



WELCOME... TO ISSUE ONE



Hello, and welcome to the first Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) news update. Let me introduce myself. I am Andy Ryan, head of Merseyside VRP, having taken up the post in July. This monthly update intends to inform you – our key partners and stakeholders – about our news, activities, and shared progress.



Some of you may wonder, 'What is Merseyside VRP?' so let me explain. MVRP is a partnership of agencies, which seeks to reduce serious violence across Merseyside using a public health approach. This means that we don't consider violence as isolated incidents, nor as a problem for police enforcement alone. Instead, we look

at violence as a preventable consequence of various factors, such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). We look to understand the scale and nature of the problem before working with agencies and communities to co-design interventions and policies to tackle its root causes.

Many of us live and work in Merseyside, and so reducing the risk of serious violence runs close to our hearts. Occasionally, we may ask for your support to develop ideas to help us achieve our collective goals. In coming months, we'll share new videos, animations and campaign news but in the meantime, I'd like to invite you to visit our website (www.merseysidevrp.com) where you will find downloadable materials and reports, campaign assets and media updates.

We believe that all communities across Merseyside have the right to be free from violence in order to provide the best life chances for all. With this as our ultimate goal, we aim to reduce the number of victims of violent crime and the amount of people hospitalised as a result of assault injuries.

Thank you for taking the time to read our first update and, above all, stay safe.

➤ [READ THE FULL STORY HERE](#)

HIGH TAKE-UP IN TIA TRAINING

The VRP continues to roll out training so that a growing number of frontline workers in Merseyside can adopt a Trauma Informed Approach (TIA) to support more children and families affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The 'experiences' include all forms of child maltreatment and environmental factors such as parents being in prison or misusing substances; parents with mental health problems; domestic violence at home. Over 1,000 staff/workers have received the ACE/ TIA training or are engaged in the trauma informed strategic support pilot for Schools. In coming weeks, we will see even more in the arts, culture and sports sectors.

- [READ THE FORMAL EVALUATION](#)
- [WATCH ACES VIDEO](#)
- [CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL STORY](#)



One of the Lifeboat participants prepares for group work

LIFEBOAT MAKES GREAT WAVES

The concept of travelling on a boat is behind an interactive group work programme, which encourages participants to develop problem solving, communication and decision-making skills. The Lifeboat Programme, run by Magistra, works with former offenders and draws on restorative practice, social learning and cognitive behavioural theories to explore the sorts of attitudes, values, and beliefs that have an impact on behaviour and wellbeing. The VRP's maiden voyage launched in September at Southwood Approved Probation Premises, in Merseyside, and received a positive response.

➤ [READ THE FULL STORY HERE](#)

SCHOOL SUPPORT IN TOUGH DECISIONS

Launched in September, our 'Additional Guidance When Considering Permanent Exclusion' received plaudits from across the education sector. The guidance asks: Is permanent exclusion our last resort, or is there an alternative way of supporting this child to avoid adverse effects for his/her future?

"As the Head of a Pupil Referral Unit, I feel the VRP's extra guidance offers timely and useful principles to note, which will help school leaders enormously when faced with this challenging dilemma," said Louise Riley, Headteacher, Meadow Park School, Knowsley.

- [DOWNLOAD THE GUIDANCE](#)
- [CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL STORY](#)

DIRECTORY GIVES HOPE TO 16+

The 'Destinations Directory' is a comprehensive resource to assist anyone in Merseyside working with young people aged 16+ to achieve their potential. Supported by both DWP through its job centres and the County FA in its work with young people, the directory highlights opportunities in education, training, employment. It also includes housing providers for the 16+.

"We hope it encourages more young people to make better informed and positive decisions about next steps and be less vulnerable to pursuing more destructive paths," said Peter Owens, co-lead of Pathways & Interventions.

➤ [CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL STORY](#)



NEW PROJECT DISRUPTS SEFTON'S CUCKOOING

'You Know Who', a joint pilot campaign with Merseyside Police and Sefton Council, explains how – and why – drug gangs are exploiting vulnerable people, and how residents can

help to keep their 'at-risk' family members, friends and neighbours safe. It was launched in Sefton in October, where a number of vulnerable people have had their homes invaded,



and taken over, by local drugs gangs who commandeer it as a base from where they sell illegal drugs, grow cannabis and store weapons.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#)



My name is David McIlveen and I am a Senior Probation Officer seconded to the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), and in this inaugural Update, it's a privilege to share some insights into my work.

By working together with partner agencies, the Probation Service has been effective in tackling offending behaviour and helping transform people's lives for the better, but with the inception of the VRP this approach has been further developed.

I work alongside colleagues from various disciplines to commission interventions and projects that address the criminogenic and socio-economic factors that help reduce the likelihood of violent offending.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#)

YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK OUT

Between 13-27 November, the VRP launches its interactive site to engage young people in dialogue to crowdsource their concerns, thoughts and ideas about issues relating to safety and violence.

"We are using the Dialogue platform to let young people across Merseyside tell us – and each other – what they think about all sorts of issues that relate to violence," says Susan Cowell, youth and community engagement lead, VRP. "Our first challenge, which launches on the 13th, is to ask young people about their feelings of safety.

"Our team is represented by a number of professionals from different sectors

who influence the way we work but we need to add another important voice, and collectively, it is young people. What do they think about these things? How do they imagine a better, healthier lifestyle in their community? Is that something we can facilitate by sharing their thoughts with policy makers and decision-makers?"

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#)

NAVIGATING COVID-19

Like all organisations, Covid-19 has certainly affected the VRP's work. Despite the challenges, however, the VRP has joined key partners and stakeholders to make concerted efforts to ensure that its interventions can continue where possible.

"While we want to remain agile in our alternative provisions, there are times when nothing but face-to-face interaction will suffice so it's always rewarding when projects relying on that can find safe ways of carrying on," said Det Supt Andy Ryan, lead of Merseyside VRP.

After the first lockdown, the VRP developed a trauma-informed programme, run by Restorative Thinking, to support educational establishments to respond to their most vulnerable young people who had experienced adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#)

WHEELY GOOD COURSE



Photo courtesy of Diana Retezan, Year 13.

A select group of Year 11 students at Alsop High School in Walton completed an eight-week course after school to learn about bike maintenance with funding from the VRP and in conjunction with the Breckfield and North Everton Community Centre. On completion of the course, students were allowed to keep the bikes. "They are all a credit to our school and themselves," said Paul Deakin, pastoral support officer, Alsop High.

HOW DID WE DO?

Every Violence Reduction Partnership, (they are called VRUs), in England and Wales has to be evaluated to further understand their value, what works and what doesn't. There are 18 of them in total. Our evaluation is managed by three universities: Liverpool John Moores, Edge Hill and Liverpool Hope. Published in September 2020. Click [here](#) for the full report

[REQUEST YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE HERE](#)



The VRP's film, which explains their work and introduces some of the team and partners, will launch at the end of November. So, watch this space!