

REPORT TO CABINET/COUNCIL**DATE September 2026****REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM****COUNCIL DECISION****Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Clare Besford**

Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031

Summary

This report presents the Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031 for consideration and endorsement.

The Strategy sets out a five-year partnership approach to preventing and reducing serious youth violence through a public health and whole-system model. The Strategy has been developed in response to the Serious Violence Duty and is informed by local intelligence, a Serious Youth Violence Rapid Health Needs Assessment, multi-agency engagement and the views of over 100 children and young people across Stockton-on-Tees.

The Strategy reflects a shared commitment from partners to reduce violence, address its root causes, strengthen protective factors and improve outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

Serious youth violence remains a significant concern nationally and locally and has a profound impact on victims, families and communities. The Strategy provides the framework through which partners will work collectively to understand, prevent and respond to violence affecting children and young people aged 10-24.

The Strategy has been developed through extensive partnership working involving Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Cleveland Police, Public Health, Education, Youth Justice, Health providers, the Voluntary Sector and the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV). It reflects local need and aligns with statutory responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty.

Recommendations

Cabinet/CMT is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031.
2. Endorse the vision, priorities and partnership approach outlined within the Strategy.
3. Support implementation of the annual Serious Youth Violence Delivery Plan.
4. Endorse the governance arrangements which place strategic oversight with the Youth Justice Management Board.

1. Detail

1.1 The Strategy establishes a long-term commitment to reducing serious youth violence through prevention, early intervention and coordinated multi-agency action. It recognises that serious youth violence is shaped by a range of factors including exploitation, poverty, adverse childhood experiences, educational exclusion, community influences and family circumstances. The Strategy adopts a public health approach that seeks to address these root causes rather than solely responding to incidents after they occur.

The Strategy has been informed by:

- The Serious Violence Duty
- The Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Rapid Health Needs Assessment.
- Local crime, safeguarding and partnership intelligence.
- Multi-agency workshops and strategic development sessions.
- Engagement with more than 100 children and young people aged 10-18 years.

1.2 The Strategy's vision is that by 2031 Stockton-on-Tees will be one of the safest places in the North East for children, young people and young adults aged 10-24. Partners are committed to reducing harm from serious youth violence, strengthening partnership intelligence, preventing entry into the criminal justice system, building resilience and improving the conditions that help children thrive.

Strategic Priorities

The Strategy is built around four key priorities:

2. Early Intervention and Prevention

2.1 Strengthening universal and targeted prevention activity through Youth Support Services, Family Hubs, the Holidays Are Fun Programme and the Youth United Stockton Alliance (YUSA). This aims to identify risk early, improve resilience and provide positive activities and trusted relationships for children and young people.

3. Deter, Disrupt and Divert

3.1 Delivering intelligence-led interventions to disrupt exploitation, reduce opportunities for violence and divert children away from offending behaviour. Activity includes Custody Navigators, the Youth Justice Turnaround Programme and targeted Youth Justice interventions for children involved in violence or knife crime.

4. Strengthening Family Support

4.1 Providing coordinated support for parents and carers through the Family Help Point, Early Help services and the Youth Justice Health Hub. The Strategy seeks to strengthen parenting capacity, improve wellbeing and equip families to identify and respond to risks associated with serious youth violence.

5. Improving Educational Support

5.1 Reducing exclusions, improving attendance and supporting educational achievement through Prevention Panels, partnership working with schools, targeted emotional wellbeing resources and improved access to education, training and employment opportunities.

5.2 The Strategy will be supported through an Annual Serious Youth Violence Delivery Plan which will set out specific actions, milestones, responsibilities and performance measures and will be reviewed annually.

6. Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

6.1 The Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on communities by reducing violence, improving safety, strengthening community confidence and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. It specifically recognises the relationship between deprivation, inequality and the risk factors associated with

serious youth violence and seeks to address these through targeted prevention and support.

- 6.2 The Strategy promotes equitable access to support services, positive activities, education and opportunities for children and young people who may be vulnerable to violence, exploitation or exclusion.

7. Corporate Parenting Implications

- 7.1 The Strategy has significant corporate parenting implications. Children in care and care experienced young people can be disproportionately vulnerable to exploitation, missing episodes, criminalisation and serious youth violence. The Strategy strengthens partnership approaches to safeguarding and improving outcomes for these children through coordinated intervention and support.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Delivery of the Strategy will primarily be achieved through existing services, programmes and partnership arrangements across Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Cleveland Police, Health, Education, Youth Justice and voluntary sector partners.
- 8.2 The Strategy also aligns with resources available through the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence, Public Health initiatives and existing early intervention programmes. There are no immediate additional financial implications arising directly from approval of the Strategy. Future resource requirements will be considered through the Annual Delivery Plan and existing governance arrangements.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Strategy supports compliance with the Serious Violence Duty and strengthens multi-agency arrangements for preventing and reducing serious youth violence. The Strategy contributes to statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding, crime prevention, public health and community safety.

10. Risk Assessment

- 10.1 The principal risks identified within the Strategy include:
- Continued increases in serious youth violence and knife crime.
 - Child criminal exploitation and organised criminal activity.
 - Educational exclusion and disengagement.
 - Emerging safeguarding risks affecting vulnerable young people.
 - Financial pressures impacting preventative services.
 - Failure to maintain effective partnership coordination and information sharing.

- The Strategy mitigates these risks through clear governance arrangements, multi-agency accountability, intelligence-led responses and annual delivery planning

11. Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

11.1 The Strategy applies across all wards of Stockton-on-Tees.

The Strategy has been developed through comprehensive consultation and engagement involving statutory partners, community organisations, schools, health agencies and over 100 children and young people aged 10-18 years. Their views and lived experiences have directly informed the priorities and actions contained within the Strategy.

Background Papers

Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031.

Youth Justice Plan 2026-27.

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