

Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Strategy 2024-2027



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Executive Summary

The Serious Violence Duty

The Safer Oxfordshire Partnership has developed the Violence and Vulnerability Strategy to adhere to the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty placed upon partners specified in Section 11 and Section 12 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. It sets out how the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership works together to address youth violence, including knife crime, and serious violence associated with drug-related exploitation of vulnerable adults and children in the county, focussing on those who pose the highest threat, harm, and risk to our communities.

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner's definition of serious violence is: "*Serious Violence includes specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents that involve a knife, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing*" - has been adopted for the purposes of this strategy.

Serious violence also includes domestic and sexual violence and is prevalent in the night-time economy. These areas have their own strategies and plans as illustrated in the table below.

This strategy is aligned with the Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership workstreams to reduce serious violence, tackling county lines and misuse of drugs through:

- early intervention and prevention activities, particularly focussed on young people.
- supporting communities and partnerships work together using a public health approach.
- effective law enforcement and criminal justice responses to deter offending and bring people to justice.
- protect and support vulnerable people from the harm caused by drugs and the drug trade.

The Violence and Vulnerability Strategy 2024-2027 focusses on the impact of drug dealing and its associated violence including knife crime on young people, vulnerable adults, and communities. The nature and extent of serious violence in Oxfordshire is identified in the [Strategic Needs Assessment for Oxfordshire](#), whether the drug supply is from outside Oxfordshire, commonly known as County Drug Lines (CDL), or from Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) based in the county,

Both drug dealing operating models rely on the criminal exploitation of children (CCE) where Oxfordshire children are forced to deal drugs in the county or to other regions, and children from other areas coming to Oxfordshire to move drugs and money. Risk factors include but are not limited to missing episodes, school exclusions, not being in suitable education, employment or training, parental substance abuse, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, substance misuse, unsafe accommodation, poor mental health and contact with the youth justice system.

National and local research has determined the root causes of knife carrying by young people. Although not exhaustive, some common factors identified by Safe4Me known to influence young people to carry knives:

- Gang affiliation – protection/status.
- Media attention/glamorisation
- Fear of crime – being attacked/self-protection
- Victim of bullying – self-protection
- Peer pressure – perception that most young people carry knives.

Exploiters use threats and violence to force vulnerable adults to deal for them or use their properties, commonly known as "cuckooing." This strategy addresses these activities.

Serious Violence in Oxfordshire

Definition

Serious violence (SV) has been given a single definition across the Thames Valley broadly based on Home Office guidance.

“Serious Violence includes specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents that involve a knife, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing.”

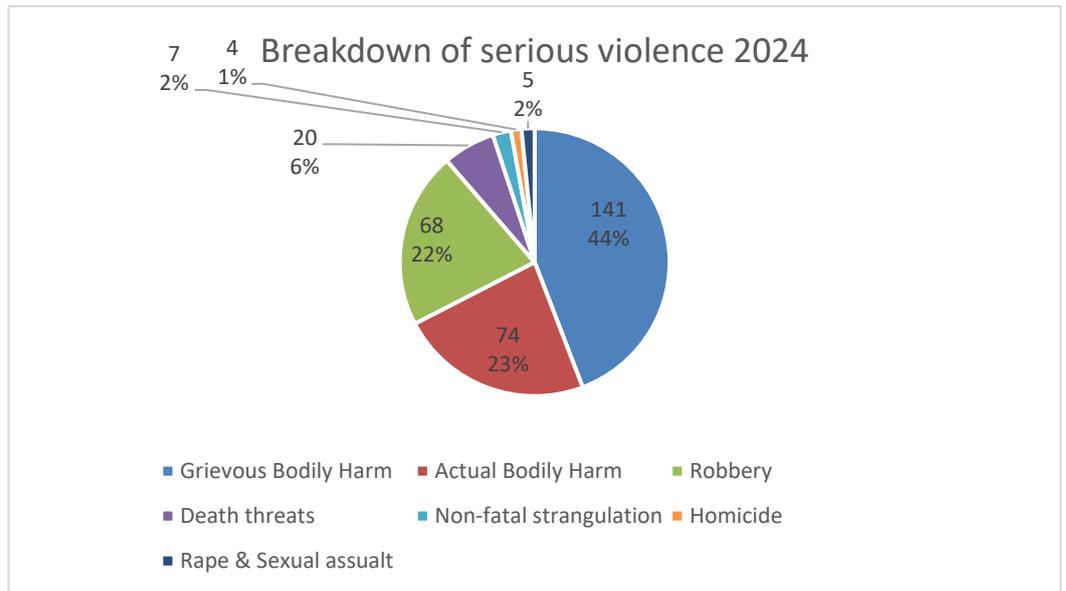
This is broadly based on the original Home Office definition and is inclusive of all ages, location types (public / private), and domestic flags.

Knife crime is defined according to the Home Office Annual Data Requirement (ADR) 160.

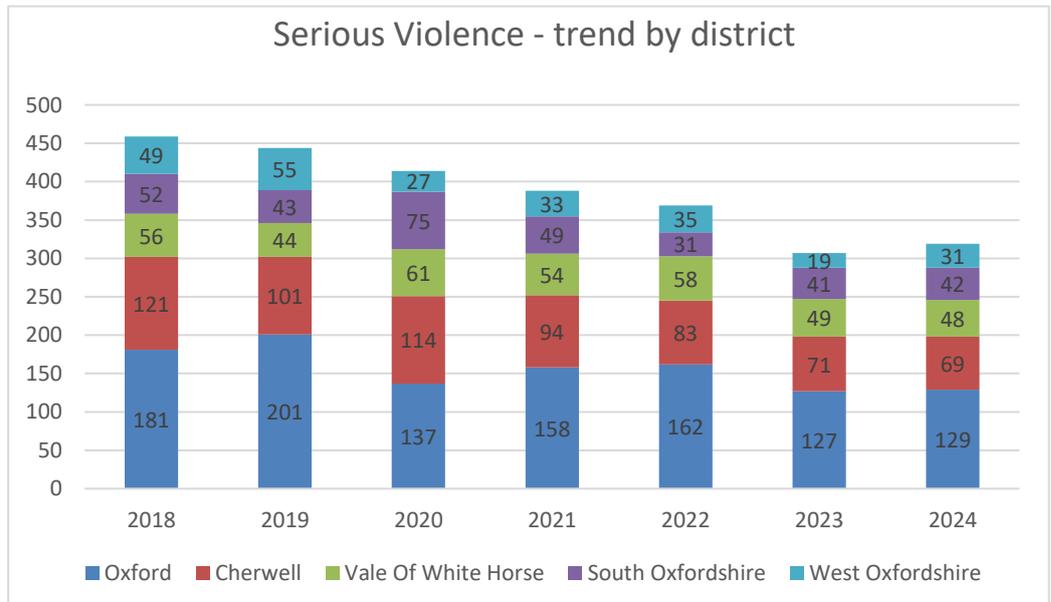
Trends and analysis

More information can be found on the [Oxfordshire Data Hub](#).

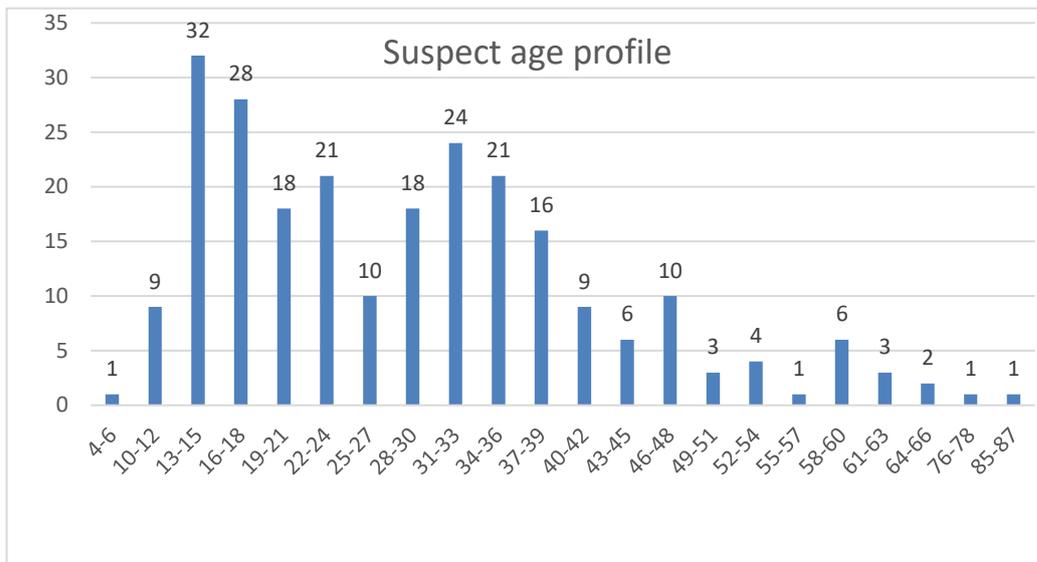
Serious violence by crime type – police crime statistics



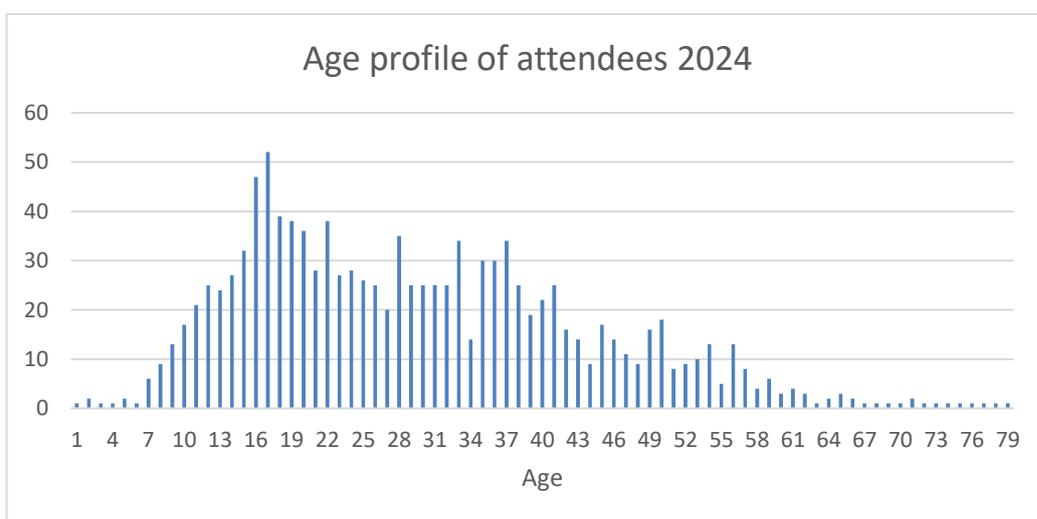
Serious violence yearly trend by district – police crime statistics



Serious violence suspects age profile – police crime statistics



Hospital admissions by age - Oxford University Hospitals (NHS Foundation Trust)



Outcomes and Impact

The partnership will monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of this strategy. CSPs have a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 review local plans to monitor effectiveness, make changes where necessary and to publish the outcomes of each review.

Three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence are:

1. Homicide rates
2. Hospital admissions for knife/sharp object assault
3. Police-recorded knife crime

Outcomes may also be based on data on police recorded violence offences included in the strategic needs assessment; this could include (but is not limited to) offences involving firearms, robbery, and possession of weapons offences.

The partnership should use both quantitative and qualitative indicators to ensure that evaluation is data-informed and captures the voices and views of our children, families, and communities. Sources of data including Health, Education and Social Care data could include:

- Children living in a household where there is domestic violence.
- Children living in a household with a family member convicted of an offence.
- Victims of/at risk of criminal/sexual exploitation
- Those who have had missing episodes.
- Children outside of mainstream school

A Partnership Approach

Plans and strategies

Drug treatment and intervention activities are embedded within the [Oxfordshire Combatting Drugs Strategy](#), the Public Health response to the Government’s 10-year drug strategy ‘From Harm to Hope’.

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Child Exploitation sub-group coordinates multi-agency activities to safeguarding children from exploitation and the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Modern Slavery and Exploitation pathways address child exploitation safeguarding approaches and adult exploitation, respectively. Youth exploitation and youth offending interventions are delivered by Oxfordshire’s Youth Justice and Exploitation Service.

The framework below illustrates how these strategic and operational priorities are addressed across the partnership:

Knife crime, County Lines and local OCGs	Oxfordshire Violence and Vulnerability Strategy Youth Justice and Exploitation Service Annual Plan
	Oxford Community Safety Partnership Plan Cherwell Community Safety Partnership Plan West Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership Plan South & Vale Community Safety Partnership Plan
Child exploitation safeguarding delivery	Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership -Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding Strategy 2025-2028 Youth Justice and Exploitation Service Annual Plan
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)	Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy TVP VAWG Strategy
Prevention and Early Intervention for young people and families	Oxfordshire Early Help and Locality Community Support Service Oxfordshire County Council Strategic Plan 2023-25
Alcohol-related violence	NightSafe Oxfordshire

Delivering the Strategy

This strategy encompasses Oxfordshire’s response to the threat, risk and harm posed by the current models of drug dealing and the exploitation and violence associated with it. It sets out the activities that prevent, intervene, and disrupt serious violence in this context, and supports the plans Community Safety Partnerships implement at a local level.

A Neighbourhood Community Safety Framework has been developed for Community Safety Partnerships in Oxfordshire to apply to risk and need issues within their localities. The framework is applicable to community safety risks that impact the quality of life in neighbourhoods where the visible signs of crime and anti-social behaviour are seen and felt by the local community, for example: drug dealing, child criminal exploitation, anti-social behaviour, and violence outside the home.

The strategy’s four strands to address the threat, risk, and harm of serious violence are:

1. Prepare – effective oversight and strategic support for delivery. Using data and insights to gain the best and most up-to-date understanding of the problem. Effective communication, campaigns, and messaging to the public.
2. Prevent – early intervention and prevention activities, focussed on young people.
3. Pursue – law enforcement and criminal justice responses to deter offending and bring people to justice.

4. Protect – protect and support vulnerable people from the harm caused by the drug trade.

Prepare – governance, data, and insights and communication.

Governance

The Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Co-ordination Group is the body responsible for coordinating the delivery of this strategy and supporting the local CSPs to delivery operational interventions, with every other meeting focusing on serious violence. Intra-board protocols are in place with the Safeguarding Boards and Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has a statutory relationship with Oxfordshire local authorities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended. The OPCC can bring together partners at a regional level in support of Oxfordshire planning. The OPCC attends the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Coordination Group and district CSP meetings. The OPCC oversees compliance with the Serious Violence Duty, working with the Home Office and collaborating with partnerships, including the CSPs, across the Thames Valley.

Communication

Communication activities are coordinated by the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership and CSPs. A shared, common language is used, and messages are agreed and used in both public and internal communications. Appropriate communication channels are identified including media outlets, social media and local community and organisation channels.

Campaign activities and communication materials are used to support Home Office, National Crime Agency, Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) and Thames Valley Police initiatives. The results of intensification weeks, coordinated by the National Crime Agency, are communicated by Thames Valley Police, and shared by partners through social media channels.

Data and Insights

Oxfordshire knife crime and serious violence data is analysed, and a balanced picture set out against the national trends in the [Oxfordshire Strategic Needs Assessment](#). This is used to support multi-agency case management processes and identify trends.

- Thames Valley Police Problem-Solving Analysts identify key locations and times of knife crime and serious violence to inform prevention and enforcement activity.
- Serious Violence and Stop and Search Dashboards are available to police officers.
- The Child Exploitation Sub-Group produces a prevalence report on child exploitation.
- Local Command Unit daily briefings, case conferences, Serious and Organised Crime meetings and Tasking and Tactical Coordination Group meetings coordinate responses across partners.
- Intelligence submissions are sourced from a range of teams within partner organisations through Thames Valley Police Force Intelligence Hub (FIH).

Information Sharing

The Safer Oxfordshire Partnership Information Sharing Protocol 2024-27 underpins data sharing.

Review and learning.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) identify learning from serious incidents and improvements to inform local organisational practices and multi-agency arrangements. OSCP facilitate learning events focussed on child exploitation. Practitioner learning events for teachers, social care professionals, police officers and other front-line professionals with up-to date information on child exploitation.

Role specific safeguarding training is embedded across all statutory partners and agencies supporting children and young people. OSCP quality assure the training materials and deliver a broad range of theme specific training including child sexual exploitation training, alongside all levels of safeguarding training. Agencies have specific intranet pages on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Partners have access to and can use the Home Office Child Exploitation Disruption toolkit within their localised plans.

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) has a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) sub-group to ensure the responsibilities of the Board are conducted in respect of Safeguarding Adult Review and other forms of learning reviews activities.

Thames Valley Police hold an annual internal conference on a Compendium of Learning from statutory reviews enabling learning from statutory reviews to be disseminated.

Probation Service deliver learning events for staff incorporating learning from internal Serious Further Offence Reviews as well as multi-agency learning reviews both local and national.

Communities

Communities are engaged in problem-solving in public spaces where there is high drug use and drug dealing, led by local Community Safety Partnerships.

Environmental Visual Audits are conducted in hot-spot areas to address serious violence and drug dealing.

- Street Safe and Common Place web portals are used to understand where the public feel unsafe and the data accessible to agencies to implement solutions.
- The Youth Justice and Exploitation Service has delivers parenting groups using the PACE (Parents Against Criminal Exploitation) model to inform, educate and empower parents to become key partners in safeguarding their children.
- OSCP's Oxfordshire Joint Operating Framework (JOF) for the Transportation of Children and Adults with Care and Support Needs and Taxi Licensing is the result of collaboration between the City and District Councils, the County Council, and the Police. It defines minimum standards for taxi licensing and transporting children and adults with care and support needs in the county, including mandatory training, use of safeguarding materials and information, information sharing, joint operations, and quality assurance. Taxi drivers receive safeguarding training which covers indicators of exploitation including CDLs and how to raise concerns.

Prevent – early intervention and prevention activities.

Young people are protected from the harm of drugs, gangs, and associated violence through the delivery of universal, targeted and specialist support services. A contextual safeguarding approach identifies risk and protective factors for the young person, their family, their peer groups, and in school and neighbourhood settings.

Non-school settings include a vast number of youth activities across the county, many are universal services open to all, with targeted activities tailored support to those at greater risk.

Oxfordshire has over 160 voluntary and community sector organisations working with children and young people. Spread across the county these groups and organisations provide essential preventative services and support services.

Prevention and early intervention activities

- Young people are provided with PSHE input about the dangers of drugs and exploitation. PSHE-accredited resources which have been provided by the VPP for Key Stages 1-3.
- The OSCP Exploitation Toolkit is used by all schools and alternative providers in Oxfordshire. This toolkit is available to all partners on the OSCP website and serves as a practical guide with links to all available resources and services to schools which support children and young people.
- Chelsea's Story' Applied Theatre Production raises awareness around the issues surrounding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) to Oxfordshire schools.
- Offer of trauma-informed training and support to all schools across Oxfordshire from the Violence Prevention Partnership. Restorative Justice training to all School Police Officers.

- Attendance and exclusions training with schools via Attendance Network meetings and In-Year Fair Access Panels advocates in use of Early Help Assessments.
- Bespoke Early Help training delivered to Early Years services, Police and Health Visitor service.
- Education training has been delivered to 150+ Children's Social Care staff and managers.
- Voluntary sector youth organisations work together to provide relevant activities to young people, providing them with safe spaces and empower them to talk about their lived experience.
- Providers have safeguarding practices embedded within their organisations and staff trained in exploitation and referral processes.
- The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership hold learning events for practitioners on child exploitation and county drug lines. Learning documents and interagency procedures for gang activity, youth violence and criminal exploitation are available on their [website](#).
- Voluntary and community sector partnerships exist across the County with a range of providers offering universal, targeted and specialist support. These are found on the [Oxme website](#).
- Organisations such as Oxfordshire Youth, Safe! Children Heard and Seen and SeeSaw work across Oxfordshire supporting young people.
- Alternative Provision staff attend Missing and Exploited Panels and Child Missing Education Panels.
- Governor Services have exclusion training for governors.
- OSCP Threshold of Need document provides guidance on early help processes to support children and families as soon as a problem first emerges.

Targeted Support

The Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS) is a core component of Oxfordshire's adolescent support structure, delivering early and targeted interventions to young people aged 11–18 who are at risk of harm outside the home. TYSS is embedded within a multi-agency framework that includes schools, social care, health services, police, and community organisations, ensuring a coordinated and holistic response to emerging vulnerabilities.

TYSS operates across a continuum of need, offering:

- Detached and outreach youth work in communities responding to incidents of violence, anti-social behaviour, and exploitation.
- Short-term 1-to-1 casework focused on protective behaviours, identity, aspirations, and healthy relationships.
- Targeted group programmes in schools and communities addressing themes such as violence against women and girls, online safety, positive masculinity, and emotional literacy.
- Year 6–7 transition support for the most vulnerable, including those with poor attendance, exclusions, SEN needs, or social care involvement

TYSS is particularly effective in identifying and supporting young people who fall below statutory thresholds but show signs of emerging risk. This includes those impacted by exploitation, social isolation, or harmful online behaviours. The service uses data and intelligence from multi-agency partnerships to identify hotspots and coordinate responses, including tailored support for schools affected by community incidents.

- Police schools' officers support specific individuals and work with the schools' management teams. Schools PCs attend In Year Fair Access Panels (IYFAP) to ensure schools have accurate information about police concerns to help inform proportionate decision-making.
- The Virtual School will be funding home-school link workers in the North, City and South of Oxfordshire for children and young people with Social Workers who are at risk of exclusion.

- The Locality Community Support Service address risk issues with young people raised by schools and colleges through a Community Around the School Offer. The offer coordinates engagement and activities to reduce the risk behaviours in a community and school setting.
- The Early Help Strategy outlines the offer of each partner from universal to statutory services and sets out strategic aims, including a service directory for professionals.
- The 'Attendance pathway' requires a Strengths and Needs or Early Help Assessment to be completed where there are issues with attendance or before a suspension or exclusion decision.
- A multi-agency early help 'Neglect and Attendance Group' has been established to look specifically at how early help processes can be used to improve attendance, reduce suspensions and exclusions for children where neglect is an identified problem for the family.
- School nurses are trained and embedded in child exploitation processes, collaborating closely with Police, Social Care, and schools to identify and protect young people at risk.
- Restorative Justice practitioners work in schools following a specific incident and hold a formal RJ meeting within 48 hrs to reduce the need for a fixed term exclusion whilst police investigate.
- Restorative Justice Service run by Thames Valley Partnership is available to organisations who require restorative justice interventions.
- Agreed local information sharing with Op Encompass to improve the responses between the police and all Oxfordshire schools where a pupil is at risk of domestic abuse.
- Children Heard and Seen – police investigators refer to the charity when a custodial sentence is imposed or highly anticipated.
- Learner Engagement Services offer early intervention through Lead Behaviour Practitioner provision, Exclusion and Reintegration provision.
- OXSIT (Oxfordshire Schools Inclusion Services) available for commissioning by schools to support children at risk of permanent exclusion with special educational needs.
- SENSS advisory services also available to schools to support and advise on best meeting children's special educational needs.
- Health care professionals can update exploitation and safeguarding concerns on the patient record to assist in care planning and risk levels.

Specialist services

- The Youth Justice and Exploitation Service (YJES) is a specialist service delivering statutory youth justice functions and social care for children who are at elevated risk of being exploited. The service works with Forensic CAMHS so is underpinned by psychological and developmentally informed approaches.
- Young people open to the Youth Justice and Exploitation Service (YJES) are screened for substance misuse issues and onward referrals made to Aquarius (drug and alcohol service provider). YJES Building Resilience Toolkit providing activities in 1-2-1 or group work sessions on young people's understanding of exploitation risk and give them strategies to stay safe.
- Drug Diversion Scheme – Thames Valley Police, YJES and Aquarius are working in partnership to deliver the Drug Diversion Scheme. This offers a treatment-based response to young people stopped by Police in possession of controlled drugs with the aim of diverting them away from the criminal justice system.
- Each district CSP attend local police meetings to discuss local issues and individuals, and problem-solving approaches are used.
- Strategic Management Groups, a problem-solving task, and finish process to respond to serious incidents and in areas of high prevalence and concern.
- Young people are discussed at the Missing and Exploitation Panels in the Cherwell/West, South, and City areas, bringing together professionals to understand and manage risk.

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Plans (MARAMPs), Social Care Strategy Meetings and Core Groups case manage substantial risk young people under the statutory and non-statutory frameworks.
- The National Referral Mechanism process is used when a young person is identified as being at risk of exploitation. The risk-management of the young person is with the police and CSC.
- Safeguarding and medical staff in hospitals work to a protocol that identifies young people thought to be victims of violent assault including stabbing who are referred to the MASH.
- There are established working processes with young person's mental health services including Liaison and Diversion, Forensic Child, and Adolescent Mental Health Service (FCAMHS), the Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service (CAHBS) the Neuropsychiatry CAMHS team, MHSTs and the specialist Horizon service. These provides the levels of specialism needed to support people with ADHD/ASD or autism, children with complex needs, children in Police custody, children who have experienced sexual harm or abuse and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour.
- The Phoenix Team provides health services for young people who are Children we Care For, those open to the Residential and Edge of Care Service and young people open to YJES.

Pursue - law enforcement and criminal justice responses.

All agencies in Oxfordshire use interventions and enforcement powers at their disposal to tackle those exploiting young people. The range of enforcement processes include Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, civil injunctions, Child Abduction Warning Notices and Criminal Behaviour Orders.

- The police Local Command Unit has multi-agency Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group, and a Serious and Organised Crime meetings which respond to drug exploitation and organised crime.
- Local Organised Crime Groups are mapped, scored and management plans in place.
- There are appropriate police Risk Management Occurrences in place with multi-agency plans for all identified nominals and localities.
- Police conduct supervisory reviews for knife crime and serious violence offences, and file quality for knife enabled crime with appropriate victim impact statements and use of bad character.
- Police and council teams use ASB legislation to reduce knife crime and serious violence.
- Operation Rasure is in place to tackle knife crime.
- Some prolific offenders involved in drug-related activity are managed through the Integrated Offender Management process.
- The police liaise with DrugFAM to provide support for families impacted by drug misuse.
- Thames Valley Police Drugs Task Force (DFT) combat County Drugs Lines across the force.
- The police work with the Southeast Regional Organised Crime Unit to share information and cooperation in targeting priority organised crime groups.
- Stop and Search systems and processes are in place to ensure stop and search is being used effectively whilst ensuring public confidence is retained. The Stop Search SPOC attends the Independent Advisory Group and TVP Stop and Search group where performance is monitored.
- The police and partners work with British Transport Police and Network Rail on addressing the movement of drugs on public transport.
- The YJES Joint Decision-Making Panel (JDMP) triages all cases referred by police Youth Justice Unit (TVP) to ensure suitable young people receive out-of-court interventions.
- The Probation Service work closely with Police colleagues and other partners through MAPPA, JTAC and TTCG arrangements to manage gang, county line and OCG nominals.

- The Probation Service provide interventions to reduce harm in relation to domestic abuse, sexual offending, and other harmful behaviours.
- The Probation Service use a 1-2-1 toolkit on moving away from an offending identity that can be used for gang members.

Protect – protect vulnerable people and locations.

Adults vulnerable to exploitation by drug dealers are identified by support agencies, the police, housing providers and local authorities and responses put in place to protect the person within their property. The National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify are used in all cases.

Criminal justice options are considered in the context of exploitation, and the individuals support needs, and joint agency operations are undertaken to prevent underage sales of knives and parents are aware of the possibility of knives being taken from home.

Protecting vulnerable adults

- Agencies are trained in Modern Slavery Act 2015 responsibilities, NRM and the Duty to Notify.
- Oxfordshire adult exploitation responses are led by the SEMART - Slavery and Exploitation Multi-Agency Response Team
- “Cuckooing” protocols are in place in Oxfordshire that include effective recording and case management on police and Council systems.
- Turning Point work with Oxford Crown Court’s on Drug Rehabilitation and Testing requirements.
- The Probation Service provide support to victims via the Victim Liaison Unit and the Domestic Abuse Safety Officers (DASO).
- The Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework is designed to support an adult with a high level of risk but does not meet the statutory adult safeguarding framework.

Protecting localities

- The Oxfordshire Community Safety Problem Solving Officer conducts Environmental Visual Audits in hot spot areas, working with partners to implement recommendations.
- Operation Sceptre runs twice a year in each district to encourage the community to hand in unwanted knives and educate people on the dangers of carrying a knife.
- Trading Standards conduct test purchasing operations in retail premises selling knives.

Conclusion

Oxfordshire’s Violence and Vulnerability strategy outlines how Oxfordshire partnerships are responding to the Serious Violence Duty. The Safer Oxfordshire Partnership has used the Oxfordshire Strategic Needs Assessment to underpin County-level approaches.

District CSPs can use various data analysis tools to drill-down into the data to better understand localised trends around risk and need to inform their responses to serious violence. Local CSP plans around serious violence ‘operationalise’ delivery of this strategy.

<u>Update control</u>	
Reviewer	<u>Date</u>
Richard Adams	July 2025
SOP V&V Subgroup	August 2025
Date of next review:	July 2026

