



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

Serious Youth Violence: Government Response to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–2019

First Special Report of Session
2019–21

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Home Affairs Committee

The Home Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Home Office and its associated public bodies.

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Simon Armitage (Committee Specialist), Melissa Bailey (Committee Assistant), Elizabeth Hunt (Clerk), Penny McLean (Committee Specialist), George Perry (Senior Media and Communications Officer), Paul Simpkin (Senior Committee Assistant) and Dominic Stockbridge (Clerk).

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First Special Report

The Home Affairs Committee published its Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–19, [Serious youth violence](#) (HC 1016), on 31 July 2019. The Government's response was received on 5 November 2019 and is appended to this report.

In the Government response the Committee's recommendations are shown in **bold type**; the Government's response is shown in plain type.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

The fight against crime is one that is ever changing and that is why the new Government is determined that we must be more agile to the evolution of criminal behaviours so that there is an effective response. Since 2014 we have seen such a change in behaviour, with significant change in the drugs market sitting at the heart of the rise in violence. This has included the growth of county lines drugs dealing. Drugs market violence may also be facilitated and spread by social media, which is used to glamorise gang or drug-selling life, taunt rivals and normalise weapons carrying. The increases have also been accompanied by a shift towards younger victims and perpetrators, and there are a range of markers for increased risk of both victimisation and perpetration such as being homeless, persistent school absence and/or exclusion, as well as substance abuse. The new Government recognises the devastating impact that serious youth violence has on victims, families and communities that is why we have prioritised action in this area.

The new Government is taking action to give the police the capacity to tackle serious violence. This includes the announcement by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary on 26 July that we will be recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers, over the next three years, which will support our efforts to tackle violent crime. A new National Policing Board has been established to help ensure all parts of the policing system work together to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. It enables the Home Secretary to directly engage with chief constables, PCCs and others to set the long-term strategic direction for policing and hold it to account for the delivery of the Government's key policing commitments. It is a clear message that the new Government is committed to supporting the police and determined to give them extra resource to protect the public and keep us all safe.

We are also giving the police the powers they need through changes to the use of stop and search and implementing the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. We are providing £10 million funding to assist Chief Officers to deliver a significant increase in the number of officers carrying Tasers.

The Home Secretary also announced on 1 October that we will be doing more to tackle county lines through targeted support and increasing law enforcement resources. The new package of measures will provide an uplift in existing capability and initiatives, representing investment of up to £20 million in this financial year and next (2019–20 and 2020–21).

On 30 September the Chancellor of the Exchequer reiterated a commitment to young people, confirming £500 million investment through the new Youth Investment Fund over five years. This vital investment, the cornerstone of the Government's offer for young people, will help build 60 new youth centres across the country, refurbish around 360 existing youth facilities, and provide over 100 mobile facilities for harder to reach areas. The fund will also support the provision and coordination of high-quality services for young people, and an investment in the youth workforce. We have also announced a new Serious Violence Bill in the Queen's Speech on 14 October which will create a legal duty for public sector bodies to ensure they work together effectively to prevent and reduce serious violence.

We have carefully considered the Committee's observations, conclusions and recommendations on the previous Government's approach. The new Government's response to these are set out in this response.

Measures in this response relate to England and Wales. However, as much of the response to serious youth violence in Wales falls within devolved competence, such as health and education, this response draws mainly from England based activity. We continue to work closely with the Welsh Government and devolved bodies in Wales on these issues.

Response to Conclusions and Recommendations

Recent rises in serious youth violence are a social emergency, which must be addressed through much more concerted Government action at a national and local level. The Government must make it a central priority to keep young people safe and prevent more families from going through this terrible trauma. (Paragraph 11).

This Government is taking forward a range of actions to keep our communities safe including extra police powers and resources. On 26 July 2019 the Prime Minister and Home Secretary announced plans to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers over the next three years. On 4 September, in his statement on the Spending Round, the Chancellor announced an additional £750 million funding in 2020–21 to start delivering on this commitment, as well as £45 million in-year funding in 2019–20 to support early recruitment this year. The national recruitment campaign was launched on 5 September 2019.

This is on top of the Government's investment in policing this year. Total police funding in 2019–20 is increasing by over £1 billion this year, including council tax and the £100 million Serious Violence Fund, which will support action in the areas most affected by violent crime. £63.4 million of the Serious Violence Fund has been allocated to the 18 police forces worst affected by serious violence to pay for increased operational activity, such as increased patrols in hot spot areas. £1.6 million will be used to improve the quality of data, particularly around knife crime, which will further support police operations. The remaining £35 million is supporting the setting-up of Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in these 18 areas. The VRUs will be responsible for drawing together local leaders across police, education, health, social care and other sectors to develop a shared understanding of the local drivers of serious violence and deliver a co-ordinated response to these. This Government has also extended the pilot underway to empower officers in the use of section 60 stop and search, which is now live across all 43 forces in England and Wales.

The Government is also investing in early intervention and prevention with over £220 million being provided to support projects to stop young people getting involved in serious violence. Established in March, the £200 million Youth Endowment Fund is supporting children and young people at greatest risk of involvement in serious violence, working with delivery partners to find, fund and scale-up those interventions that are shown to be most successful.

The Youth Endowment Fund has just announced the results of its first funding round: 22 projects based across England and Wales will share £16.2 million and will collectively deliver a range of interventions, including mentoring, sports based and family focussed approaches. The Fund will be making details of further funding opportunities available shortly. In addition, the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund, which awarded its first funding in November 2018, is supporting 40 projects endorsed by Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). These projects are working with at least 60,000 children and young people at risk of criminal involvement, organisations safeguarding those at risk of gang exploitation and county lines, or who have already offended to help divert them into positive life choices. In addition, the national Troubled Families Programme, provides early intervention support to families who are struggling to cope with multiple problems such as involvement in crime; unemployment; poor school attendance; health problems; and domestic abuse. The latest evaluation results show that, compared to families with similar characteristics who have not been on the programme, 19-24 months after starting to receive support juvenile convictions were reduced by 15% and juvenile custody by 38%.

We are also determined to take effective action against the misuse of drugs, which is a factor behind the increases in violence. Dame Carol Black was appointed in February 2019 to lead an independent review of drugs. We know the sale and use of drugs is driving serious violence. This review will give us a greater understanding of the drugs market.

It is important that different agencies work together effectively to reduce violence. That is why the Queen's Speech on 14 October included the Serious Violence Bill in which the new Government will bring forward legislation for a new legal duty on specified agencies to plan and collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. This new duty will ensure agencies and bodies to work together, where possible through existing partnership structures, to prevent and reduce serious violence. This new duty has been created taking into account responses from professionals in health, education, police, social services, housing and the voluntary sector in an eight-week public consultation. Guidance will be published in due course which will explain how different organisations and sectors can partner with each other.

The Government and local authorities need to address urgently the widening gap between demand for and provision of public health services, in the context of links between alcohol and susceptibility to serious violence. Serious consideration should also be given to the appropriate provision of services, balancing harm reduction for users with wider public safety concerns. Engagement with mental health services is also crucial to ensuring appropriate provision. (Paragraph 55)

The new Cabinet Office Serious Violence Team has been created to coordinate Government activity and ensure all Departments are driving action that will reduce serious violence. The team, which reports directly to the Prime Minister, is establishing a step change in the Government's approach to ensure that serious violence remains a

priority across Government and that the vision of a multi-agency 'whole system' approach is taken forward nationally and locally. They are providing strategic leadership, ensuring greater collaboration across Government, and defining success measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the Government's response. In addition, they are bringing together data, analysis and best practice from across Government to understand the underlying issues driving serious violence, and what is most effective in response to them.

A substantial proportion of serious violence is linked in some way to alcohol. However, we know that since 2007/08, the absolute number of homicides where the suspect or victim consumed only alcohol has reduced, and that there is little evidence that the current increase is being driven by these kinds of offences.

Public Health England is supporting local authorities and their partners to put in place high quality interventions to prevent, mitigate and treat effectively alcohol-related health harm. The relevant services include local licensing controls, identification and advice and specialist services to support recovery for dependent drinkers. From April 2013, an alcohol risk assessment has been a mandatory component in the NHS Health Check, so that people will be given brief advice on cutting down if their drinking is putting their health at risk, followed by a referral to specialist alcohol services if needed. Practitioners in both mental health and alcohol/drug services need to work in close collaboration to deliver person-centred care which responds to a range of presenting needs, including: alcohol and drug use, mental and physical health issues, and other vulnerabilities such as domestic abuse and homelessness.

Alcohol treatment services not only help individuals manage their drinking problem but also the factors that may be contributing to their drinking problem including health issues, mental health issues such as depression and anxiety management, social problems such as housing, employment and family relationships including anger management and domestic abuse.

Additionally, we are investing £6 million between 2018–19 and 2020–21 on the Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents Programme to support children living with alcohol-dependent parents as this is a particularly vulnerable group.

Work in partnership with Public Health England and the Welsh Government has supported 32 areas in reducing alcohol-related crime and health harms, as part of the Local Alcohol Action Areas Programme. Over the two years of the programme, there were many initiatives aimed at improving public safety and protecting the vulnerable. These included the introduction of street marshals in Barnsley, in Exeter the extension of a scheme whereby premises door staff become street marshals at the end of the evening to the whole city centre, and the establishment of new safe spaces in Hastings, Nottingham, Swansea and Westminster.

Domestic abuse

We know that children who are exposed to domestic abuse are more likely to experience abuse in their own adult relationships and are at greater risk of substance abuse, juvenile pregnancy and criminal behaviour than those raised in homes without violence or abuse. That is why last year an £8 million fund was launched to support children affected by domestic abuse, funding nine innovative projects across the country to intervene early and

help children recover from the harmful effects of abuse. We have also provided £163,000 to fund the national rollout and evaluation of Operation Encompass. This initiative ensures timely information sharing between police and schools when children have been exposed to domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Bill also has a number of provisions to protect and support children, include the provisions in respect of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and the Domestic Violence Disclose Scheme. One of the key functions of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner will be to encourage good practice in the identification of children affected by domestic abuse and the provision of protection and support to people—including children—affected by domestic abuse. The Commissioner will be required, under the terms of their appointment, to have a thematic lead within their office to represent the interests of children. Furthermore, existing measures in the Serious Crime Act 2015 make it explicit that cruelty to children which causes psychological suffering is a crime. This includes when children are emotionally harmed by exposure to domestic abuse, holding perpetrators to account for their actions.

The Government has commissioned a leading domestic abuse charity to produce training on co-occurring alcohol use and domestic abuse. It is intended help police, GPs, and staff in domestic abuse and alcohol treatment services to identify these co-occurring issues and respond in an effective, safe and joined-up way. The training is currently being piloted with learners representing the different services it is aimed at.

Mental health

It is recognised that mental health issues are more prevalent in individuals involved in violence and gangs than other comparable groups and the police are dealing with a high number of mental health incidents. The links between gang-affiliation and poor mental health can operate in both directions. Poor mental wellbeing can draw young people to gangs while gang involvement can negatively impact on an individual's mental health. Tackling poor mental health in this context requires collaboration across a range of agencies, to ensure that vulnerable young people affected by violence, gangs and poor mental health receive the support they require.

The Government is determined to improve mental health provision, including prevention and crisis care support for all, and has announced significant additional funding of an additional £2.3 billion to enhance mental health services by 2023–24. The NHS Long Term Plan set out plans to improve mental health crisis care including a single point of access to crisis care via NHS 111, as well as waiting times targets for emergency mental health services which will take effect for the first time from 2020. The Government continues to work with the police and health and social care partners to ensure people receive the support they need, and also reduce the demand on the police specifically.

The Home Office has also developed a joint action plan with the Department for Health and Social Care, designed to address some particular pressure points on the police. This includes working with forces to identify local practices which have proved effective in tackling some of the common issues raised by forces, such as persistent callers, safe and well checks and missing persons, and to share those more widely across forces. The

Government is also considering recommendations from the Mental Health Act Review, including reviewing the role of policing and mental health services so that people in a mental health crisis receive the right support at the right time.

A programme of work particularly directed at identifying and providing necessary support for mental health issues in children and young people is underway further details of which are set out later in this response.

We recommend that the new Prime Minister takes personal responsibility for reducing serious youth violence and driving activity in this area, tasking Cabinet Ministers with taking ownership for key actions. (Paragraph 70)

The Prime Minister has been clear that tackling serious violence and responding to this challenge is a top priority. That is why he has already announced that 20,000 new police officers will be recruited over the next three years. These additional officers will help to ensure the police have additional resources to tackle their increased demand, including serious violence. In his announcement on the Spending Round, the Chancellor has announced that the Home Office will receive an additional £750 million in 2020–21 to deliver on this commitment, with an additional £45 million of in-year funding given in 2019–20 to support early recruitment this year. Up to 6,000 additional officers are to be recruited by the end of the next financial year (March 2021) distributed across the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales to ensure we are doing all we can to make our streets safer as soon as possible.

On 31 July, the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary hosted the first meeting of the new National Policing Board. The Board will ensure we and policing are delivering those new officers as quickly as possible, as well as progress other national policing issues. The Prime Minister also chaired the Criminal Justice System roundtable on 12 August, bringing together Secretaries of State with other senior public officials to drive forward a cross-sector activity and outcomes, highlighting serious violence as a priority. This is the first of its kind to ensure we are looking at the issues and opportunities across the criminal justice system holistically. At that meeting, the Prime Minister reiterated again the high priority tackling serious violence has for this Government. This work is being coordinated by the Cabinet Office on the Prime Minister's behalf.

The Prime Minister has asked to receive regular reporting on progress in preventing and deterring serious violence and other crime types. The Prime Minister—together with the Home Secretary—intend to chair meetings with Ministers and operational partners to track and challenge that progress, and to ensure there is leadership and coordination of the tackling serious violence agenda.

By the end of September, the Government should provide us with a list of named accountable leaders in every region or county of England and Wales. This might be a PCC, a mayor, or the leader of a local safeguarding partnership or violence reduction unit, for example. They must be identifiable locally as the individual reporting directly to 10 Downing Street, and responsible for convening those who need to work together to drive down serious youth violence. (Paragraph 71)

PCCs and Mayors have a vital leadership role to play in galvanising the local response to serious violence. We look to PCCs to exercise local leadership and bring together different partners, including working across local Community Safety Partnerships and other local

partnerships, and to provide the strategic focus needed. Partners across different sectors, including police, local authorities and the private and voluntary sector should be engaged. Communities and local partnerships are at the heart of our response to serious violence. This issue must be owned locally so that all the relevant partners can play their part.

£35 million of funding has been provided for PCCs to work with other relevant partners to set up violence reduction units in 18 local areas (which together account for 80% of hospital admissions relating to injury caused by a knife or sharp object). We have been clear that VRUs are to bring together community leaders and other key partners including police, local government, health and education professionals to identify the drivers of serious violence and develop a response to this challenge; thus providing local accountability. We have applied a number of long-term success measures to these VRUs relating to reductions (especially among those aged under 25) in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object; in knife-enabled serious violence; and in all non-domestic homicides. A number of shorter term output measures, for example relating to implementation of delivery plans (including partnership working), development of analytical products and numbers of young people being reached through interventions, will also be monitored; helping to ensure there is effective planning and collaboration to support a longer-term approach to preventing violence. A process evaluation will be undertaken in relation to the first year of VRU funding, which in addition to providing an understanding of how the VRU are being implemented, will scope viability of future impact assessment. The new Serious Violence Bill will complement and assist the VRUs by creating the conditions to support successful delivery of this multi-agency approach, including through the extended set of partners on whom the duty will fall.

The £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund was designed to encourage PCCs to take this leadership role by enabling them to lead local partnerships bidding for funding. To secure funding, PCCs were required to work with community safety partnerships (or local equivalent partnerships) to bid for funding to support targeted early interventions and prevention activity. The Fund is supporting 40 projects endorsed by PCCs across England and Wales. PCCs are also the recipient of £35 million funding for Violence Reduction Units and are required to work with other relevant local leaders to provide information on outcomes so we can monitor how the funding is being used.

The Home Office has worked in collaboration with PCCs to deliver a series of 12 serious violence engagement events across England and Wales between October 2018 to July 2019. The events brought together key professionals from community safety partnerships including police, health, education, social services, youth offending services, housing and the voluntary sector. The overall objectives of each event were to raise awareness and identify local partnership action that could be taken to tackle serious violence. The events allowed delegates the opportunity to hear from a range of speakers including Ministers, PCCs, Chief Constables, victims of serious violence and a range of leading professionals from sectors such as public health, local authorities, policing and the voluntary sector.

The Home Secretary has focussed on establishing strong relationships with policing leaders to tackle serious violence, including Chief Constables, and PCCs. A new National Policing Board has been established to ensure all parts of the policing system work together to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. It enables the Home Secretary to directly engage with the sector to set the long-term strategic direction for policing and hold it to

account for the delivery of the Government's key policing commitments. As Chair of the National Policing Board, the Home Secretary will monitor progress on issues that require a whole-system response.

This Government has been responsive to the views of the law enforcement community, for example easing the restrictions on use of Section 60 stop and search power. Ministers will continue to have close engagement with the police, and since taking office, the Home Secretary has visited several police forces and joined frontline officers on patrol in areas where serious violence is a high concern.

The Ministerial Taskforce and the Serious Violence Taskforce should be monitoring progress across a common dataset, collected consistently across the country. That data should also be driving and informing local action to tackle serious youth violence, led by the regional or local leads. We recommend that the new Cabinet Office team prioritises the establishment of such a dataset at the earliest opportunity, and reports back to us on its progress by the end of October 2019. It should also inform us what targets or milestones the Government has set in relation to reducing serious youth violence, and by what date it intends to meet those targets. (Paragraph 73)

The Government uses the official crime statistics to analyse trends, which include the latest police recorded crime figures, published by the Office for National Statistics. We monitor this data closely to compare and calibrate with other data sets such as NHS data on hospital admissions for injury with a sharp implement.

There is a specific set of core metrics which are used to monitor the relevant crime trends, which are routinely used by the Ministerial and official level serious violence groups, which include:

- Three key measures: homicide, hospital admissions for knife/sharp object assault and police-recorded knife crime;
- Data on other police recorded violence offences, including offences involving firearms, robbery and possession of weapons offences;
- Police data on charge rates for serious violence offences, like robbery;
- Ministry of Justice statistics for offenders cautioned/convicted for knife and weapons related offences.

These data are all available at police force area level and some are available at more local levels, allowing for hot-spot mapping. For many of these datasets we also monitor relevant demographics relating to victims and perpetrators, for example victims/offenders under/over 25, sex, and ethnicity. These data series are all monitored frequently and are subject to rigorous quality assurance associated with their routine publication as official statistics.

The crime statistics and other data are used to inform and check policy development and it is used to routinely inform Ministers, the Serious Violence Taskforce and discussions with policing on the latest trends in serious violence.

Analysis of crime data was used to allocate the £100 million Serious Violence Fund to 18 of the worst affected areas in England and Wales. 18 forces with the highest volume of hospital admissions for knife injury were allocated £63.4 million to support operational

activity to tackle violent crime, £1.6 million was provided to support improvements in the data available on violent crime and £35 million to establish or build on VRUs in areas worst affected by serious violence. We have set out three proposed long-term measures for areas where we are investing in VRUs, namely reductions (especially among those aged under 25) in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object; in knife-enabled serious violence; and in all non-domestic homicides.

Whilst we have not set a specific target for reducing specific crime types, we are determined to reduce violent crime.

The Government must prioritise safeguarding in the upcoming spending review, with ringfenced resources for safeguarding partners to ensure that they operate much more effectively. It is not enough to expect separate agencies—the police, local authorities and the NHS—to resource inter-agency partnership work, given the financial and operational constraints within which they are operating. (Paragraph 105)

The effectiveness of multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is a key priority for the Government. Safeguarding partners have an existing duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area and it is for them to determine how to jointly fund that work locally. The Government will be considering in the light of the initial learning from the implementation of new safeguarding arrangements what more might be needed as part of the Spending Review in 2020.

In the 2019 Spending Round, the new Government has announced significant uplifts including new investment in policing, schools and the NHS. There will be a total of £13.8 billion in extra day-to-day spending for 2020–21, which represents a 4.1% uplift overall. The Government is providing an additional £1 billion grant for children's and adult's social care, to support local authorities to meet rising demand. This means that we are providing a total of almost £3.5 billion in grants for adults and children's social care in 2020–21, up from £2.5 billion last year, which will support them in delivering their functions including fulfilling their statutory safeguarding duties.

The overall extra day-to-day spending includes an uplift for Home Office funding for 2020–21 to £12.9 billion, which is £984 million above the allocations for 2019–20, and a real increase of 6.3%. This will help the Home Office deliver the Government's priorities, including delivering year one (i.e. up to 6,000) of the pledge to recruit 20,000 additional police officers to help reduce crime.

The Government confirmed a historic five-year NHS settlement in January 2019, which sees NHS funding grow by £33.9 billion in cash terms by 2023–24. The Spending Round 2019 also confirmed increases in other key areas including a real terms increase to the Public Health Grant. The settlement will further enable the NHS and local authorities to continue to deliver better services and health outcomes for patients including the prevention, public health and safeguarding interventions which are vital to tackling serious violence.

Safeguarding bodies should be given a duty to produce local plans, with clear targets and milestones, to reduce the number of children at risk locally of county lines exploitation, reporting back to the Home Office on a regular basis via the regional serious violence leads that we recommended in Chapter 3. The Government should

also examine whether changes are needed to the statutory framework and resources underpinning child safeguarding, to ensure that children abused outside the home do not fall under the threshold for social services support. (Paragraph 106)

Safeguarding partners—police, health and local authority—are already under a duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area and publish both their plans and an annual report on the effectiveness of their arrangements. These agencies have statutory duties to work together, and with other agencies to safeguard children. This would include all children at risk. In April 2019, the Department for Education wrote to safeguarding partners reminding them of their responsibilities to publish the procedures and processes in place for cases relating to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, including in relation to child criminal exploitation. All new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements have now been published and, as every local authority sets their own thresholds for the point of referral, we have set out our expectations for documents relating to thresholds very clearly in statutory guidance (*Working Together to Safeguard Children*, 2018). Safeguarding partners will continue to be expected to report on the effectiveness of their arrangements in their annual reports. Ofsted will continue report on the effectiveness of local authorities' thresholds for action.

In the Queen's Speech on 14 October, the new Serious Violence Bill was announced to bring forward a new legal duty on statutory agencies to plan and collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence. As part of this duty we would expect a multi-agency approach to involve regular sharing between agencies of data and intelligence to prevent and tackle serious violence and identify those most at risk of becoming affected by serious violence and using this information to target interventions.

The Home Office has already increased the support that local areas receive in responding to threats from outside the home through funding the Tackling Child Exploitation Support Programme. The Programme is a consortium which will support local safeguarding partners in local areas to develop an effective multi-agency response to a range of threats to children from outside the family, including sexual and child criminal exploitation. Led by Research in Practice together with The Children's Society and University of Bedfordshire, the consortium brings together partners with combined knowledge of evidence and experience in responding to child exploitation and extensive experience of managing complex national programmes. The programme will provide dedicated expertise, advice and strategic or practical support to safeguarding partners in local areas according to what they need.

The new Government is also continuing to put in place further significant measures to tackle county lines and to support local partners. On 1 October, the Home Secretary announced plans to significantly uplift activity to tackle this issue. Together the new package of measures will: Increase the capacity of the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre through strengthening national intelligence gathering, coordination and tasking against county lines; deliver greater disruption of county lines using the rail network through supporting increased operational activity by British Transport Police; exploit the use of existing data and technology to support disruption of county lines drug dealers using the road network; pursue the profits which drive violence and exploitation through greater action against Money Service Bureaux suspected of laundering county lines moneys; and provide specialist services to young people and their families to help them exit their involvement in county lines.

The Department for Education's updated 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance, published in July 2018, also specifically highlights the role of frontline practitioners and agencies in tackling county lines and sets out the risk of exploitation from outside the family by criminal gangs and organised crime groups. The guidance also makes clear that children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare.

The Government is currently examining whether any changes are needed to the statutory framework to ensure that children abused outside the home are recognised and appropriately assessed for local authority support.

The Government should consider whether a national data-sharing protocol should be established for the new safeguarding structures being created. Ministers should also examine the case for funding the Information Commissioner to establish an advice service on data sharing between public agencies. The new serious violence team within the Cabinet Office should send us a written update on this issue by the end of September. (Paragraph 114)

The Government recognises that tackling serious youth violence, including county lines and the associated exploitation of children and young people, needs an approach involving policing and other agencies working together with a focus on enforcement, prevention and early intervention. To do this, we must bring organisations together to share information, data and intelligence and encourage them to work in concert rather than in isolation. That is why the Government will be legislating in the new Serious Violence Bill to introduce a new legal duty on specified agencies to work together. As part of this duty we would expect regular sharing between agencies of data and intelligence to prevent and tackle serious violence and identify those most at risk of becoming affected by serious violence and using this information to target interventions.

The Government has already updated the Data Protection Act in 2018, making clear that relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm. The Act contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information, even without consent. The Cabinet Office has further worked with departments to pursue opportunities for greater sharing of data in order to assist analysis and better target interventions at those most in need, and will be taking this work forward in the coming months.

In addition, the Government has updated the section on information sharing in its statutory guidance for safeguarding partners: *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*. This was supplemented by non-statutory guidance: Information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, in 2018, which supports practitioners in the decisions they take to share information.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is also supporting local areas to create strong local learning systems and will undertake national reviews of child safeguarding cases it judges to be complex or of national importance. Learning is the primary focus of all reviews. The Panel's first national review is now underway, looking at adolescents in

need of state protection from criminal exploitation. The Panel will draw on the learning from a number of serious incidents in this area they have seen during their first year of operation, and a report will be published later this Autumn.

The Government is also continuing to invest in the Child Protection Information Sharing (CP-IS) project, an IT system which links unscheduled healthcare settings (such as emergency departments and minor injury units) with children's social care services. This allows the two organisations to automatically share information about children on child protection plans and with 'looked-after' status, meaning that those dealing with at-risk children and young adults have a clearer sense of the overall picture. With scoping of further expansions to include wider healthcare settings taking place this year, Government departments continue to consider wider opportunities the system might present with regards to safeguarding vulnerable individuals.

There are no current plans to establish a new role or responsibility for the Information Commissioner. The Government will continue to ensure that local agencies have the support that they need regarding data-sharing and will further reflect on these specific recommendations as work continues collaboratively cross-government to identify further improvements.

The Government has acknowledged the link between the drug market and violence: it must now take urgent action to reduce demand by improving the provision of treatment for drug users. There is no need to await the outcome of Dame Carol Black's review, when the links between violence and demand for Class A drugs are so clear. (Paragraph 121)

The Government is already taking action to tackle the production and distribution of drugs in the UK, to reduce demand for drugs and to improve the provision of treatment to those who misuse drugs, and we are continuing this work. These are complex and long-standing challenges which require sustained and concerted effort across a range of partners to address.

As stated in the Select Committee's report, global drug production has increased

which has been linked to an impact on drug purity, demand and supply. The independent Review of Drugs, led by Dame Carol Black, was launched to deliver a critical appraisal of the challenges we face on tackling the harms caused by drugs given the very concerning rise in serious violence and the evolving drugs market, including county lines. The findings of the Review will be vital in informing our approach.

The Government is committed to understanding the complex factors behind the supply and demand factors in the drugs market in order to inform both national and local action to protect individuals from these harms. We will respond to the evolving threats and challenges that continue to emerge from drug misuse. This includes changing drugs markets, changing patterns of use—such as that recently seen in the form of 'spice'—and an ageing and more complex group of people who need wide-ranging support to recover. The Government's policy on drugs is clear and anchored in education to reduce demand, tough and intelligent enforcement to restrict supply, evidence-based treatment to aid recovery, and coordinated global action.

Public Health England will continue to support local authorities in delivering tailored, effective services that give people the best chance of recovery. The ring-fenced Public Health Grant remains in place for 2020–21, retaining the specific condition to improve drug and alcohol treatment uptake and outcomes. We remain committed to protecting and improving the outcomes from core services such as substance misuse and will involve key stakeholders in discussions about how best we achieve this from 2020 onwards. We recognise that drug treatment is invaluable to individuals, their families and the communities in which they live. People should have access to a range of treatment options that can be tailored to individual need. Recovery remains at the heart of our approach: more adults are leaving treatment successfully compared to 2009/10, and the average waiting time to access treatment is now at two days. However, we recognise there is still further to go. Treatment should be based on the best evidence and provided alongside the wider recovery support essential to achieving and sustaining recovery, for example, access to training and employment, stable housing, and wider health services. The Government appointed Dr Edward Day as the first national Recovery Champion in May 2019. Dr Day has extensive clinical expertise in the field of substance misuse and will be providing a leadership role around key aspects of the recovery agenda. In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care are leading work following publication in July of the Government's 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s' Green Paper. This includes work with the Recovery Champion, Public Health England and other partners to develop a shared understanding of the current challenges facing the substance misuse treatment and recovery workforce.

When tackling the drugs trade, including county lines, it is important we do so through a whole system approach to disrupting organised crime groups. This will ensure targeted interventions in drugs trafficking, and a coherent end to end response in dealing with complex threats such as drug trafficking and county lines. The Chancellor of the Exchequer also announced, on 4 September 2019, a formal review to identify the powers, capabilities, governance and funding needed to support the Government's response to Serious and Organised Crime.

Tackling county lines drug dealing and the associated exploitation and violence is a priority for this Government. That is why on 1 October 2019 the Home Secretary announced further targeted investment to tackle this issue. This will be a significant uplift building on our existing programme of work in this area. These new measures will strengthen our partners' response to county lines significantly, including expanding the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre, increasing operational activity by the British Transport Police to disrupt county lines on the transport network and going after the profits which drive county lines; as well as providing specialist support to victims and families.

The best available assessments show it is likely that about half the rise in knife and gun crime and robbery is due to improvements in police recording. However, for the remainder, drug-related cases seem to be an important driver. Between 2014–15 and 2016–17, homicides where either the victim or suspect were known to be involved in using or dealing illicit drugs increased from 50% to 57%. Crack-cocaine markets have strong links to serious violence and evidence suggests crack use is rising in England and Wales due to a mix of supply and demand factors. County lines drugs dealing is also associated

with violence and exploitation and its spread is a key factor. County lines groups continue to pose a significant threat to vulnerable people and violence remains a key feature of county lines activity.

In response to the links between drugs and recent increase in violent crime we are taking a range of action to tackle county lines and the misuse of drugs, including providing £3.6 million funding over two years for the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre, which has been jointly developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and National Crime Agency. Since its launch in September 2018, the NCLCC has coordinated three separate weeks of national law enforcement intensification, leading to over 1,600 arrests, over 2,100 vulnerable individuals engaged for safeguarding and significant seizures of drugs and weapons. We are also providing up to £500,000 of funding over two years to support delivery of a new round of Heroin and Crack Action Areas; and we are providing more than £90,000 of funding to support the delivery of Mentor UK's 'Real-Life Skills' project. This project pilots a prevention programme in the Blackpool area, in two schools, a pupil referral unit and an alternative provision for young people who are unable to attend a mainstream school for a variety of reasons. The purpose is to steer young people away from becoming involved in drug use, drug related crime and risky behaviour and will benefit more than 140 young people over the three-month programme. In addition, we are supporting targeted interventions for intensive one to one support for young people already involved in serious violence or county lines related exploitation, through St Giles Trust, Redthread and our Young People's Advocates. Through these interventions we have already supported over 800 young people in 2018-19 and that support continues.

We welcome the additional in-year funding for policing to tackle serious violence. We also strongly welcome the creation of violence reduction units to coordinate the police response with other partners. They have the potential to have a major impact on coordinating a cross-agency approach to serious violence, providing there is clear local leadership and commitment from all the relevant agencies. However, we are very concerned by the short term nature of the funding that has been announced. The lack of commitment for future years makes it harder for forces to use the money to recruit and train additional staff, and means that the focus is more likely to be on funding overtime by existing staff. Given that many police officers and staff are already stretched by additional overtime and other demands, we do not believe that this is a sustainable or desirable approach. We reiterate the call we made last year, in our Policing for the Future report, for the Government to make available substantial additional resources for policing, so that forces can recruit additional officers and staff, both to respond to serious organised crime and to increase community prevention activity, neighbourhood policing and schools officers. (Paragraph 132)

It is absolutely vital that the Home Office prioritises investment in neighbourhood policing and safer schools' officers in the next spending review, to enable policing to rebuild vital links with the communities and people most affected by serious violence. By the beginning of April 2020, all schools in areas with an above-average risk of serious youth violence should have a dedicated school police officer. We also reiterate our previous recommendation that the Home Office should move to a long-term funding settlement for policing, to allow for much-needed investment in the frontline workforce. (Paragraph 151)

The Government has acknowledged that demand on the police is changing. This Government has committed to increasing the number of police officers by 20,000 over the next three years. Individual forces will work with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Home Office to accelerate local recruitment plans whilst the Police Uplift Programme also develops a stronger national model to accelerate and streamline the process for future years. How these additional officers are deployed by each force is a matter for Chief Constables who will deploy officers and staff to best meet local needs.

This builds on the increase in police funding this year, which was the largest increase in a decade. Police funding is increasing by over £1 billion in 2019–20, including funding from council tax and funding to tackle serious violence. The Government has already provided £100 million additional funding in 2019–20 to support increased police activity to tackle serious violence.

Neighbourhood policing

Forces are changing how they deliver local policing to better respond to the changing crime mix and priorities of local people, and good neighbourhood policing remains core to the British model of how we protect the public. Prevention, partnership working, problem-solving and safeguarding the vulnerable remain key. Officers doing this job play a vital role in preventing crime and building trust in communities.

The Government supports the College of Policing's new Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines which will help all forces more effectively use their local policing resource and encourage proactive neighbourhood work. An additional 20,000 officers will bolster the ability of PCCs and Chief Constable to tackle serious violence and further partnership working to improve crime prevention.

A new National Policing Board has been established to ensure all parts of the policing system work together to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public. It enables the Home Secretary to directly engage with the sector to set the long-term strategic direction for policing and hold it to account for the delivery of the Government's key policing commitments. As Chair of the National Policing Board, the Home Secretary will monitor progress on issues that require a whole-system response. Individual forces will immediately increase their local recruitment while we develop a stronger national model to accelerate and streamline the process for future years.

As set out previously in our response, the Government has been responsive to the needs of the police and will continue to provide them with the support that they need to tackle serious violence and keep our streets safe.

School police officers

The deployment of individual officers is an operational decision for police forces. The Government will build on models of police-school partnerships that exist in England and work well in building positive relationships between schools and police, and we are working closely with the Department for Education and the NPCC to support the

role of police school partnerships in tackling serious violence. Many forces are already prioritising investment in safer schools officers with plans to increase numbers of officers in schools to 500 in London alone by this Autumn.¹

There is a pressing need for more investment in wraparound support to keep a child in mainstream education. The presence in a child of multiple risk factors for school exclusion should be an instant ‘red flag’ for additional support, and the Government must act quickly to implement the recommendations of the Timpson Review. Providing only part-time timetables in alternative provision is also a very serious failing. Most of those who have been excluded from school are in need of more social, educational and emotional support—not less. They are already more vulnerable to being drawn into exploitation or risky behaviour, and they should not be left to spend even more time on the streets. Urgent action is needed to ensure that they have full-time support. (Paragraph 170)

The Government understands that the Committee is concerned about the links between school exclusion and violent crime. However, it is important to emphasise that it does not automatically follow that the act of excluding a child will result in them going on to commit criminal offences, and while exclusions are a marker for increased risk of involvement in serious violence, we must be careful not to draw a simple causal link between exclusions and knife crime.

The Government will always back head teachers and teachers to create calm and safe schools, enabling teachers to teach and pupils to learn. The Department for Education is funding national behaviour hubs which will enable schools which already have an excellent behaviour culture to work closely with other schools to drive improvement. In some cases, head teachers will need to make use of their powers to exclude and the government supports head teachers in doing so where warranted. This means supporting head teachers to use their powers to issue fixed period exclusions in response to poor behaviour and to permanently exclude as a last resort. In response to the Timpson Review of School Exclusion, the Government is taking forward an ambitious programme of action which will respect head teachers’ powers to use exclusion, while equipping schools to support children at risk of exclusion, and ensuring excluded children continue to receive a good education. In particular, the Department for Education will re-write guidance on exclusions and behaviour for schools, to ensure head teachers have the information they need to use exclusion properly and proportionately.

When a child is excluded this should not be the end of something, but the start of something new and positive in their education. We need to be just as ambitious for children and young people in Alternative Provision (AP) as we are for those in mainstream. There are some good AP schools already operating, but we need to do more to ensure that all children and young people in AP receive a high quality education. The Department for Education is reshaping the free schools programme, through the “new free schools wave”, to focus on Alternative Provision especially for those children who have been or are at risk of being expelled from mainstream schools.

We are committed to reforming Alternative Provision, and already made progress and launched a £4 million AP Innovation Fund which is delivering projects to improve outcomes

¹ <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/serious-violence/oral/98751.html>, Q280-Q282

for children in AP. Later this Autumn, we will set out plans to go further to improve outcomes for children in AP, including more on how we will support alternative providers to attract and develop high-quality staff through a new AP workforce programme, and how we will help commissioners and providers to identify and recognise good practice.

Overall provision arranged for a child in alternative provision, which includes PRUs, must be full-time, unless this would not be in the child's best interests because of health needs. Guidance reinforces that the education received in AP should be on a par with that which a child would receive in a mainstream school. Full-time can be made up of two or more part-time provisions, for example, a pupil may spend the majority of time in mainstream but attend an AP setting for smaller, defined periods of time to supplement their education.

The Department for Education should take action to tackle racial disproportionality in school exclusion, if necessary via a separate independent review. (Paragraph 171)

The Government has no plans for a further independent inquiry into exclusions of children from school. The Timpson Review was launched in response to the finding of the Race Disparity Audit that children from some ethnic groups are more likely to be excluded. The new and robust analysis undertaken for the review stripped away other factors (such as economic disadvantage, special educational needs (SEN) or unsafe family environments) which could be increasing the likelihood of an individual child being excluded. The analysis found that controlling for a range of other identifiable factors, there are some ethnic groups whose likelihood of exclusion remains greater than others. The Government takes this issue seriously, and we are committed to delivering an ambitious programme of reform. Every child deserves to receive an excellent education, regardless of their characteristics, what school they go to or where they live, and we are committed to reducing disparities in exclusion rates between different groups. To achieve this, it is particularly important to track patterns of exclusions by ethnicity, including assessing whether pupils of a particular background are more likely to be excluded.

We will be calling on Directors of Children's Services, governing bodies, academy trusts and local forums of schools to review information on children who leave schools, by exclusion or otherwise, and to establish a shared understanding of how the data on the characteristics of such children feeds local trends.

In revising guidance to schools, the Department for Education will clarify our expectation that this information should be used to inform improvements in practice and reduce disparities, with particular reference to those groups more likely to be excluded nationally, including children from certain ethnic groups, children with certain special educational needs (as well as mental health problems), and children who have a social worker. The Government will also continue to promote diversity within the school workforce, and the Equality and Diversity hubs play an important role in offering tailored leadership opportunities to aspiring leaders from under-represented groups.

The Government needs to introduce a fully-funded, statutory minimum of provision for youth outreach workers and community youth projects in all areas, co-designed with local young people. This would be a national Youth Service Guarantee, with a substantial increase in services and ringfenced funding from central Government. It should include enhanced provision in areas with higher-than-average risk factors linked to serious youth violence, such as under-25 knife crime and school exclusion. It

must also be coupled with proper mental health provision for young people, informed by an understanding of the impact of trauma and other adverse childhood experiences.
(Paragraph 194)

The Government recognises that local youth services are an important partner in tackling violent crime. Local authorities are responsible for allocating funding to youth services in line with local need and we believe they are best placed to know what is required in their communities. It is important that central government allows local authorities to have the flexibility to decide their budgets for local services in a way that best reflects need, including areas with higher-than-average risk factors linked to serious youth violence.

On 30 September the Chancellor reiterated a commitment to young people, confirming £500 million investment through the new Youth Investment Fund over five years. This vital investment, the cornerstone of the Government's offer for young people, will help build 60 new youth centres across the country, refurbish around 360 existing youth facilities, and provide over 100 mobile facilities for harder to reach areas. The fund will also support the provision and coordination of high-quality services for young people, positive activities which appeal to young people, and an investment in the youth work profession including increasing access to a renewed suite of youth work qualifications. The Government intend to involve key stakeholders and young people in those discussions and will make further announcements on this in due course.

Mental health support and provision

Following the consultation on 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: A Green Paper' in July 2018, commitments were made to an ambitious programme promoting good mental health and support in and around schools and colleges. Through this joint and collaborative programme the Department for Health and Social Care, Department for Education, NHS England and Health Education England have clear plans in place to ensure children and young people have the mental health support they need. These plans include establishing new Mental Health Support Teams, working in or near schools and colleges; incentivising schools and colleges to identify and train a senior mental health lead; and piloting a 4-week waiting time for access to specialist NHS children and young people's mental health services.

The new Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) will be established in 20% to 25% of the country by 2023 and will intervene in cases of mild to moderate mental health issues and work with schools and colleges to improve join up between schools, colleges and mental health services/professionals. MHSTs will be comprised of newly trained workforce of Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHP) as well as more senior clinicians and therapists. The training for the EMHPs who will be providing the mental health support will include an understanding of the impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences. The core offer is predominantly for children and young people 5-18 years old.

The first 25 trailblazer sites, delivering 59 MHSTs, were announced in December 2018 and will be operational by the end of 2019, 12 of these sites are also piloting a four-week waiting time. A further 123 Mental Health Support Teams will be introduced in 57 sites around the country during 19–20. 48 of these sites were new and brings the total number of sites to 73 to date. The regional selection focused on health inequalities and disadvantage and commissioners were asked to detail how they would support children and young people

likely to have higher need. This includes those with experience of trauma including crime, those with physical or neurodevelopmental needs such as learning disability or autism, looked-after children and those who are LGBTQ+, as well as those in contact with the justice system, who may find accessing services more difficult.

Subject to contract award, training for senior mental health leads will be available to schools and colleges for the first cohorts from June 2020 and available to all state-funded schools and colleges by 2025. The training will equip senior mental health leads to establish or develop their positive whole school or college approach to mental health. This training will include how to identify children and young people at-risk and those exhibiting signs of mental ill health.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out clear commitments to increase access to mental health support, including work to extend current service models to create a comprehensive offer for 0–25 year olds that reaches across mental health services for children, young people and adults. An additional 345,000 children and young people 0–25 will have access to support by 2023–24. Under this Long-Term Plan, mental health services will continue to receive a growing share of the NHS budget, with funding to grow by at least £2.3 billion a year by 2023–24. For the first time, funding for children and young people's mental health services will grow faster than both overall NHS funding and total mental health spending. Setting up 24/7 crisis care provision for children, young people and their families is a key priority for the Government in the NHS Long Term Plan. All children and young people experiencing crisis will be able to access crisis care 24 hours a day, seven days a week by 2023–24 via NHS111.

Over the last decade, many of the ties that bind communities together have been severed, from youth workers and neighbourhood police officers to community safety teams and safer schools officers. Local authority finances are being increasingly consumed by statutory services such as social care, housing and looked-after children, and council budgets will not benefit directly from savings to the criminal justice system and the health service. The Government must ensure that additional funding is made available to invest in effective activity to reduce serious violence. It needs to recognise that prevention is a far more cost-effective alternative to spending so much money on reactive and acute responses later on, which cost the taxpayer far more in the long term. (Paragraph 200)

There is strong evidence that a relatively small number of individuals commit the majority of crime and serious violence. In one UK study of first-time offenders, the 5% who became chronic offenders committed almost 50% of total re-offences, equating to an average of 27 subsequent offences per individual. Being aged 10–17 years at first-offence is one of the best predictors of being a chronic offender. These individuals are likely to continue to offend at a high rate beyond their teenage years. There are huge potential societal benefits to identifying those at risk of being a prolific career criminal and engaging them in prevention activity.

The Government recognises that tackling serious youth violence, needs a multi-agency approach involving a range of partners and agencies with a focus on not just law enforcement, but also prevention and early intervention. Very significant funding has already been invested in early intervention through the £22 million Early Intervention Youth Fund and the £200 million Youth Endowment Fund to ensure those most at risk are

given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives. The anti-knife crime Community Fund has supported 115 projects in local communities to tackle knife crime in 2017/19 and 2018/19. We have also announced that we are supporting 61 projects in the third year of the fund up to March 2020.

The £100 million Serious Violence Fund is enabling resources to be targeted in the areas most affected by violent crime. The Violence Reduction Units being set up with £35 million of this funding in these areas will bring together local leaders across police, education, health, social care and other sectors to provide local coordination of the response and associated investment.

On 30 September the Chancellor reiterated a commitment to young people, confirming £500 million investment through the new Youth Investment Fund over five years. This vital investment, the cornerstone of the Government's offer for young people, will help build 60 new youth centres across the country, refurbish around 360 existing youth facilities, and provide over 100 mobile facilities for harder to reach areas.

We value opportunities for young people to build trusted relationships and to seek spaces where youth work can deliver high quality information, advice and guidance alongside positive activities that improve wellbeing and participation in their communities. The Government recognises that these opportunities can have a transformational impact on young people, providing them with skills and resilience needed to lead productive, violence free lives. Through the £13 million Trusted Relationships Fund we are identifying innovative approaches to tackling vulnerability among children and young people at risk of exploitation and abuse. The Fund supports 11 local authority led projects working with children and young people (aged 10–17) who have been identified locally as at risk of child sexual exploitation or abuse, criminal exploitation and peer on peer abuse. The Fund aims to build resilience to harm through fostering healthy, trusting relationships with responsible adults. By using a variety of methods to foster these relationships, we hope to improve understanding of emerging local threats, reduce victimisation and drive down demand on statutory services. Effective multiagency working at the local level underpins the success of these and many other programmes, with the police playing a key role alongside social workers, health professionals and third sector partners in identifying those young people most at need, supporting referrals into services, and sharing intelligence.

In addition, we will be using the new Creating Opportunities Forum to bring together representatives of businesses, the public and the voluntary sector to explore how we can do more to provide at risk young people, particularly in the areas worst affected by serious violence, with real employment related opportunities. The first meeting of the Forum took place in July and brought together Ministers from different departments, and representatives from the different sectors to discuss what more might be possible in this space, from raising the aspirations of the young people concerned, through to creating work placements, mentoring opportunities, training and real jobs. In taking this work forward, we are looking at the different opportunities provided by different business sectors, including the public sector, as well as being alive to the different circumstances and opportunities that may be available in different regions of the country.

The Government is committed to developing a new youth offer to set out our ten-year vision for young people, working closely with young people themselves, the youth sector, and other partners. It will reaffirm our commitment to give young people a strong voice on

the issues they care about such as combating serious violence and knife crime, addressing mental and physical health challenges and concerns about the environment and climate change.

In addition, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has launched the review of the guidance which sets out the statutory duty placed on local authorities to provide youth services. It is expected to provide clarity on the Government's expectations for a local youth offer, including the value of youth work delivered by trained practitioners. The Government has already taken action to renew entry level qualifications, national occupational standards curriculum and institute a level 3 apprenticeship, as well as funding bursaries up to £500,000 for students undertaking youth work qualifications, all of which will further support youth workers to develop the skills they need to best support young people, especially those facing multiple barriers or disadvantage.

£22 million has been invested (across academic years 2017–18 and 2018–19) in regular extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged children and young people living in some of the most deprived parts of the country, so they can benefit from these before and after school, during term-time and in the holidays. This support extends beyond the school term. In 2018, the Government announced a programme of research and pilots to explore ways of supporting disadvantaged families during school holidays. It awarded £2 million of funding to seven organisations to deliver free healthy food and activities to children and families in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country during the 2018 summer holidays. With this money they were able to support around 280 clubs and reach around 18,000 children. In 2019 funding was quadrupled and the programme was strengthened to encourage coordination in local communities so that even more disadvantaged children were able to benefit from high quality provision.

Conclusion

The new Government is committed to tackling serious violence and its devastating impact on victims, families and communities. We have made significant new investments in capabilities and structures. This programme has also been supported by and involved a wide range of partners across England and Wales.

The Prime Minister's commitment to enable the recruitment of 20,000 additional officers over the next three years provides an opportunity for us to continue to build and intensify our efforts in this space and we look to other partners and agencies to continue to work with us, supported by a new multi-agency duty. This, with a re-energised end to end criminal justice response will help bring levels of violent crime down and provide the reassurance and safety to those communities being impacted.