



Quarter 1, 2025-26



HUB NEWSLETTER

WELCOME

We are thrilled to share the incredible work that has taken place at the start of this new financial year and beyond, highlighting the power of partnership working and the difference it is making to the lives of local young people, their families, and the professionals who support them.

Over this quarter (one), our collaborative efforts **reached 2,368 young people, 121 over-25s, and 141 professionals**, providing opportunities for engagement, learning, and support. Notably, in May, National Knife Crime Week saw us raising awareness about the consequences of knife crime, bringing communities together through engagement interventions, sharing information via our social media channels, and giving young people a platform to express their thoughts and experiences.

Local VRPs delivered a wide range of interventions, from mentoring, peer group work, and school workshops to dedicated support for parents and carers. Detached youth work also took place across multiple areas of Avon and Somerset, with youth workers connecting with young people where they are. During this time, **1,100 young people engaged in detached youth work** activities, conversations, or were signposted to local support services.

Looking ahead, the summer holidays have provided an opportunity to continue working with multiple agencies to offer activities, advice, and support to local young people, parents/carers, and community members. Much of this work has been delivered alongside the national Safer Streets Summer Initiative, which began on 30 June and runs until the end of September. The initiative focuses on reducing town centre criminality, shop theft, street crime, and anti-social behaviour across the UK. Our recent news write-up offers an overview of just one of the many local events that have taken place and continue to engage the community.

Together, we continue to create safe spaces, opportunities, and positive experiences for our young people and their communities, demonstrating the real impact of partnership working in transforming lives.

Natalie Lavis
Avon and Somerset VRP Director



SOMERSET VRP

50

Professionals
worked
with.

45

Young people
worked
with.

Highlighting a Partner: Somerset Youth Justice Team

The Somerset Youth Justice Team (YJT) works with children and young people aged 10 to 17, aiming to prevent youth crime and reduce re-offending across the county. Their focus is on early intervention, supporting children at risk of becoming involved in criminal behaviour, and helping those already in the justice system to make positive changes.

In addition to their core work, the team delivers in-school social skills training through their Teachable Moments model. This programme, delivered in partnership with the Family Intervention Service and Somerset VRP, supporting secondary school-aged children, provides tailored interventions focused on social skills, emotional regulation, and positive decision-making, particularly for young people at risk of exclusion or involved in serious violence, including knife crime.

This new financial year will include young people who are disengaged from education and are at increased risk of violence. The service also works with professionals to build capacity and confidence in responding to these challenges.

Knife Crime Survey

During Knife Crime Awareness Week, Somerset VRP ran a Somerset-wide survey to understand young people's views on knife crime. **290 people took part**, representing a good mix of ages, genders, and communities.

Although knife crime makes up less than 5% of serious violent crime in Somerset, its impact can be devastating.

Key findings:

- **Concern:** Around half of respondents worry about knife crime, with concern rising as age increases.
- **Impact:** Young people are seen as the group most affected.
- **Information:** The news was the most common source, followed by teachers/school staff and social media.
- **Reporting:** 83% would report a knife crime, though many prefer to do so anonymously. Trust in reporting routes varies by age.
- **Understanding:** Nearly two-thirds know what counts as a knife crime, but most focus on violent incidents.

These insights will help Somerset VRP shape future awareness and support, ensuring young people know how to stay safe and where to seek help.





B&NES VRP

801

Young people
worked
with.

Highlighting a Partner: Project 28

Project 28 plays a vital role in supporting young people across the community, helping them navigate challenges and make positive changes in their lives. Through consistent engagement, encouragement, and access to tailored support, the team builds meaningful relationships that give young people the tools and confidence to make better decisions.

Whether through drop-ins, one-to-one conversations, or referrals to specialist services, Project 28 provides a safe space to ensure young people feel heard and supported. Many go on to discover new passions and opportunities, from sports that offer structure and focus, to education and training that open doors for the future. The impact of this work can be seen in the resilience, motivation, and healthier choices young people develop over time. By working in partnership with others and creating opportunities for growth, Project 28 helps young people not only overcome difficulties but also build lasting foundations for brighter futures.

Giving Young People a Voice

In June 2025, the VRP Co-ordinator presented to the Keynsham Youth Council to discuss the issue of knife crime and to listen to the experiences of children and young people. The session provided an important opportunity to hear first-hand how knives are affecting both the community and school environments. This ongoing collaboration will ensure that the voices of young people are included in shaping the VRP's decision-making and work streams. A youth survey was conducted which coincided with Operation Sceptre (knife crime awareness week), to gather wider views from local children and young people. The results will be analysed and shared in the coming months.

Alternative Routes

The B&NES VRP funded Solve to deliver the Alternative Routes programme. This quarter, Solve ran three workshops across two schools, reaching 480 young people. Feedback from both schools and participants was overwhelmingly positive, with the majority rating the sessions 5 out of 5. Young people reported learning about the dangers of knives, criminal exploitation, grooming tactics, and the importance of thinking before acting and speaking to trusted adults. The workshops were engaging, interactive, and relatable, with real-life stories helping students understand the consequences of their choices.





Highlighting an intervention: Education Inclusion Programme

Education Inclusion Programme (EIP) is a short-term intervention service that helps reduce permanent exclusions and community risks through 1:1 student support, school guidance, and family liaison. Based within the Youth Prevention Service, it works closely with partners such as social care, police, health, and the Youth Justice Service, ensuring joined-up support. Led by an experienced education professional, EIP is embedded in local escalation panels and high-risk groups, keeping children at the centre of coordinated prevention.

Reporting Period: July 2024 – June 2025

Total Students Supported:

- 77 = 65 Secondary and 12 Primary year 6.

Youth Achievement Awards:

- 12 (all Year 6).

SEN Profile:

- Primary:
 - 2 undergoing Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), 5 with EHCPs.
- Secondary:
 - 5 with EHCPs, 51 SEN Support, 9 no SEN designation.

Impact on PEx Risk:

- 72 of 77 students (93.5%) showed a 2+ point reduction in exclusion risk.

Detached Youth Work

This quarter, youth engagement work reached 281 young people through sessions on serious youth violence, exploitation, healthy relationships, and community safety, alongside signposting to local youth services. Providers focused on key areas, building relationships and offering advice in the community.

In response to rising antisocial behaviour, free basketball sessions were offered replicating the successful sessions in another area.

Following a recent critical incident, Youth Development Workers engaged young people in discussions on weapon carrying, safety, and reporting, and supported small group work with those affected.

Plans for 2025/26 include expanding the programme to deliver small group sessions in schools and youth settings, providing more tailored support where it's needed most.





Highlighting an intervention: Blunt Truth

The Blunt Truth programme continues to make a strong impact across North Somerset. This quarter, sessions have reached 316 young people and 10 professionals, supported by Army medics, the VRP team, Avon Fire, Army Reserves, and local NPT colleagues. Feedback from both school staff and pupils has been highly positive, with the content described as engaging and impactful.



Blunt Truth Session

During a recent two-day delivery at one school, there was a remarkable 146% increase in pupils feeling confident about reporting knife crime after attending the sessions.

Funding has enabled the purchase of merchandise to reinforce FEARLESS messaging and essential equipment to support delivery.

Community & School Engagement

As part of our Community and School Engagement Programme, Safer Stronger North Somerset recently attended the Weston Independent Market to raise awareness around knife crime and promote anonymous reporting. This market engagement is one of several initiatives designed to connect with local communities, share key messages on violence reduction, and encourage safer choices for young people.



VRP Coordinator, Clair Sandilands

The Western Independent Market is held every Wednesday 9.30am-2.30pm. Check their [Facebook page](#) for more details.





BRISTOL VRP

74

Professionals
worked
with

623

Young people
worked
with.

Highlighting an Intervention: Detached Youth Work

Bristol Horn Youth Concern (BHYC) has continued its commitment to engaging young people across Bristol through multi-agency detached youth work in identified hotspot areas. By meeting young people where they are, BHYC supports them in making positive choices, understanding the consequences of involvement in gangs, drugs, or anti-social behaviour, and connecting them with local services.

Young People Engaged:

- Outreach workers connected with approximately 560 young people.

Focus Areas:

- Anti-social behaviour e.g., nitrous oxide use.
- Inter-group tensions
- Providing food, mentorship, and safe spaces for young people.

Key Observations:

- April: Outreach workers responded to a violent assault near McDonald's, providing support and statements to the police.
- May: Increased tensions around youth gatherings, workers faced access restrictions at some locations but continued engagement.
- June: Large city-centre gatherings were safely de-escalated, young people received meals and guidance toward safer activities.

Girls Group & Outreach in Bristol

The Girls Group supported 39 girls and young women over the past quarter, focusing on resilience, self-esteem, healthy relationships, and the prevention of exploitation. Sessions were delivered in schools, community settings, and youth clubs.

Two street-based youth workers carried out outreach and detached youth work across Bristol's Inner-City, engaging girls where they gathered and encouraging participation in services.

1-to-1 Community Mentoring

This program provided bespoke, trauma-informed mentoring for young people experiencing exploitation and harm outside the home. Skilled practitioners focused on building meaningful therapeutic relationships, offering evidence-based interventions, and contributing expert advice to child protection and adult safeguarding multi-agency responses. In Quarter 1, 14 new young people accessed community mentoring through four partner services.



KNIFE CRIME

Awareness
Week

Knife Crime Awareness Week is an important national campaign that highlights the devastating impact of knife crime on individuals, families, and communities. It reminds us that knife crime is a societal issue requiring collective responsibility and action.

This year's theme, "Change Can Happen", was led by the Ben Kinsella Trust. The week ran from the 19th–25th of May and coincided with the National Police Chiefs' Council Operation Sceptre, which unites police forces to detect, prevent, and reduce knife-related violence.

Locally, our VRPs supported a variety of initiatives to raise awareness, educate communities, and encourage collaboration to prevent knife-related harm.

- **Youth Engagement and Surveys:** B&NES VRP has launched an anonymous youth survey for young people to share their experiences and views on knife crime. The results will help guide targeted interventions that reflect local young people's voices.
- **Creative Expression:** The University of Bristol's city-wide project "Empty Shirts, Lost Childhoods" saw over 150 young people, aged 13–25, turn white school shirts into bold expressions of their emotions and calls for change. The shirts were exhibited at the Lord Mayor's Chapel, giving young voices a public platform.
- **Professional and Media Engagement:** Unique Voice hosted an online event featuring the "Safer Together" film, co-created with young people from three South Bristol schools with support from the charity CrimeStoppers. The film encourages empathy, hope, and action. The event included discussions with Oasis Academy John Williams, CrimeStoppers, and Avon and Somerset Police on the film's impact and future use.
- **Community Workshops:** Somerset VRP held knife-crime pop-ups in schools and youth hubs, providing advice, information, and access to their youth survey, which will inform future prevention work. In Taunton, "Stand Against Violence" delivered workshops for students (school Year 7+), parents, and carers on the consequences of knife use and providing practical resources.
- **College Engagement:** South Gloucestershire and Stroud College hosted South Gloucestershire VRP and local police for discussions on community safety, crime prevention, and reporting concerns. Students also engaged with pop-up stands offering information, resources, and giveaways.
- **Police Activities:** Local police conducted knife sweeps in parks and public spaces, increased patrol visibility, engaged with retailers, and delivered educational sessions in schools.
- **Emergency First Aid Training:** In collaboration with StreetDoctors and Bristol Healthy Youth Collective, delivered hands-on first aid sessions in Bristol city centre to 20 young people. Providing life-saving skills, confidence in emergencies, and trust in accessible learning environments.
- **Ongoing Prevention Work:** The VRP runs year-round initiatives, raising awareness among young people and professionals, promoting reporting channels, and supporting projects such as Bleed Kit Partnership and permanent Knife Surrender bins which are available across the region.

Together, we can be the change. By raising awareness, educating communities, and empowering young people, we can create a safer future for everyone.




Your Streets, My Priority.

“Your Streets, My Priority” is a coordinated programme led by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to strengthen neighbourhood policing and make town centres and high streets safer and more vibrant.

The PCC has acted on feedback from communities asking for safer streets and more visible policing. Working with the Chief Constable, additional officers are being deployed where they are most needed, focusing on tackling anti-social behaviour, retail crime and disorder in local high streets. The aim is to ensure that people feel safe where they live, work and shop.

Throughout the summer, the PCC visited communities across the region to see first-hand the impact this work is having. In addition to enforcement, community stalls and pop-up events are taking place across the region, giving residents the chance to meet local teams and hear more about the initiative.

More information is available at: [Your Streets, My Priority – OPCC for Avon and Somerset](#)




SPOTLIGHT

JOIN A PUBLIC FORUM WITH PCC CLARE MOODY

The Violence Reduction Partnership will be hosting a stand at each of the forthcoming public forums. The forums will provide those attending with the opportunity to:

- Hear a progress update from PCC Clare Moody, on the Police & Crime Plan priorities.
- Meet and hear from the local Neighbourhood Policing Team.
- Attendees can share any policing concerns and ideas on how to make your community safer.



[Sign up to attend](#), via Eventbrite to share your thoughts and influence local policing.

Below are the locations and dates for each forum, which will all be from 6.00-8.00pm

- **Somerset East**, Completed.
- **Somerset West** (Taunton), Completed.
- **South Gloucestershire**, Chipping Sodbury Golf Club, Tuesday 9th September.
- **North Somerset**, Weston Museum, Tuesday 25th November.
- **B&NES**, The Salvation Army (Bath), Tuesday 20th January 2026.
- **Bristol**, The Station- Creative Youth Network, Tuesday 24th March 2026.

Visit the [OPCC website](#) for forum updates.

Thank you for reading our Violence Reduction Partnership Hub Newsletter!
We appreciate your support in helping to create safer communities.

To learn more about our work and initiatives, visit our website at asvrp.co.uk.
Stay connected and up to date by following us on [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

Together, we can make a difference!

