

Avon and Somerset VRP Annual Report

Annual Report 2022/23

October 2023



Avon & Somerset

**Violence
Reduction
Partnership**

Table of Contents

Foreword	3
Serious Violence (SV) Definition	4
Violence Reduction Partnership	5
.....	6
Avon and Somerset VRP 2022-23.....	8
Our Violence Reduction Partnership Spokes.....	15
B&NES VRP	16
Bristol VRP	18
North somerset VRP	20
Somerset VRP	22
South Gloucestershire VRP	24
Looking forward	26





PCC Mark Shelford & DPCC Claire Hiscott

Foreword

“This report celebrates the achievements of the newly named Violence Reduction Partnership. The choice to use Partnership has been intentional and reflects the collaborative nature of the work.

“My Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Claire Hiscott, manages the Violence Reduction portfolio on my behalf and this year has seen her attending regular meetings, meeting with the public, visiting the VRP spokes and partners as well as chairing our board.

“I recognise that this has been a year with solid achievements and some challenges. Following our external review of the VRP, I am excited for what the year ahead will bring.

“Finally, I would like to thank everyone who works, supports, and links into our newly named Violence Reduction Partnership. I look forward to working with you all and building new working relationships.”

Police and Crime Commissioner, Mark Shelford



Serious Violence (SV) Definition

Since the inception of the first 18 Violence Reduction Units (VRU) in 2019, we have been working more broadly than the Home Office definition of serious violence, allowing for a more flexible local needs response.

The Serious Violence Duty Planning and Implementation Partnership reviewed this flexible approach and reached a consensus on the following definition:

The Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) embraces a priority focus on the prevention and reduction of public space violence for under 25's (children and young people); including homicide, attempted homicide, robbery, wounding, grievous bodily harm, knife and gun crime, alcohol and drug related violence and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as county lines and modern slavery.

We also recognize and commit to supporting a joined-up response to existing partnership work to tackle serious violence across the whole pathway and in the broadest sense, including domestic abuse, rape and serious sexual offences and violence against women and girls more generally.

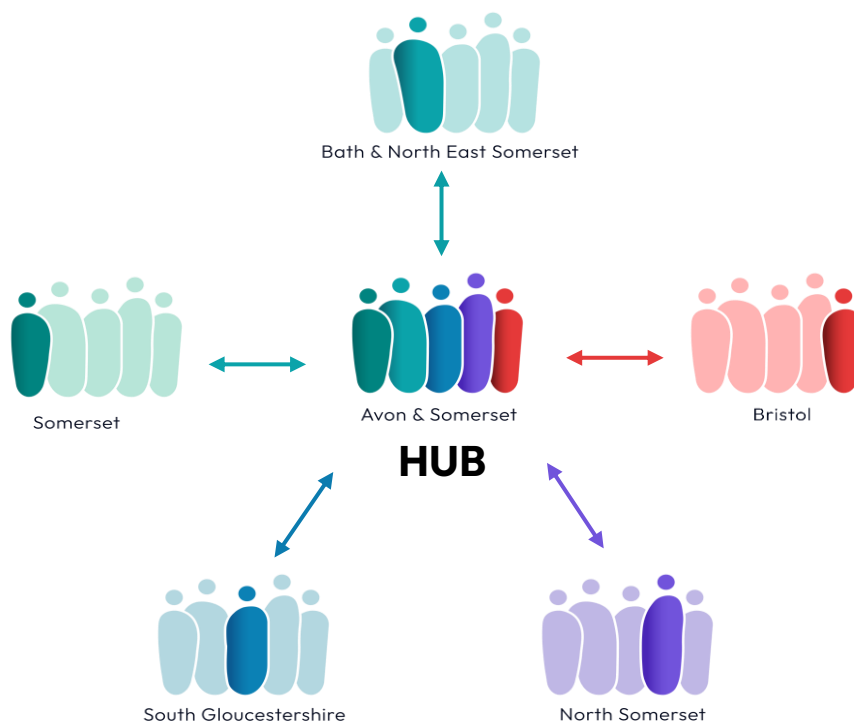
Violence Reduction Partnership

The collaborative nature of the Avon and Somerset approach to tackling serious violence work has been demonstrated through recent rebranding activity.

The partnership name, primary target audience, long-and short-term goals, general purpose, vision, and mission, as well as the design of a new website, have all been agreed upon by the five spokes, partners, and the Office of the Police Crime and Commissioner (OPCC) with the support of the VRP Communications Manager and creative firm Ergo. The agreement on the new logo, branding, and communication channels was another aspect of the rebranding initiatives.

Each local area has a new logo that represents their unique individuality, but they all combine to create the single VRP logo.

Hub and Spoke Model



Purpose

Our Purpose is to create safer and more resilient communities for now and the generations to come, by reducing serious violent incidents across Avon and Somerset.

Vision

Our Vision is to eliminate serious violence, protect the vulnerable and create safer communities, through the opportunities provided by the evolving Violence Reduction Partnership.

Mission

Our Mission is to work collaboratively with partners, to understand and address the root causes of violence in Avon and Somerset, with a focus on education, prevention, and protection.

Goals

- **V**iolence is reduced/eliminated across Avon and Somerset. Resulting in a reduction in the number of young people involved in the criminal justice system.
- **R**eveal and promote the new Violence Reduction Partnership name and branding, increasing awareness and referrals across Avon and Somerset.
- **P**rovide successful prevention and awareness initiatives on violence and serious violence among professionals, young people, and children. Achieved through strong collaborative working and all vulnerable people being considered a priority.





Home Office Grant

The Home Office's violence reduction grant for Avon and Somerset 2022/23 was £2,042,762. And was part of a three-year settlement. Locally this resulted in a spend of £ 1,730,000.

Serious Violence Duty

A dedicated Serious Violence Task and Finish Group has been established, convened by the OPCC, and made up of the five responsible authorities. This group will agree how we will work together to deliver on the serious violence duty requirements, including mapping the overlap with the VRP.

Crime in Avon and Somerset

Between 2019-2022, serious violence increased by six percent. This increase is predominantly down to rises in rape and sexual violence offences. January to October 2022 saw a reduction in under 25s admitted to A&E due to 'assault by sharp object.' Across 2019-2022 there was a 14% reduction in knife related possession.

Avon and Somerset VRP 2022-23

Intervention spending includes:



Spent on interventions.



Spent on education inclusion.



Spent on other interventions e.g. sports mentoring.



Spent on detached youth work.



Spent on targeted mentoring.



Avon and Somerset VRP Achievements

819

Young people were identified as at risk through VRP operational meetings.

1,114

Professionals from partner agencies received training.

21,332

Young people reached through interventions and awareness raising.



Police Patrols & Problem Solving

Seventy hot spot areas with significant levels of serious violence and harm have been identified across Avon and Somerset. These specific areas are each approximately 200 meters wide and are often just part of one street. An additional 3 year 'Grip' funding has enabled police to provide pulse patrols in 34 of these hotspot areas. Officers patrol each area on a schedule for 15 minutes at a time. This work is complemented by collaborations with partners to address the long-term issues in these specific areas.

Initial findings show it 'highly likely' that pulse patrols are reducing serious violence in these areas. To further understand impact, police analysts are measuring any changes in other crime types within these hotspots and any effect on surrounding areas.

Further prevention and problem-solving work with partners have been implemented in the remaining 36 areas.

Data Accelerator Programme

A joint bid to the National Data Accelerator Programme funding stream secured one million pounds for 2022/23. The programme aims to embed the infrastructure across all partners to share information. This requires common information governance arrangements, implementing a secure method of data transfer and the visualization of the information once it arrived at the relevant destination.

Analysts across the force area have received training. The new added information governance arrangements in place with the police and local authorities enable sharing of relevant information.

In Bristol and Somerset, an education application (app) has been developed to share advanced levels of information about pupils, so that schools have a greater understanding of the lives of their pupils, the services they are accessing and how they can better meet their support needs.





Blunt Truth Workshops

Multi-agency teams deliver interactive educational sessions where young people consider choices and learn practical skills. The one-hour sessions are led by the police's youth project and engagement coordinator, medical trauma specialists and Great Western Ambulance volunteers. Sessions include a film, practical first aid and offer participants a chance to talk about their experiences and their fears around knife carrying. Concluding with how to safely report and dispose of weapons.

To date, fourteen sessions have been delivered to 1,436 young people in schools and youth clubs across Bristol.

Blunt Truth has been exclusively delivered in Bristol for the last 2 years and will be expanding into South Gloucestershire and North Somerset in the year ahead. North Somerset's delivery will include a collaboration with The British Army, who will provide the medical trauma element of the session.

South-West Public Health Violence Prevention Network

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities have convened a community of practice with public health colleagues.

The network meets quarterly to maximise the input to local action on violence prevention. It has been a source of guidance for the VRP's response, using a public health approach, whilst providing peer support on the implementation of national policies or statutory requirements e.g. The Serious Violence Duty.

Evaluation

A new Senior Lead for Evaluation and Impact within the Avon and Somerset VRP will guide the work and help build the partnership's evaluation framework.

We aim to improve our understanding of the nature of serious violence, through our Strategic Needs Assessment. Tracking and monitoring our impact and the impact of commissioned interventions against agreed measures.

A national review of the year ending to March 2022 looked at all 18 police force areas with Violence Reduction Units, which includes ours. It looked at both the impact had on violence and progress made in the third full year in existence, with particular attention to multi-agency working, data sharing and analysis, community engagement, commissioning interventions, and monitoring interventions.

A statistically significant reduction in police recorded violence without injury was identified in these areas.

There has been a further review nationally to assess our readiness for implementation of the Serious Violence Duty. The summary for Avon and Somerset identified that we have comparatively low prevalence of serious violence, and we are "Ready and Engaged", at the mid-point of the assessment scale. The review was against themes such as collaboration, review and response strategy and work is underway to achieve the higher "Mature with Best Practice" rating.

The hub has also reviewed specific interventions locally. This year the focus Education Inclusion, an approach to intervene with young people who are at risk of permanent exclusion from

12 | Avon & Somerset VRP Report 2022/23

Evaluation is one of the Home Office's three key priorities to mature the VRP in the year ahead.



school and help them avoid becoming entrenched in criminal activity. Cordis Bright (an external agency) reviewed a pilot site in Bristol, which was then rolled out across the whole of Avon and Somerset. The review checked that the skilled workforce and identified that they had reached over 315 individuals (against a target of 280). Improvements observed for the individuals included:

- Feelings of safety,
- Health and wellbeing,
- Improved education outcomes,
- School attendance and behaviour.

For the schools, there was an improved awareness of available support services and pathways, which will enable their ability to manage future risks.



Trauma Informed Approaches

Building on the success of our 2021/22 Trauma Informed Avon and Somerset project, the VRP continues its journey in becoming trauma informed with all partners.

A Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) based Trauma Informed working group has been championing a trauma informed approach which includes lived experience representation.

A Trauma Informed Systems Manager has been appointed to drive forward this area of work. They will promote a system-wide commitment to a Trauma Informed Practice, including trauma informed commissioning. Working across:

- Criminal justice (including police),
- Education,
- Health,
- Social care,
- Voluntary sector.

In Somerset, partners are working towards a 'Trauma Informed Somerset' and have established a steering group to meet the following objectives:

- To develop a common set of principles/goals with shared language.
- To strive for a sustainable consistent and joined up training offer with support to sustain and embed the learning.
- To develop a better system understanding of the impact of wider determinants of health resulting from ACEs and trauma experiences.
- To conduct further research into best practice and evidence-based interventions and agree common practice standards for trauma informed services in Somerset at various levels of intervention.

Avon and Somerset Police Chief Constable, Sarah Crew, chairs the Trauma Informed Steering Group. Additionally, there will be an internal force focus on the wellbeing of police staff and an external focus to improve public services to communities.

The VRP continues its journey in becoming trauma informed with partners.





Our Violence Reduction Partnership Spokes

Identification

Bath & North East Somerset's Violence Reduction (B&NES) VRP hold monthly information sharing meetings called the Partnership to Reduce Violence and Exploitation (PREV) meeting. They look at people and places of concern. This year over sixty-five individuals who were deemed at risk of serious violence and/or exploitation were brought to PREV.

Young people are identified through police intelligence, or directly from concerned colleagues and partner agencies.

Professionals' Training

B&NES Partnership delivered its second annual professionals' conference on serious violence in March.

Community Support

Police Early Intervention Team (EIT) officers have a strong community focus and have worked with neighbourhood policing colleagues, schools, and other partners to offer reassurance and support following serious incidents.

Grant Funding

Partners from the voluntary sector were invited to bid on themed rounds of funding. Five grants of £4,000 were awarded to help young people and communities affected by serious violence.





Young people identified at risk of serious violence and exploitation.



Young people reached.



Spend on interventions.

B&NES Commissioned Interventions

Detached Youth Work

A collaboration was formed to deliver outreach sessions in hotspot areas, where children and young people are at risk of serious youth violence. Hot spots are identified through local knowledge, police intelligence and/or from PREV. In 2022/23, they reached 2,035 young people.

Young people are also directed to a new dedicated youth centre in Bath city centre which provides a safe space.

Lived Experience Mentoring Scheme

Local lived experience mentors support and positively influence the behaviour of children who have been exploited, involved in serious violence or who are at risk of becoming involved in serious violence.

Delivered by the Southside Family project, the scheme provides positive experiences for eight young people who act as peer mentors, enabling them to feel empowered by supporting others within our local communities.

Schools Exclusion Project

Teachable Moments are project which support schools across the county and aims to reduce school exclusion by addressing the root causes of incidents and behaviour that lead to exclusion from school.



Identification

There are three apps being used to identify young people of concern:

- The Safer Options app: this includes the cohort of at-risk children from Avon and Somerset Police’s Criminal Child Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) risk models.
- The Safer Options person search: this app allows a search for a person and returns all case notes that reference Education Inclusion Managers and Safer Options meetings.
- Self-Serve analysis: an aggregated app that shows vulnerability trends across the city.

Support for Professionals

The Safer Options Trauma Informed Consultation Service, funded by the NHS’s Vanguard project, offers a psychological led process to support trauma recovery and case management for complex needs children and young people.

This involves working with the professional network around a child to understand what has happened to them, and how they can best be supported in a trauma informed way.

This has seen the introduction of two mental health practitioners for young people affected by community violence and a new Forensic Psychologist embedded in our specialist exploitation project, offering support to those working directly with the child and family.

1,283

Total young people reached.

793

Young people reached through multi-agency detached youth.

£462,302

Spent on interventions.

Bristol Commissioned Interventions

- Seven hundred and ninety-three young people were reached through multi-agency detached youth work teams, including Bristol Drugs Project, Bristol Horn Youth Concern, Creative Youth Network, Learning Partnership West, Local Partners. Outreach teams target identified hotspot areas and respond to emerging needs, such as in the event of an incident.
- 104 parents were reached through parents' groups, facilitated by partners Full Circle, Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities and Bristol Robins.
- A specialist girls and young women's worker has been appointed in response to the increasing number of girls and young women involved in serious violence. The Girls' Groups covered self-worth, confidence, decision-making and relationships. This was done in partnership with local charities Full Circle, Growing Futures, Hope and Creative Youth Network. To date this work has reached 112 young women and girls, at risk of CSE and CCE.
- Eight young entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to demonstrate their business savvy and sales skills through the summer holidays in Streets2Boardroom's Car Boot Sale Hustle.
- Work with education settings in Bristol continues to be the cornerstone of our work in Safer Options. Consultation and interventions have been offered in 500 cases to support schools in keeping young people in their setting.
- Education Inclusion and Youth Justice Support project have received 31 referrals through the Weapons in School's pathway and 23 referrals for Drugs in schools.
- Seventy-seven young people were offered 1-to-1 community mentoring and youth work, delivering a bespoke trauma informed package of support.
- Working in conjunction with partners: Bristol Horn Youth Concern, Growing Futures, Hartcliffe BMX, Impact, LPW, Naos, Turn2Mentoring. Targeting the boys and young men who are disproportionately represented in the cohort and underrepresented in other emotional, social and health services.
- Solve delivered a 'Choices' workshop to 126 students at City of Bristol College on the impact of knife crime and serious youth violence.
- Sports interventions have reached 32 young people through Jui Jitsui with Gracie Barra and football with Impact mentoring.
- Street Space and Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership (HWCP) ran a drop in twice a week, designed to engage with those involved in heightened Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Somali Youth Voice delivered "Time to Act" project providing basketball, outdoor activities, and group discussions.
- St Pauls Adventure Playground project delivered a series of workshops on CCE, CSE, knife crime, Drugs, and alcohol awareness sessions to 20 young people.





In Remembrance

Remembering our colleague and friend,

Project Officer Steve Vaughan who died in January 2023. His commitment and links with our communities will continue through the work of North Somerset VRP.

Identification

A serious violence dashboard offers a live profile of serious violence in North Somerset.

At case meetings, referrals are processed and held locally. Cases where a lead agency has already been identified, e.g. social worker allocated, the VRP will support and feed in through their case management processes.

The VRP casework process provides live indicators of trends and risks around weapon carrying.

Professionals' Training

In November 2022, the VRP worked with council colleagues to deliver a North Somerset Exploitation Awareness Day at the Winter Gardens in Weston Super Mare.

Specialist police teams, the charity sector and the local authority presented to the 260 attendees.



Total young people reached.



Young people referred to the VRP.



Spent on interventions.



North Somerset Commissioned Interventions

- North Somerset VRP and North Somerset Youth Offending Service (YOS) co-funded the continuation of the **Education Diversion Project**. Preventative Caseworkers worked with 65 young people this year.
All mainstream secondary North Somerset Schools and Academies referred into the project. Other referral sources include Children’s Social Care, Police including VRP, CAMHS, Family and Carers and YOS Teams. Young people undergo a full health and wellbeing assessment, speech and language screening to identify need and inform an individual’s programme of interventions. There has also been a successful roll out of School Drugs Diversions, education, and harm reduction input available to any student caught with or under the influence of a substance in school.
- “Our Way Our Say” delivered in the Southward area of Weston, working to help reduce youth violence through the provision of diversionary activities, skills, and training young leaders in sports coaching. Two hundred and ninety young people have been reached through the weekly sessions and extra August school holiday sessions.
- Youth Inclusion Support Project (YISP) workers supported by PCSOs have worked with 33 young people on a one-to-one basis, providing bespoke interventions. Sessions explored what constitutes an offensive weapon, the law around this, consequential thinking, and challenging thoughts around the need to carry weapons. All young people have reported improved mental and physical health and wellbeing as well as an increased awareness of risk and police intelligence supports this.
- St Giles Trust delivered county lines awareness sessions to 7,169 young people through schools, also supported this with a webinar for parents.
- ‘Start to Finish’ provided mentoring to 39 young people already involved in crime or at risk of violence. Management of staff is due to move to within the VRP.
- Collaborate Digital have delivered sessions in schools around healthy relationships, aiming to tackle violence against women and girls. They have reached 1300 young people.
- VRP PCSOs delivered 6 ‘pop up shops’ across North Somerset secondary schools and Weston college, Locking road campus in Q4, reaching around 160 students and staff across 11 sessions, including 2 interactive Q&As. The sessions have been extremely well received by staff and students alike, with some great engagement opportunities, signposting and awareness raising. Topics of discussion have included frauds/scams; hate crime; knife crime, drugs and county lines.



Identification

The VRP police EIT identify high risk missing persons and those at risk of serious youth violence and exploitation through local data and partner referrals.

Ninety-nine young people were discussed at multi-agency meeting, 33 with needs not being fully met elsewhere and offered support through VRP.

Professionals' Training

A series of free events, training and webinars were delivered to professionals during April and May.

The in-person opportunities included a violence reduction conference for managers and team leaders and sessions on promoting healthy relationships in adolescence and criminal exploitation and organised crime.

Online training covered county lines, peer and familial harmful sexual behaviours and responding to sexual abuse disclosure.

8,848

Young people reached.

82

Young people at risk of exclusion have been helped. directly by Youth Justice

£363,231

Spent on interventions.

Somerset Commissioned Interventions

- Collaborate Digital have provided digital media workshops in eighteen secondary schools across Somerset on priority themes: healthy relationships, weapon possession; criminal exploitation and substance misuse. Young people created their own media assets such as a podcast or video.
- Turning Point Services (part of Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service) run **Admit A&E projects** at weekends from Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil General Hospital. This year, support workers have provided brief interventions to 80 young people who attended hospital for substance misuse, overdose, injury due to violence, or where there are concerns related to criminal exploitation and/or safeguarding.
- Eighty-two young people at risk of exclusion have been helped directly by Youth Justice support workers at the crucial **teachable moment**. Education Inclusion Coordinators review support and empower the school to keep the young person in class. An additional 1,000 pupils were reached through all year group assemblies in one targeted school.
- Working with partners Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - Crime Prevention through Sport Fund (sasp.co.uk), we have funded boxing clubs in Highbridge and Bridgwater, which reached 45 young people.
- Jump start sports mentoring has used sport to connect with 27 young people. The identified young people are given support to overcome barriers that might prevent them from participating in positive activities. They are supported to build resilience and self-esteem to help them engage in community activities as part of a healthier lifestyle.



Identification

Fortnightly Partnership Intelligence Management Meetings (PIMM) form part of the process for managing extra familial harm to children within South Gloucestershire.

Partners come together to share information and identify young people at risk, possible people of interest, locations of concern and emerging issues. Young people are tiered according to risk, offered an appropriate level of support, and reviewed at future meetings.

Survey

South Gloucestershire VRP ran a knife crime survey, developed, and distributed by young people to their peers. They analysed the results (with support) and gave a presentation with their recommendations.

The young people who participated were from Thornbury youth service Krunch, Hanham School, South Gloucestershire YOT, Youth board, and Yate youth café.

Responses were given on why people might be carrying weapons and specific local areas affected by knives and drug use were identified. Young people were also asked what would help them and areas feel safer.



Young people
reached.



Young people
identified at risk of
serious violence
and exploitation
were referred.



Spent on
interventions.

South Gloucestershire Commissioned Interventions

- South Gloucestershire council delivered the Education Inclusion Project in partnership with Learning Partnership West. Together they supported 50 young people and their schools in avoiding permanent exclusion and supporting the young people to stay in education.
- Learning Partnership West delivered Routes mentoring to 24 young people, addressing serious violence involvement, exploitation risks and encouraging the young people to engage in their local communities.
- The 'Mankind Training Package' was designed and delivered to 17 professionals, who work with young people exhibiting toxic masculinity. The course equipped staff to inform and nurture young people around positive masculinity and choices.
- In July 2022, partner organisations and departments within the local council supported a 'Patchway Community Day', providing a physical presence in the community and enable discussions with residents, local individuals, and young people on crime in their area.
- Police officers from Op Topaz targeted hotels, shops, and other establishments to raise awareness about exploitation. Members of the public were also able to speak to the police about ASB and serious violence in their area.
- Partners came together at a local community center to provide information and advice. This included a 'Street Doctors' session, covering first aid and what to do if someone is heavily bleeding. Details around drugs and alcohol from a local partner. The day ended with the local Neighbourhood Beat Team and VRP Police officers having a friendly game of football with the young people.





Looking forward

We hope in reading this report, you join us in celebrating the hard work and progress that the partnership at all levels, has made in the last year. Thank you to everyone who engages in making a difference in this complex and evolving area, it is the passion and dedication that persists to be our strong foundation here in A&S.

2022-23 was the beginning of the Hub and Spoke VRP model taking a pause to look at itself and how we were working, recognizing a need to mature ourselves and our use of resources to further this agenda. Our partners have supported and challenged one another to ensure development will happen and now with the Serious Violence Duty, we are in a better position than ever, to take the partnership to the next level. We look forward to the next year of work with the VRP, in setting out our priorities and working to really understand our impact.

We want to understand more about the priority issue of knife crime and knife related homicide, the partnership is committed to a deeper analysis of this rife issue, so to ensure local plans are being targeted in the right way. In our January 2024 Strategic Needs Assessment, the partnership will commit to a ‘deep dive’ on this.

The partnership strongly believes in our hub and spoke model, which advocates a genuine local response to the issues circling serious violence. One size does not fit all here, so we recognize and believe in empowering local areas to build local responses. With this, communities and young people must be more involved in the co-production of these plans, as a result, we will be rewarded with greater confidence and sustainability for the VRP’s future in tackling serious violence for Avon and Somerset and its people.

Charlotte Pritchard

Violence Reduction Partnership Senior Commissioning and Policy Manager





Please do contact the VRP Hub via
VRPHub@avonandsomerset.police.uk

