

# SAFER SOMERSET PARTNERSHIP & DOMESTIC ABUSE NEWSLETTER

Autumn edition



## UPDATES

### SAFER STREETS FUNDING FOR NORTH SOMERSET AND SOMERSET

Funding to help tackle violence against women and girls has been awarded to North Somerset Council and Somerset County Council. The neighbouring councils have made a successful joint bid to the Home Office Safer Streets Fund for £324,449.

The bid is an innovative and collaborative proposal by the two councils covering the whole Somerset policing area. It presents an opportunity to work together and achieve positive outcomes in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) crimes across the area between now and March 2022

The plan sets out a two-tiered approach involving:

**Prevent** - to change behaviour and stop incidents occurring such as VAWG education and awareness in schools, communications campaigns, research and engagement within communities, and

**Protect** - to strengthen the response where these incidents are prevalent, such as a safe haven scheme and enhancing the CCTV camera network and street lighting.

### KNIFE CRIME CAMPAIGN



A knife crime campaign was launched with a bid to raise awareness about the dangers of carrying a knife and report knife crime incidents across the county.

The Somerset Violence Reduction Unit states Somerset is a safe place to live, but police data suggests the reporting of knife possession has doubled in Somerset

between 2016-2018. Early this year, the Violence Reduction Unit commissioned a research report on 'Social Media and experiences of cultural norms, violence and exploitation in Somerset'.

Insights from this report finds the primary reason young people carry weapons is for protection and out of fear for their safety, not to intentionally incite violence. Some young people told us they have carried weapons because they perceived it to be cool and are sometimes swayed by music artists and online influencers. Please visit the Somerset Violence Reduction Unit [webpage](#), downloads section to view the report. To know more about Knife Crime visit: [Somerset and Knife Crime](#)

## **SOMERSET VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT (VRU) SCHOOL INCLUSION PROGRAM**

The VRU are currently working with Somerset Youth Offending Service and Somerset County Council's Education Safeguarding to deliver a 6 month support boost to 8 priority schools across the county from October 2021 – March 2022. The project is aimed at reducing the causes of incidents and behaviour that leads to exclusion from school. Somerset Violence Reduction Unit received £102,000 to deliver this work as part of a regional bid to the Home Office Youth Interventions Fund.

Research indicates that children who are excluded from school are at a higher risk of violence and exploitation. This could occur at home, in the community or online. A needs assessment carried out on behalf of Avon and Somerset VRU's states that against the backdrop of disrupted delivery due to the pandemic, schools engagement and reducing the number of exclusions must remain a focus of the VRUs in tackling serious violence. The Timpson Review of school exclusions (2019) reported that exclusion is a marker for being at higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime. *Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Unit, Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment 2021*

The project aims to provide interventions for children in mainstream secondary schools who are at risk of multiple temporary exclusions.

The interventions will be designed to help children to cope better at school and to stay safe from harm caused by violence and exploitation. Children will be offered support to address any risk factors and motivations that is impacting on their education and welfare.

For more information about this project please contact Clare Stuart at [c.stuart@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:c.stuart@somerset.gov.uk)

## **AVON AND SOMERSET VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT (VRU) TRAUMA INFORMED FUND**

As part of a regional fund available via the Police and Crime Commissioners Office, Somerset VRU and partners are being allocated free training spaces around Trauma Informed Practice aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people. We are looking to work with partners who may be interested in receiving training and support to implement a Trauma Informed approach to multi-agency case work. If any strategic leads or professionals who chair relevant multi-agency meetings would like to know more about this program please contact Clare Stuart at [c.stuart@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:c.stuart@somerset.gov.uk)

## **AVON AND SOMERSET PCSO STAND AGAINST VIOLENCE ASSEMBLIES**

Avon and Somerset Police were instrumental in their support to the Stand Against Violence Knife Crime and Weapons possession assemblies across a number of PRUs, secondary school and Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) hubs across Bridgwater and Cheddar. These sessions were rolled out over the past fortnight and would resume after the half term. The Bridgwater Together Team who was one of the partner agencies was highly impressed with this initiative and commended the team for organising the sessions.

## **SOMERSET ACTIVITY AND SPORTS PARTNERSHIP (SASP) JUMPSTART**

Avon and Somerset Police participated in the SASP Jump Start Children and Families: Inspiring Aspirations, Learning seminar which was a great platform to share the successes of partnership working. Along with the amazing SASP mentors the police were able to encourage positive attitudes & behavior and challenge thoughts around risky behaviors. This sort of engagement within the settings of Jumpstart & 1:1 sports mentoring sessions, contributed towards building a trusting relationship with young people.

# DOMESTIC ABUSE NEWSLETTER

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## DOMESTIC ABUSE E-LEARNING MODULES FOR PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONALS

helping to keep you safe

Are you a member of the public and want to recognise signs of domestic abuse and modern slavery?  
Do you also want to know what you can do to help?

Take these elearning module tests available for free and help reduce victimisation from abuse, visit: [training.somersetsurvivors.co.uk](https://training.somersetsurvivors.co.uk)

SOMERSET County Council

helping to keep you safe

A practical guide on how to recognise victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery is now available for professionals for free.

Visit: [practitioners.somersetsurvivors.co.uk/](https://practitioners.somersetsurvivors.co.uk/), to access the modules and help reduce victimisation from abuse

SOMERSET County Council

New free online resources are available for both professionals and the public to help spot the signs and reduce the risk of becoming a victim of domestic abuse and modern slavery. This new range of online learning modules will give professionals further confidence on next steps and the help and support they can provide to victims. The public have free access to a set of modules providing guidance on recognising the signs of domestic abuse and modern slavery and what they can do to help.

To access the professional suite of modules, visit: <https://practitioners.somersetsurvivors.co.uk/> To access the learning modules for public, visit: <https://training.somersetsurvivors.co.uk/>

## DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT

Somerset County Council is increasing its range of specialist domestic abuse services and the number of safe accommodation sites for survivors. The Council is looking to increase the range of specialist services and provision of safe accommodation to victims in the county over the next 2-3 years as part of its response to the new Domestic Abuse Bill which became law on 29 April 2021. This will include increasing specific services for children and adults including therapeutic support and counselling recognising the trauma domestic abuse brings.

The new domestic abuse act creates for the first time a legal definition of domestic abuse. This ensures domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes.

For further information on the Domestic Abuse Act, visit: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/04/29/domesticabuseactfactsheet/>

For further information on the services provided by SCC, visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/domestic-abuse/>

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

What does a healthy relationship look like? Professionals working with young people are in the unique position to support them to have healthy relationships before they harm or are harmed. @safelives\_ have developed a resource pack, informed by the voices of young people & tested in practice <https://safelives.org.uk/men-and-boys/phase2>

## HOME OFFICE LAUNCHES STREETSAFE

StreetSafe is a pilot service for anyone to anonymously report about public places where they have felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues, eg street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours, eg being followed or verbally abused. To learn more about StreetSafe, click [here](#).

## NATIONAL POLICE CHIEFS COUNCIL (NPCC) NATIONAL WORKING GROUP FOR HONOUR BASED ABUSE, FORCED MARRIAGE AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION GROUP

- a. Forced Marriage Case Study Learning Points – A summary was produced from the Crown Prosecution Service which made several points about how a local authority could have handled a forced marriage case better. These included:
  1. One of the things the court focused upon was that those who spoke to a child should know exactly how to extract the child's early account. A clear note of what the child said had to be made at the earliest opportunity and should be as full and accurate as could be in the child's words rather than a summary.
  2. The importance of social media and the type of material that may be obtained through social media searches;
  3. The importance of speed when a referral is made – social media evidence was lost
  4. The lack of understanding of UK statutory authorities around different traditions and customs of different communities, national and ethnic groups around marriage including the processes and factors involved: what sections are there to a marriage? Are there precursors if so, what, for what purpose and who retains this? Is it normal for there to be photos and videos, in what style and of what length, are gifts given?
- b. HMICFRS super complaint – Supporting BAME victims of sexual abuse. A report looking at how the police respond to this issue produced by the Halo Project was shared and this highlighted several key findings, including:
  1. All police responses to victims/survivors of sexual abuse needs to be trauma informed
  2. Police officers need to consider the language they are using when interacting with victims survivors and ensure they are interacting with a level of empathy.
  3. Importance of having a neutral and professional interpreter at all stages
  4. Programme of training required to ensure all officers understand different cultures in Britain today.

SafeLives, the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse urges you to take these short surveys which are completely anonymous. These surveys are only open to people over the age of 18 that currently live in Somerset. You can change your mind at any point in the survey by simply exiting the screen. The aim of the survey will be to let us know your experiences of all types of services, such as the council, social services, police or specialist domestic abuse services. [Victim/survivor survey](#) [Those who harm survey](#). For further information contact: [lucy.giles@safelives.org.uk](mailto:lucy.giles@safelives.org.uk)

## BARNARDO'S REPROVIDE PROGRAMME

### **Free Weekly Support Groups for Men in Somerset & Avon.**

Barnardo's is taking part in a major research initiative led by Bristol University to look into the effectiveness of support for men who are concerned about their behaviour within their intimate relationships.

Barnardo's are supporting men who want help around anger management and are concerned about violence and abuse within their intimate relationships.

The group is ideal for men who want to improve their current or future relationships. Many men come to the group because they also want to improve their relationships and support for their children and the Reprovide programme has a strong focus on this.

If you are a professional who works with families and you have consent to pass us the details of any men interested, we will call them directly to progress.. Alternatively, they can self-refer by calling or texting us on 07976 225 462 or 07870 376 548

Or email [reprovide-men@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:reprovide-men@bristol.ac.uk)

Our groups run weekly on Wednesday evenings in Taunton and Thursday evening near Shepton Mallet. Since we began in July 2020 many men have completed the 23-week programme of support.

Those who have completed the programme report that although anxious to begin with, the support group was friendly and gave them a safe and confidential space to talk about many difficult issues. For many men it is the first time they have been able to speak openly and with each week tailored to a specific issue, men tell us that they have learnt a huge amount that helps them on a daily basis to regulate emotions, show empathy and understand how to build and sustain positive relationships.

Most men get an assessment within a week of their first call to the programme. There is no requirement to fill in any referral forms.

Following assessment 2/3rds of men are allocated to the Reprovide programme, and 1/3 are allocated to our control group.

Those allocated to groups can start within a month as the groups operate on a rolling basis and men can start at any time.

A requirement of participation is that men give us contact details of current and former partners so that we can offer them ongoing support from our Women's Safety Officer. Barnardo's also has a small amount of funding to support the therapeutic recovery of children linked to men on the programme.

To find out more call or text us on 07976 225 462 or 07870 376 548, or email us at [reprovide-men@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:reprovide-men@bristol.ac.uk) or visit <https://reprovideprogramme.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/> or [Somerset Reprovide Programme | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](https://www.somersetreprovideprogramme.org.uk/)