committing to including VCSE organisations 'membership at all levels of the CURV's structure' and 'investing in approaches that genuinely amplify the voices of Cleveland, and providing genuine opportunities for young people and community representatives to have a seat at the decision-making table'.

CURV's governance structure includes representation from Tees Valley Infrastructure Partnership (TVIP); an organisation which brings together the 5 Voluntary Development Agencies (VDAs) responsible for supporting and advocating for VCSE organisations across Cleveland. Additionally, CURV's partnership agreement commits to:

- Support and facilitate the sharing of data between partners/specified authorities.
- Nurture an environment that builds a learning culture across the partnership and shares good practice.
- Using an evidence-based approach, explore and test innovative solutions that help prevent and reduce serious violence throughout the whole of Cleveland.

- To develop capacity throughout Cleveland against the increased expectations brought from the implementation of the SV Duty.

Violence Reduction: The Potential Impact of VCSE Data Sharing

Research and evaluation form a key delivery strand for CURV's violence reduction strategy; identifying priorities and highlighting opportunities to deliver greater impact. Actionable insights required high quality data to be shared, then analysed, and finally made available to decision makers in a secure and effective manner. Since its creation, under partnership direction, CURV has set up an Information Sharing Framework which allows authorities designated as Specified or Relevant under the Duty to securely and lawfully share the minimum level of information required (often anonymised) to better understand the nature, scale and drivers of serious violence in Cleveland. A mandatory requirement for CURV is to create a comprehensive pool of publicly accessible insights known as a 'Strategic Needs Assessment'.

The value of data from different sources cannot be understated; The national crime survey highlights that with the exception of homicide, all crime is believed to be significantly under-reported to police. An overreliance on police data risks underestimating the role of 'hidden' factors and the experiences of parts of the communities less willing, or less able, to engage with police and statutory services. Such an approach risks developing and implementing a response strategy which fails to account for the needs and experiences of some of Cleveland's most vulnerable and/or hardest to reach communities, potentially further embedding social disadvantage and undermining the public legitimacy of statutory authorities.

In the course of their work, VCSE organisations collect information and data on the needs and experiences of the communities they serve, often seeking to fill gaps in available or accessible services. CURV feedback suggests that this sector can also lack the information/capabilities needed to better engage with public-health models and/or public safety agendas of statutory services. CURV funded activities have enhanced the amount of publicly accessible data and tools available have and invested in raising the capacity of local VCSE organisations to secure additional (particularly nationally offered) funding. However, VDA's continue to provide feedback that the sector continues to face challenges in effectively engaging with and contributing to the serious violence reduction agenda of the CURV partnership and the wider public safety goals of statutory services.

In addition, achievement of a wider understanding of the impact of interventions/services delivered by VCSEs can be limited by a lack of an effective system to securely share data between the VCSE and statutory sector.

Setting the Foundations for Sustainable Collaboration

Given the collective understanding of the nature, scale and complex drivers of serious violence in Cleveland, and the current and projected economic environment of the UK and local communities, additional resources are unlikely to be secured and existing resources are unlikely to be maximised without the introduction of more effective systems which support more collaborative working across sectors.

Through TVIP, the VDAs offer an extensive and deep level of knowledge, experience, trust and relationships ideally suited to assessing the needs and practical considerations for delivering system change towards sustainability in the areas of inter-sector sharing and collaborative working.

Specialist staff from the following VDAs have been nominated by TVIP to lead on delivery of the following two sustainability planning projects by the end of March 2024. The products delivered will supported sustainability planning in a costed, strategic and specific manner in

CURV's third year and beyond and mitigate against the risk of slow and/or ineffective progress through a less informed approach.

- 1) Catalyst (based in Stockton) – Completion of an engagement exercise to survey all VCSE organisations and consult with key members on the following issues, and present findings and recommendations in written report:
 - a. What interest is there amongst VCSE colleagues in data-sharing?
 - b. What further data would VCSE colleagues find useful to help in their delivery?
 - c. To what extent are VCSE colleagues concerned that statutory partners make decisions without data held by their sector?
 - d. What are the practical barriers to data-sharing?

- 2) Middlesbrough VDA – Via an established and high-quality training provider deliver two strands to increase confidence and skills in the VDAs to support their sector sustainably:
 - a. A train the trainer programme for staff from infrastructure organisations (TVIP) to be better equipped to deliver future training to Cleveland VCSE organisation.
 - b. Facilitation of a workshop-based development of a Theory of Change (TOC) for the VCSE sector to engage effectively with statutory partners in the violence reduction and public safety agenda. The written TOC will identify the sector needs (inputs) to achieve system change activities to deliver effective and sustainable collaborative working. The TOC will also define the metrics and indicators for measuring short term and long-term success (outputs and impact respectively).

At a local level, preventing, reducing, and tackling serious violence is a key priority in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.

Performance against the agreed outputs will be monitored and managed by CURV.

Decision:

That the Police and Crime Commissioner approves the allocation of funding from the CURV budget to the value of £4,952. The funding is broken down as follows:

- 1) £1,600.00 (Catalyst-led Data Sharing Project)
- 2) £3,352.00 (MVDA-led TOC Development)

OPCC Lead Officer: Lynsey Blas

Contractor Details (if applicable):

Catalyst and Middlesbrough VDA.

Implications:

Has consideration been taken of the following:	Yes	No	
Financial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Equality & Diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

(If yes please provide further details below)

Decision Required – Supporting Information

Financial Implications: (Must include comments of the PCC's Chief Finance Officer where the decision has financial implications)

Funding to support this proposal is affordable within the funded allocated to CURV.

Legal Implications: (Must include comments of the Monitoring Officer where the decision has legal implication)

There are no legal implications arising.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The projects will aim to seek representation from all Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. The aims of the project are to development of an inter-sector serious violence response strategy which better serves all demographics and communities across Cleveland, and potentially re-balances any existing inequality or diversity-based data quality issues which currently undermine fair and equitable strategic analysis.

Human Rights Implications:

None arising

Sustainability Implications:

There has been an increase in the recognition and potential value of a Theory of Change (ToC) and data sharing processes as part of strategic planning at organisational and in support of partnership activities. The funded activities serve to reduce the dependency on external expertise to develop the VCSE sector's confidence and skills in applying ToC, and to allow the sector the opportunity to develop their understanding and inform partners of the challenges and opportunities the sector face in supporting violence reduction. Such foundational work is required to create the system change necessary for a sustainable approach.

Risk Management Implications:

These are short term projects to be delivered by previously used providers for relatively small amounts of money. The risk of failure to deliver is considered low and can be managed through regular communication and updates.

OFFICER APPROVAL

Monitoring Officer:

I have been consulted about the decision and confirm that financial, legal, and equalities advice has been taken into account. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Signed



Date 22.02.24

Police and Crime Commissioner:

The above request HAS my approval.

Signed



Date 23.02.2024