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Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
Policing Minister
Via email only: kit.malthouse.mp@parliament.uk

22 May, 2020

Dear Kit,

Tackling Serious Violence in Cleveland

Thank you again for your continuing constructive engagement with PCCs during the Covid-19 crisis. Your commitment to the weekly catch-up calls with us, together with your officials, is welcome and is hopefully mutually beneficial. We appreciate your perspective nationally on how policing and community safety is operating. We also value the opportunity as PCCs to raise issues and concerns from our perspective locally, regarding policing, criminal justice and community safety.

During those collective discussions the issue of violent crime is never far from our thoughts and has been covered on several occasions. Within the 17 Force areas, tranches of £35m Violence reduction funding has been allocated and you have commented that discussions are ongoing about whether further resources can be identified and invested.

I am grateful that on yesterday's call you listened to my concerns and have agreed to look at the situation in Cleveland as regards serious violence resourcing.

To reiterate and give some background to our discussions:

Serious violent crime in Cleveland continues to climb.

In fact Cleveland's rate of serious crime has risen 23% in the past 12 months - with an increase of 18.9% in knife crime compared to the same period a year earlier.



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This gives Cleveland the 2nd highest violent crime rate in the country per 100,000 population - and for knife crime we are now ranked 6th nationally.

Over the course of 2019 and early 2020 we saw a steady increase in serious violence crime, peaking in December 2019. In just five days between Christmas and the New Year, our area of less than 600,000 residents experienced four alleged homicides and 13 incidents involving violence serious enough to be brought to the attention of the Force's senior leadership.

Levels remained high through January and February 2020.

In order to manage the risk - partnership working, early intervention, early action and problem solving must be at the forefront of our response.

Cleveland has some of the most deprived wards and neighbourhoods in the United Kingdom and this is one of many contributing factors which impact on a year-on-year rise in serious violence.

Cleveland has faced significant socio-economic challenges in the recent past, including reductions in partner agency funding, high levels of deprivation and unemployment, and the unsustainability caused by time limited funding.

Serious violence is highlighted as one of the highest risk areas in the force's *Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (STRA)*.

Recent analysis of this problem identifies that serious violence is likely to continue to follow an increasing trend. A significant number of these offences (20%) are domestic abuse related, however a number of other factors have been identified including repeat offending against vulnerable victims, emergence of county lines activity, a link with the night time economy as well as alcohol and drug abuse and associated markets. There is a clear link with serious violence and organised criminality.

My current Police & Crime Plan 2019/20 commits me to work with community safety partners to develop violence reduction interventions. I am preparing a new Police & Crime Plan for 2020/21, effective from early July, which will draw on good practice from across the country in this respect.

In February this year my office (OPCC) organised - and I chaired - a Cleveland-wide multi-agency Serious Violence summit in Hartlepool. A multi-agency partnership strategy is under development to prevent further escalation of this problem and to provide focus and co-ordination to address serious violence. The key principles of this strategy are:

- Enhancing our understanding of the problem;
- Managing and responding to risk;

- Safeguarding vulnerable people;
- Working in local partnerships.

If resourced, Cleveland's unit for violence reduction would:

- Ensure a standard and agreed data collection process across all partners including NHS;
- Deliver and commission an enhanced model of youth provision, incorporating prevention and early intervention to ensure young people are diverted from serious violence pathways at the earliest opportunity;
- Identify clearly the most at risk cohorts of young people and adults and enhance support to those groups;
- Support working with families;
- Support and involve all partners in delivery of a unit.

Working with partners our key outcomes would be:

- Reduce involvement in serious violence by preventing violence from happening in the first place;
- Prevent violence from escalating to serious criminality;
- Reduce re-offending by those already involved in serious and violent crime;
- Reduce victims of serious crime.

Despite the socio-economic challenges set out earlier in this letter, the OPCC works effectively through high quality partnership working and we pride ourselves on our truly collaborative approach to issues in Cleveland. Partnership working is at the heart of our practice. Our positive links with partner agencies place us in a strong position to drive forward the public health approach to serious violence, should we have the resources to do so.

The funding formulation has not taken account of the true situation in Cleveland, as the statistics above show. Having taken account of this, we are currently building a problem profile for serious crime and are actively involving all partners to ensure that our response is truly a 'Cleveland-wide' one. This includes Public Health England and the Royal College of Surgeons, amongst many others, whose NHS returns are a key part of the current government funding formulation.

I am sure that you have heard this many times before. Short-term funding has been a real challenge. Time limited resources, often only 12 months, has proved challenging, especially when the services are positively evaluated and then cannot continue. This, in particular, has an impact on prevention and early intervention services.

I study the Force Serious Incidents log every day and see for myself the horrifying incidents of violent acts, including use of knives and other weapons, and we need to get upstream of these acts of violence to try and prevent them happening. We need to

prevent such acts taking place by looking further at the conditions in which they can arise and doing our best with other partners to mitigate against them.

I know all our local MPs, and council leaders, whose authorities are valued partners and to whom I am copying this, would wish to work with us to make progress in this critical issue.

I've enclosed my previous letters of 16th August 2019 and 16th January 2020, by way of background as there is some further information within them.

We will put together a more detailed submission within the near future to you and your officials with our suggested approach to move forward, including with costings, and I will be happy, with senior staff from my office and the Force, to discuss our request in more detail.

I thank you again for the opportunity and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Barry Coppinger
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

c.c. Chief Constable Richard Lewis, Cleveland MPs and Cleveland Council Leaders



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Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
Policing Minister
Via email only: kit.malthouse.mp@parliament.uk, ministerforcrimeandpolicing@homeoffice.gov.uk

22 June, 2020

Dear Kit,

Tackling Serious Violence in Cleveland

In advance of our meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday 23rd June 2020 at 10am, I thought it would be helpful to provide you with a summary of the significant challenges and risk factors we face here in Cleveland in preventing and tackling serious violence, including an outline of our proposed community and partnership response to this critical issue, attached at Appendix A.

Last week it was reported that during COVID-19 the national average reduction in recorded serious violence is currently 28%. However, Cleveland has experienced an 11% reduction significantly lower than the national average.

As a shared vision to make our communities safer and stronger, all of our local MPs, and council leaders, whose authorities are valued partners and to whom I am copying this, are committed to dealing with this issue.

I thank you again for the opportunity to meet and look forward to discussing how we can work together to address serious violence in Cleveland.

Yours sincerely

Barry Coppinger
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

c.c. Chief Constable Richard Lewis, Cleveland MPs and Cleveland Council Leader



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The scale of the challenge in Cleveland:

The Cleveland Police area encompasses four local authorities - Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. Cleveland is the smallest geographical area of all forces in England and Wales (with the exception of the City of London Police), has high levels of deprivation and a number of problematic socio-demographic and economic factors. The challenges faced by Cleveland are more in keeping with those faced by the larger metropolitan forces. This is recognised by the fact that Cleveland is currently considered to be 'most similar' to Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, Northumbria, and Humberside. With the exception of Humberside all of these police force areas qualified for Home Office Serious Violence Funding.

Crime



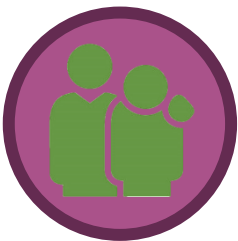
- Cleveland has the **third** highest violent crime rate in the country.
- Cleveland ranks **sixth** highest nationally for the rate of offences involving knives and sharp instruments.
- Most serious violence offences in Cleveland are **increasing** at a higher rate than the national average.
- The cost of the most serious violence to the Police and Criminal Justice System in the last 12-months is estimated to be **£23.3m**, rising to **£116.2m** when taking into consideration wider costs to society.

Health



- Cleveland has the fifth highest rate for hospital admissions for assault with sharp objects in the country.
- The rate of hospital emergency admissions for violence in Middlesbrough and Hartlepool are significantly higher than the national average.
- Middlesbrough and Hartlepool account for the highest rates of Opiate/Crack Cocaine users in the country standing at 25.5 and 20.6 per 1,000 population, more than double the national average of 8.6.
- Hartlepool has the **4th** highest rate of alcohol admissions to hospital in the country. Middlesbrough, Stockton, and Redcar are also above the national average

Vulnerability of Children and Young People



- Looked after children rates in Cleveland are amongst the **highest** in country.
- More than **one in ten** missing reports in Cleveland are linked to children and young people living in a care setting.
- Permanent and fixed-term exclusion rates in education across Cleveland are more than **double** the national average and amongst the **highest** in the country in some local authority areas.
- In Cleveland the number of educational days lost by pupils is almost **double** the national average.
- Middlesbrough is the most the deprived place to live in the country with **33% of children** living in income deprived households.

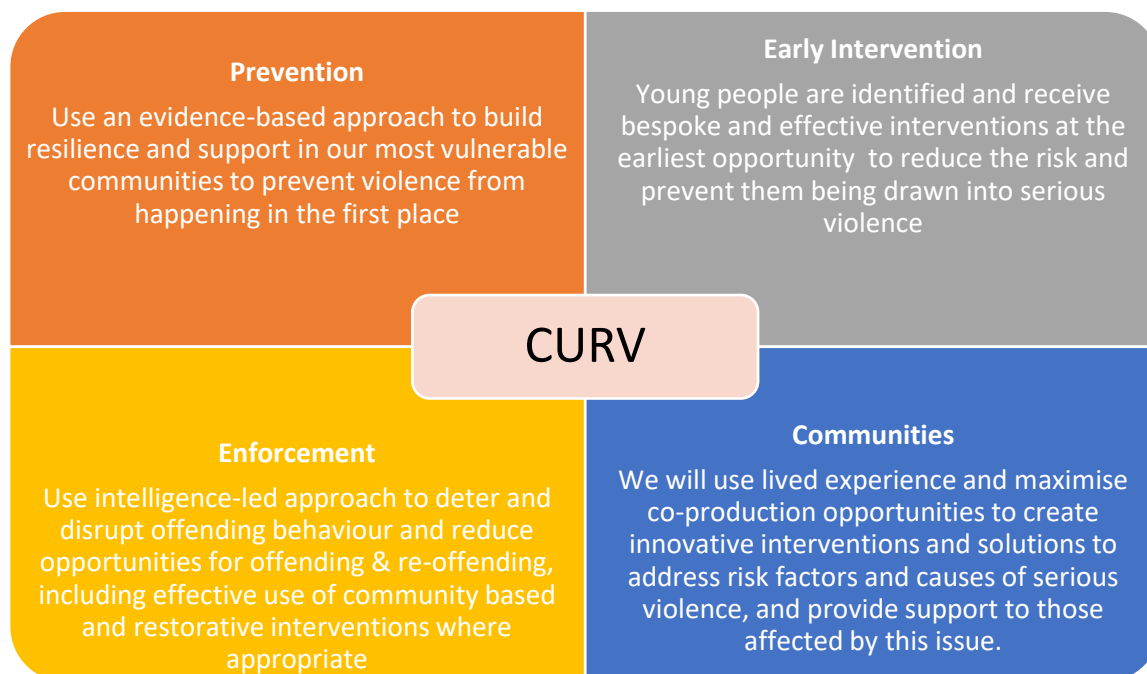
Perceptions of Young People



- Young peoples' perceptions of serious violence in Cleveland are high with more than half of young people surveyed stating violence was a problem in their local area and was getting worse, and over one third had witnessed someone carrying a weapon, which including knives.

Cleveland’s Proposed Approach to Prevent & Address Serious Violence

Led by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland, we would seek to implement a unique community and multi-agency response to prevent and address serious violence through the development of the Cleveland Unit for Reducing Violence (CURV). We would adopt, develop and promote a public health approach through the following:



To the support the development and delivery of the CURV vision, investment is required to drive forward a whole-system response, initial resource and investment requirements are as follows:

CURV Activity	Cost Profile (per annum)
CURV Multi-Agency Team	£635,000
Resilience & Capacity Building Activity	£40,000
Technology & Infrastructure Costs	£35,000
Communications	£50,000
Design & Delivery of Interventions	£500,000
Independent Evaluation	£20,000
Total	£1,280,000

A condition of government spending for VRU’s is that a minimum of 20% is allocated for interventions. The Cleveland CURV model allows for 39% almost double the requirement.

This funding is proposed as upfront investment for the first 12 month period only. The OPCC will be proactively working to access, core and additional funding, to enable the future sustainability of CURV.

Future funding would be identified via various funding streams including but not limited to:

- Youth Endowment Funding (10 years sustainable)
- Big lottery funding
- Premiere league serious crime funding streams
- Internal funding
- Private sector funding

Through effective delivery of the CURV programme the following outcomes will be achieved:

- Reduced rates of serious violence,
- Reduced rates of knife related offences
- Reduced youth related anti-social behaviour
- Reduced fear of crime amongst young people
- Reduced Missing from Home episodes involving children & young people
- Reduced substance misuse
- Reduced hospital presentations and admissions for violence related injuries
- Reduced re-offending
- Reduced school exclusions
- Reduced persistent absenteeism
- Reduced rate of young people not in education, training and employment
- Reduced victims of serious and violent crime

Supporting Information

Research continues to make a link between social deprivation and crime. It is well documented that areas such as Cleveland, with high rates of unemployment, low levels of academic achievement and health related issues, such as drug & alcohol dependency, will experience higher levels of victimisation and criminality. In addition to high level of demand, the changing nature and increasing complexity of work involved presents an ever increasing challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic and its disproportionate impact on communities in Cleveland have exacerbated these challenges further.

Violent Crime in Cleveland

Cleveland has the third highest violent crime rate in the country standing at 41.1 per 1,000 population compared to the national rate of 29.1. Over the last 12 months the number of offences involving knives and sharp objects has increased by 22% with Cleveland now ranked as having the sixth highest rate in the country. Unlike 'most similar' forces, the rate of most

serious violence in Cleveland is following an increasing trend and has recorded a 23% increase year-on-year.

In the 12-months up to the end of March 20 the cost of serious violence to the Police and Criminal Justice System is estimated to be £23.3m, rising to £116.2m when the costs to the general public in anticipation of crime and as a consequence of it are taken into consideration.

Serious Violence Offence Type	Costs in anticipation of crime	Costs as a consequence of crime	Cost in response to crime	Total
Murder	£671,770.00	£25,780,920.00	£8,942,340.00	£35,395,030.00
Assault with injury	£1,956,360.00	£64,559,880.00	£14,385,000.00	£80,901,240.00
TOTAL COSTS	£2,628,130	£90,340,800	£23,327,340	£116,296,270

During COVID-19 the national average reduction in recorded serious violence is currently 28%. However, Cleveland has experienced an 11% reduction significantly lower than the national average.

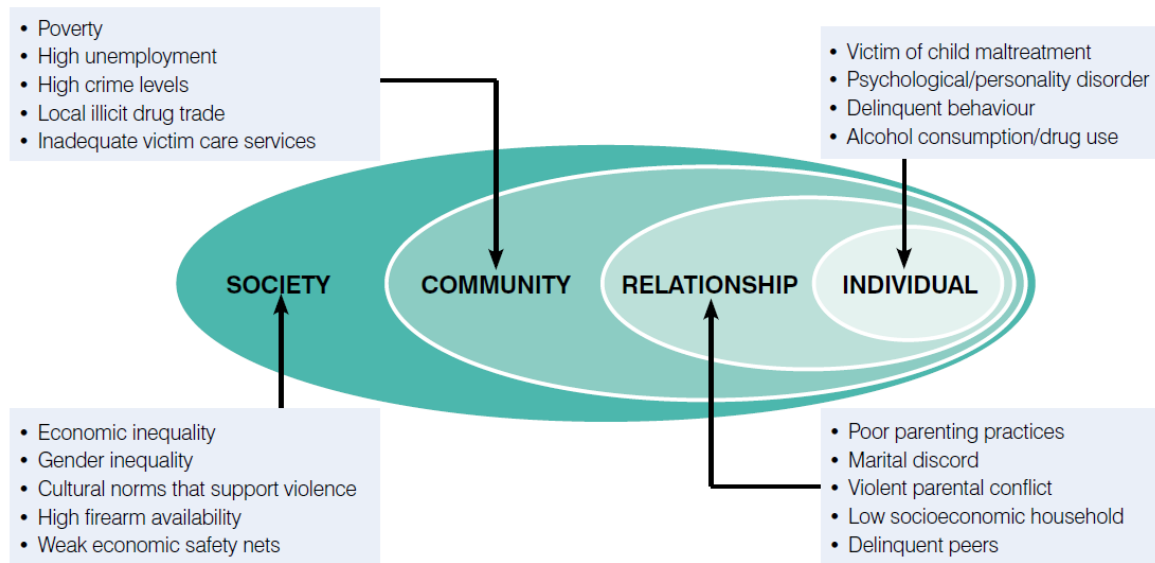
The Impact of Violence on Health Services in Cleveland

Analysis of Hospital Episode Statistics for the 3-year period 2016/17-2018/19, shows Middlesbrough and Hartlepool in the top quartile for the highest rates of emergency hospital admissions in the country for violence, with rates standing at 73.3 and 69.7 per 100,000 population respectively, significantly higher than the national average of 44.9 per 100,000 population.

Hospital admission data for assaults with sharp object for the 3-year period 2015/16 – 2017/18 used by the Home Office to identify qualifying police force areas for Serious Violence funding standardised to rate per 100,000 population shows Cleveland has the fifth highest rate in country, and is the only area in the top 10 forces not to receive a funding allocation.

Risk Factors for Violence in Cleveland

A Violent Crime clearly affects all individuals and communities. There are specific factors that are known to impact a person's risk of becoming either a perpetrator or victim of serious violence. These are detailed in the chart below.



Adapted from World Health Organization, 2004

Deprivation in Cleveland

Research has found there are multiple factors which can increase the risk of offending in young people. For example, those from lower income households, those living with parents who are not in employment and those with a lack of qualifications are most at risk of offending. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019, in terms of income, Middlesbrough is the most income deprived place to live, with 25% households living in income deprivation and 33% of children living in income deprived households.

The national rate of unemployment (based on the economically activity population) is currently reported as 4.1%. With low levels of academic achievement and a high proportion of people with no qualifications, unemployment levels are comparatively high in all areas of Cleveland. The most recent ONS unemployment data indicates that Middlesbrough and Hartlepool have the second and third highest rates of unemployment in England and Wales with rates of 7.6%, and 7.5% respectively. The Cleveland area has a comparatively high number of workless households. Middlesbrough has the third highest rate in the UK at 27.3%, with Hartlepool being the fourth highest at 26.4%. The rates for these two areas are more than double the UK average of 10.5%.

Vulnerability of Children & Young People in Cleveland

In 2019 approximately 1,600 children or young people living in a social care setting within the Cleveland area. At a rate of 160 children per 10,000 population, Middlesbrough has the second highest rate of looked after children across England. Hartlepool follows closely behind, with a rate of 142 per 10,000 population (4th highest). Local analysis indicates that children under 18 living in a care setting account for around 13.5% of all missing person reports. The complexity

and vulnerability associated with such individuals, particularly those under the age of 18, continues to increase.

The average GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score) in England and Wales sat at 46.9% of pupils in 2018/ 2019. Three, of the four local authorities, that make up the Cleveland police force area were graded as 'significantly worse' than the national rate. Middlesbrough was the lowest at 42.2%, followed closely by Hartlepool at 43.1%, and then Redcar and Cleveland at 43.5%.

Persistent absenteeism from education is a particular problem for some communities within the Cleveland area. For example, in 2019 16.1 % of all children attending school in Middlesbrough were persistent absentees, accounting for the highest rate in England. This is accompanied by high rates of fixed term and permanent exclusion with Redcar accounting for the highest rate of secondary school permanent exclusions in the country.

The permanent exclusion rate in Redcar alone is over three times the national average, with Middlesbrough and Stockton also exceeding the national average. Fixed-term exclusions for all four local authority areas are more than four times the national average. Due the high rates of exclusions, the number of pupil educational days lost is near to double the national average across Cleveland.

Exclusion rates are intrinsically linked to young person's vulnerability and increased risk of being drawn into criminal exploitation and engagement in serious crime and organised crime.

Substance Misuse in Cleveland

Organised crime activity and associated violence between rival members is intrinsically linked to the supply and distribution of illegal drugs. Local analysis 2019/20 crime data indicates 4% of serious violence was linked to Organised Crime Group activity. Public Health data from 2019 shows Middlesbrough has the highest rate of Opiate/Crack Cocaine User (OCU) in the country at 25.52 per 1,000 population and Hartlepool has the third highest rate at 20.63, these rates are more than double the national average of 8.85.

Alcohol-related hospital admissions in Cleveland are much higher than the national average of 664 per 100,000 population. Latest data for 2018/19 shows Hartlepool as having the fourth highest admission rate in the country at 1,021, whilst Middlesbrough (964), Stockton (940) and Redcar & Cleveland (806) all have rates which are significantly higher than the national average.

Young People's Perceptions of Violence in Cleveland

A local survey of more than 350 young people in 2019 on the subject of serious violence found that carrying knives and witnessing incidents of violence is commonplace across the communities in Cleveland with:

- Almost 6 in 10 young people stating that they thought that violence was a problem in their local area;
- More than half (56%) stating violence was getting worse in their local area;
- Over one third witnessing someone carrying a weapon with knives accounting being cited the most.

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