



Home Office

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
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Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
London
SW1P 4DF

30 March 2023

Dear Dame Diana,

I am writing to update you with regards to the Serious Violence Reduction Order (SVRO) pilot.

The Government introduced SVROs through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022. SVROs are a new order which will give the police the powers to take a more proactive approach to those already convicted of knife or offensive weapon offences through providing the power to stop and search those with an order. These orders will help to tackle prolific, high-risk offenders, by making it easier for police to search them for weapons. SVROs will also help protect first time offenders from being drawn into further exploitation by criminal gangs, by acting as a deterrent to any further weapons carrying.

As you know, the Government is piloting SVROs in four police force areas – Merseyside, Sussex, Thames Valley, and West Midlands - to build an understanding of the effectiveness of the new orders before making a decision on whether they should be rolled out nationally. The Government has today published the commencement regulations in respect of the pilot, which will begin on 19 April 2023 and will be live for two years. There will be an additional six-month savings period following conclusion of the pilot to allow for SVROs which take effect on and up to the final day of the pilot to run for the minimum duration of six months. No new applications for SVROs can be made during the savings period.

Whilst SVROs may only be applied for, or varied, in pilot force areas, constables across England and Wales will have the power to stop and search those with an SVRO. This will allow the police the flexibility to tackle travelling criminality and ensure that offenders are not able to evade enforcement simply by leaving the pilot force area.

The pilot will be independently evaluated by Ecorys. The evaluation will consider the deterrent effect of SVROs; test community responses to the orders; examine any potential disproportionate impacts on those with protected characteristics; and build evidence on the outcomes for offenders

subject to an SVRO. The terms of reference for the evaluation will shortly be published in the libraries of both Houses following a commitment made by Lord Sharpe during the passage of the PCSC Act. The Government will carefully consider the results of the evaluation before a decision is made on whether the orders should be rolled out nationally.

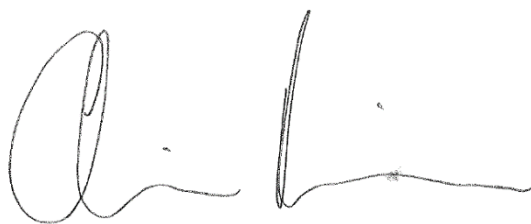
The Government has also issued the final version of the SVRO statutory guidance, which can be found on gov.uk at: [Serious violence reduction orders: statutory guidance version 1 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-reduction-orders-statutory-guidance-version-1).

Targeted use of stop and search forms part of our wider approach to tackling serious violence, knife crime and homicide. The Government is determined to crack down on the scourge of violence and is taking a twin track approach which combines tough enforcement with programmes to divert young people away from violence.

This financial year (2022/23), the Government has made available £130million for these purposes, including £64m for our network of Violence Reduction Units, which bring together key partners to address the drivers of serious violence locally. It also includes £30m for Grip, our hotspot policing programme which is helping to drive down violence using a highly data-driven process to identify violence hotspots – often to individual street level – and target operational activity in those areas. We are also providing £200m over 10 years for the Youth Endowment Fund, to test and evaluate what works to ensure those young people most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Philp', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire