

# Violence Prevention Framework for Scotland

Annual Progress Report  
2024/2025





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# Ministerial Foreword



**Siobhian Brown MSP**  
Minister for Victims  
and Community Safety

The Scottish Government is committed to a public health approach to tackling violence; one that prioritises prevention, partnership, and early intervention. This approach aims to help individuals turn their lives around while making our communities safer for everyone.

Over the past 20 years, non-sexual violence, including homicides and knife crime has declined across Scotland<sup>1</sup>. However, we know violent crimes of course continue and this is what we must remain laser-focused on tackling. Over the last 18 months, Scotland has seen a number of violent incidents involving young people, including the loss of three young lives to knife crime. These deaths are tragic and heartbreaking for families, friends, and communities and reinforce the urgency of our collective efforts. The Scottish Government has made clear that no form of violence is acceptable and that no one should carry a weapon, including a knife, at any time in any circumstance.

In January, the First Minister, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, and I, along with others, met with young people and families affected by violence. Their courage in sharing their

experiences was humbling. We also engaged with youth work representatives and violence reduction funded partners, including the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Medics Against Violence, and from YouthLink Scotland's No Knives Better Lives programme. Their insights reaffirmed our approach and the critical role of youth work in prevention and early intervention.

While the vast majority of young people do not engage in violence, a few still view harming others as a somehow acceptable part of their lives. This must be challenged. We encourage frontline professionals, parents, carers, and community leaders to speak with young people about the dangers and consequences of violence, particularly knife crime.

In May 2023, the Scottish Government published the **Violence Prevention Framework for Scotland**<sup>2</sup>. This was the first of its kind in Scotland, setting out a comprehensive three-year programme of activity to prevent violence and reduce its impact, backed by £6 million to support its implementation.

<sup>1</sup> [Violence Prevention Framework Monitoring Framework Document](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Violence prevention framework - gov.scot](#)

The Framework promotes a whole-system approach, involving a wide range of organisations and services working together to deliver targeted actions. It acknowledges there are no simple solutions, and that preventing violence requires sustained effort across multiple sectors. I am pleased to be able to publish this second Progress Report on the Framework alongside a new **Monitoring Framework**<sup>3</sup> providing further insight into the national evidence available on the levels of non-sexual violence.

I welcome the progress highlighted within this Report by all our violence reduction partner organisations as well as the wider efforts by all those working across communities to help make a positive difference to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Preventing violence is a shared responsibility. We still have work to do to deliver on this programme. By working together, we can build safer communities across Scotland, where everyone can live free from violence and fear.

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3 [Violence Prevention Framework Monitoring Framework Document](#)

# Introduction

As part of the continued implementation of the **Violence Prevention Framework for Scotland**,<sup>4</sup> this second annual report outlines key developments and progress made during 2024/2025. The Framework supports our commitment in the **Programme for Government**<sup>5</sup> to ensure everyone feels safe in their communities and aligns with the three-year delivery plan for the **Vision for Justice in Scotland**.<sup>6</sup>

We have committed to publishing a Progress Report each year of the **Framework's** three-year implementation, to reflect ongoing activity, respond to emerging evidence, and adapt to evolving trends in violence prevention. The first report, covering progress made over 2023/2024,<sup>7</sup> was published in September 2024.

The Framework is built around four core aims:

- **we are all safe, and feel safe, in our communities**
- **our communities are stronger and more resilient**
- **our relationships are healthier and more respectful**
- **people at risk of experiencing violence receive support to live healthier, more productive lives**

In addition to showcasing work already underway across the Scottish Government, the **Framework** set out 14 priority actions under these aims. These are being delivered in partnership with our grant-funded organisations: the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (SVRU), Medics Against Violence (MAV), YouthLink Scotland's **No Knives, Better Lives** (NKBL) programme, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV), and Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP).

As part of our commitment to monitoring progress, we have developed a set of high-level indicators. Originally referred to as the **Measurement Framework**, this has now been renamed as the **Monitoring Framework** to better reflect the complex and interconnected factors that influence violence prevention. The first **Monitoring Framework**<sup>8</sup> is published alongside this annual report.

By collecting this evidence, the **Monitoring Framework** can help contribute to increasing our understanding of the extent and nature of violence in Scotland and how that profile has changed over time. This will support our ongoing assessment where a renewed focus or a change in approach to violence prevention activity might be beneficial.

4 [Violence prevention framework - gov.scot](#)

5 [Programme for Government 2025 to 2026 - gov.scot](#)

6 [The Vision for Justice in Scotland Three Year Delivery Plan - 2023/24 to 2025/26](#)

7 [Violence Prevention Framework for Scotland - Annual Progress Report 2023/2024](#)

8 [Violence Prevention Framework Monitoring Framework Document](#)

# Update on Actions

## We all are safe, and feel safe in our communities

**Action 1** – We will fund the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit to lead on work with partners to identify opportunities to ensure that our evening economy remains safe and free from violence.

### Update on progress

In response to changing patterns of behaviour, the SVRU has shifted its focus from problems arising from the late-night economy, traditionally linked to alcohol licensing, towards the early evening economy, where increasing numbers of young people gather to socialise. While the overwhelming majority of young people are simply enjoying time with friends, this shift has brought heightened risks of violence, antisocial behaviour and exploitation.

To address these concerns, the SVRU launched the **Street Guardians** pilot initiative in March 2025. This collaborative pilot, led by the SVRU and involving YMCA Scotland,<sup>9</sup> Action for Children,<sup>10</sup> Glasgow Street Pastors,<sup>11</sup> and the G20 Youth Project,<sup>12</sup> aims to enhance youth safety in two key areas of Glasgow

during Friday and Saturday early evenings, where large groups of young people are congregating.

The approach centres on providing visible, trusted adults, - referred to as “safe adults” or “capable guardians”, - who patrol public spaces, engage positively with young people, and offer early intervention. Their presence signals safety, builds trust, and helps prevent harmful behaviours before the risks of harm escalate.

Since March 2025, the Street Guardians have engaged with over 1,000 young people in Glasgow. Most interactions have been positive, with young people keen to enjoy themselves peacefully. The team has also identified cases of criminal exploitation, working with police and partners in the Common Ground programme<sup>13</sup> to coordinate support and action.

In parallel, the SVRU has supported One Community Scotland<sup>14</sup> to deliver **Spring into Success**, a transformative programme addressing key issues affecting Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) youths, including antisocial behaviour, family disconnection, violence, and domestic abuse. Many participants had previous convictions linked to offences committed particularly during early evening economy hours in Glasgow. Building on this work, One Community Scotland, in partnership with the SVRU and The King’s

<sup>9</sup> [Empowering young people - YMCA Scotland](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Our work in Scotland | Action For Children](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Glasgow | Street Pastors](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Home | G20 Youth Project](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Common Ground | Barnardo's](#)

<sup>14</sup> [One Community Scotland](#)

Foundation,<sup>15</sup> launched a podcast project exploring the challenges faced by young BME adults. The initiative responds to rising concerns about gang exploitation and aims to amplify the voices of young men at risk. Currently, ten young men are participating, sharing their experiences and insights to help shape future interventions and support.

In addition, Police Scotland Youth Volunteers<sup>16</sup> continue to play a key role in promoting and delivering the **It'll Cost You** campaign<sup>17</sup> aimed at reducing harm and vulnerability among under-18s. Working within local policing divisions across Scotland, young volunteers help raise awareness of the risks and consequences of proxy purchasing—where adults illegally buy alcohol for minors. Their activities included attending community events and visiting premises to distribute leaflets and apply pavement stencils that reinforced the campaign's message.

In 2024/2025, a total of 114 Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, supported by 53 Adult Volunteers, actively promoted the national proxy purchase awareness campaign across Scotland.<sup>18</sup> Through 32 deployments, they distributed 3,730 leaflets and contributed 511 hours of volunteering. The initiative focused on educating communities about the risks of proxy alcohol purchasing and aimed to reduce youth-related anti-social behaviour and violence, particularly around the early night-time economy.

During 2024/2025, the national Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)<sup>19</sup> team, based at Education Scotland, delivered seven capacity building days and eight two-day professional

learning events across fourteen Local Authorities, including Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire, Stirling, South Lanarkshire, and Scottish Borders.

In addition, five local training teams (Argyll and Bute, Aberdeen City, East Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, and East Lothian) delivered at least ten additional training days, reflecting the growing capacity of local authorities to lead MVP delivery.

In total, approximately 460 staff were trained, 260 by the national team and 200 by local trainers. Participants included school staff and a wide range of partners such as Women's Aid, Community Learning and Development, Police Scotland, voluntary agencies, and local authority staff. This multi-agency approach enriched discussions and deepened understanding of violence prevention strategies.

There is strong evidence that participating in the MVP professional learning increases knowledge and crucially improves confidence in teaching and discussing gender-based violence prevention with young people.

In total, all local authorities are engaging with MVP, with 234 Local Authority schools confirmed as delivering MVP,<sup>20</sup> an increase of 23 from last session. This equates to 6,458 mentors (senior phase pupils) have delivered a minimum of 8,611 MVP lessons<sup>21</sup> to younger pupils. In 60% of schools (a 5% increase on last year), staff are delivering additional lessons to supplement peer delivery.

<sup>15</sup> [The King's Foundation](#)

<sup>16</sup> [PSYV - Police Scotland](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Home | It'll Cost You](#)

<sup>18</sup> [It'll Cost You Proxy Purchase Campaign 2024](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Mentors in violence prevention \(MVP\) | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

<sup>20</sup> Where we do not receive feedback from co-ordinators or practitioners we count the school as not delivering to avoid over estimating the number of schools delivering

<sup>21</sup> Based on dividing the number of mentors by 3 as most mentors work in groups of 3 then multiplying by 4 lessons (the minimum recommended)

In response to strong evidence supporting early intervention to prevent gender-based violence (GBV), a pilot professional learning programme was developed for primary school and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) staff. Drawing on core MVP materials and tailored content for early years settings, the programme was co-designed with input from practitioners and Education Scotland Associates.

Four Local Authorities volunteered to pilot the training, engaging staff from 19 primary schools and one Early Learning and Childcare setting. The pilot demonstrated strong engagement and highlighted the value of equipping early years educators with the tools to support gender based violence prevention from the earliest stages of education.

Through the **Medics Against Violence School Academy**, nearly 5,000 young people have been reached with vital education around violence prevention. Additionally, the **On the Edge**<sup>22</sup> programme engaged 20 young people at risk of violence, providing knowledge and space for discussion to support safer decision-making, particularly in the night-time economy. These contributions have supported wider violence prevention efforts by empowering young people to make informed, safer choices.

**Action 2** – The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will continue to monitor and improve their service engagement processes and procedures to identify and support vulnerable and high-risk people in their homes and communities to help keep people safe from harm.

### Update on progress

Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) have revised their Home Fire Safety Visit programme, expanding on the risk criteria and visit content considered during a visit. The visits concentrate more on those deemed vulnerable in society and will include the contributory health and lifestyle factors, as it is recognised that health and care issues, when coupled with fires in the home, result in worse outcomes including a much higher likelihood of fatalities.

SFRS are continuing to review their policies for staff and communities to help build safer communities across Scotland.

**Action 3** – To complement implementation of this Framework, the Scottish Government will work with Police Scotland to support the development of their Violence Prevention Strategy during 2023/2024.

### Update on progress

Police Scotland's Violence Prevention Strategy, likely to be published early 2026, is built around four core pillars—Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare—forming a comprehensive framework to reduce violence and build safer communities. This approach aligns with Police Scotland's national 2030 vision<sup>23</sup>: safer communities, less crime, supported victims, and a thriving workforce.

<sup>22</sup> [Medics Against Violence](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Our 2030 vision and three-year plan - Police Scotland](#)

## Strategic Priorities (2024–2027)

Outlined in the Police Scotland 2024–27 plan,<sup>24</sup> with over 130 milestones aim to be achieved by March 2027, the violence prevention strategy focuses on four priority areas identified through data analysis, emerging trends, and community concerns:

- **transport-related violence and antisocial behaviour**
- **violence within educational and care settings**
- **possession of weapons**
- **support pathways for repeat victims and perpetrators**

These priorities guide targeted action where it can have the greatest impact, using a holistic approach to deter offending, disrupt threats, safeguard communities, and ensure readiness to respond.

## Youth Engagement and Insight

In late 2024, Police Scotland established a national Youth Engagement Team to better understand the issues affecting young people and their communities. In partnership with the SVRU, the team launched **The Way We See It: What young people think about violence**, a project capturing youth perspectives and experiences. The findings will be combined with data from Young Scot's 2025 **Truth About Youth** survey<sup>25</sup> to inform future violence prevention policy and practice.

## Local Initiatives and Partnership Working

Local Policing divisions play a vital role in delivering their violence reduction activity. One example is Operation Dynos, an intelligence-led initiative in Glasgow and Lanarkshire addressing the criminal exploitation of young people. Through multi-agency collaboration—including health, social care, and third-sector

partners—Operation Dynos provides early intervention and tailored support to divert young people from offending. Police Scotland's Retail Crime Taskforce<sup>26</sup> supports this work by preventing vulnerable youths from being recruited into retail-related crime. Together, these teams are developing educational programmes and place-based safety improvements for at-risk young people.

## Violence Mapping Journey

As part of Scotland's **Violence Prevention Framework**, Police Scotland and the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit is developing a Violence Mapping Journey initiative. This project, which was initiated during 2024/2025, engages individuals with lived experience of violence, both victims and offenders, to understand the circumstances that lead to violence and identify key intervention points. Through structured engagement, participants reflect on their experiences and highlight where timely support could have made a difference. These insights will inform enhanced preventative strategies, ensuring services are responsive, targeted, and capable of reducing harm.

## Our communities are stronger and more resilient

**Action 4** – The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and its partners will use the learning from its place-based pilot in Wallacetown, Ayr through 2024-2025 to develop the approach into further additional areas of Scotland.

<sup>24</sup> [Police Scotland Three-year business plan \(2024-2027\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Truth About Youth: Our 2025 insights survey - Young Scot Corporate](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Police Scotland has established a dedicated unit to tackle retail crime across the country. - Police Scotland](#)

## Update on progress

Over 2024/2025, the SVRU worked closely with local partners in Ayrshire to finalise the review of the Wallacetown Place-Based Approach. The learning from this initiative<sup>27</sup> was published in June 2024 and continues to inform SVRU's work across Scotland.

Building on Wallacetown's success, the SVRU applied a two-tiered approach to their work in Niddrie in South East Edinburgh, from Community Engagement and Empowerment with focused interventions supporting young people identified as vulnerable to involvement in violence or conflict with the law.

The SVRU undertook a Community Needs Assessment<sup>28</sup> in Niddrie which highlighted concerns around antisocial behaviour, crime, and safety. While young people were often perceived as the source of these issues, residents also expressed concern about the lack of services and support available to them, particularly in areas affected by poverty. The SVRU used the Photovoice method<sup>29</sup>, a powerful participatory research method which combines photos and accompanying words generated by participants, to deepen engagement with younger residents.

During 2024/2025, the SVRU worked with local delivery partners to thoroughly map the service landscape in Niddrie and identify gaps so that coordinated, targeted prevention efforts could begin. Although many partners had resources, they lacked clarity on where to focus activity. The SVRU helped raise awareness of available services and ensured interventions were appropriately funded and targeted.

## Youth Navigator Programme

In partnership with Castlebrae High School in Niddrie and Heavy Sound,<sup>30</sup> the SVRU funded and supported the implementation of youth navigators, providing hybrid support in schools and communities for young people most at risk. The SVRU led coordination efforts across partners to ensure effective delivery and governance. Two navigators were recruited in early 2025, and the programme is now being evaluated.

## Operation Moonbeam and Bonfire Night Violence

Both Craigmillar, in North Edinburgh, and Niddrie have experienced significant disorder around bonfire night in recent years, impacting community wellbeing and public services. The SVRU's involvement in the area has helped shape Police Scotland's violence prevention strategy, coordinating efforts across key partners including the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

The SVRU also worked directly with young people previously involved in disorder, offering mentoring and support. A culminating session with around 50 young people featured the author Graeme Armstrong<sup>31</sup> sharing his own lived experience of gang life and violence. Following this session, none of the participants were reported to be involved in subsequent disorder, highlighting the value of focused interventions and peer-led engagement.

Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV)<sup>32</sup> from Cumnock and Kilmarnock, in East Ayrshire, and communities in South Ayrshire took part in six deployments in Wallacetown, supporting community safety efforts. Activities included distributing safety leaflets, litter picking,

27 [Wallacetown](#)

28 [Niddrie & Craigmillar](#)

29 [Williams-Russell-Wyatt-Peter-Hughes\\_merged.pdf](#)

30 [Heavy Sound - Heavy Sound](#)

31 [Graeme Armstrong \(author\) - Wikipedia](#)

32 [PSYV - Police Scotland](#)

and assisting with the local arts festival. These young volunteers serve as positive role models, visibly promoting good citizenship and contributing to safer, more engaged communities.

**Action 5** – During 2023, the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit will lead work in partnership with YouthLink Scotland, Police Scotland and other partners, to deliver possible solutions specifically aimed at targeting weapon carrying amongst some young people, and older people with histories of violence.

### Update on progress

The SVRU has built upon this work by delivering on a range of impactful programmes and partnerships throughout 2024/2025, supporting national violence prevention efforts and improving outcomes for young people and communities across Scotland.

### Practitioner Training

In partnership with **No Knives Better Lives**,<sup>33</sup> the SVRU co-delivered six national training sessions in Peebles, Glasgow, Livingston, Aberdeen, Greenock, and North Ayrshire. Over 120 professionals from education, policing, social work, and criminal justice participated in sessions covering:

- **weapons and violence**
- **social media and relationships**
- **positive masculinity**

These sessions were delivered during 2024/2025 and strengthened best practice in prevention delivery and professional learning.

33 [Home - No Knives Better Lives](#)

34 [Staf \(Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum\)](#)

35 [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill: leaflet - gov.scot](#)

36 [The Mission of SISCO - insidetime & insideinformation](#)

37 [MEN MATTER SCOTLAND](#)

38 [You Decide Team - Scottish Violence Reduction Unit](#)

### Stop and Search Education

Working with the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum,<sup>34</sup> the SVRU co-produced educational resources to improve understanding of stop and search procedures in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>35</sup> Developed with input from young people, the programme includes two animated videos and a toolkit for school-based officers and partners. These resources help young people understand their rights and reduce negative perceptions of policing.

### Violence Anonymous

The SVRU supported the launch of the world's first in-person Violence Anonymous group in Scotland: a community-led, self-sustaining 12-step programme. Initial rollout at **SISCO**,<sup>36</sup> a Glasgow-based recovery and rehabilitation group, has expanded to include new groups in partnership with Men Matter<sup>37</sup> and a rehabilitation unit. This model requires minimal funding and is designed to scale nationally but will grow organically and slowly due to the nature of the programme.

### You Decide Team (YDT) Navigators

With SVRU support, YDT<sup>38</sup> enhanced referral pathways from social work, policing, and alcohol and drug services. In 2024/2025, YDT supported over 150 clients, connecting them to addiction recovery, housing and mental health services, education, employment, and volunteering, parenting and victim support. This person-centred approach has strengthened outcomes for individuals seeking to move away from violence.

### Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL)

In partnership with Police Scotland, the SVRU expanded the Violent Offender

Watch programme in Edinburgh and launched the SOL programme<sup>39</sup> in West Lothian in March 2025. SOL provides preventative support for 10–25-year-olds at risk of violence or conflict with the law, involving local policing, mentoring, provided by Aid and Abet,<sup>40</sup> a charity involved in supporting those who have been in the criminal justice system in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Lothian. The programme adapts successful tertiary prevention models for upstream intervention and supports access to colleges and schools.

### Whole School/Whole Community Approach in Fife

In early 2024, the SVRU began working with a secondary school and local partners in response to a disproportionate number of violence and weapons-related incidents involving young people in the area. Socioeconomic challenges and a complex neurodiversity profile further highlighted the need for a tailored, place-based approach. This work is still ongoing in the area.

### Building a Whole Community Response in Fife

Throughout 2024/2025, the SVRU developed a 'pathway of prevention' model, connecting services from early years and family support through to education and employment. Key achievements include training over 200 educators and support staff in conflict management and relationship-based practice, helping reduce tension and improve engagement with young people.

### Strengthening Transitions and Alternative Learning in Fife

The SVRU partnered with the Community Trade Hub and community STEM (sciences, technologies, engineering and mathematics) bus to support young people transitioning from primary to secondary school. Working with 14 feeder primaries, the SVRU co-developed age-appropriate activities and training inputs to promote emotional development and behavioural support. These efforts have also strengthened alternative learning pathways for young people outside mainstream education.

### Addressing Emerging Risks

In late 2024/2025, the SVRU collaborated with youth charity Clued Up and local social work teams to explore rising concerns around knife carrying and interpersonal violence among youth groups in Fife. Enhanced data access and stronger partnerships have laid the groundwork for detached youth work and street-level interventions, with further development planned in 2025/2026.

### Building capacity of the workforce

Throughout 2024/2025, the SVRU delivered a series of targeted training sessions to frontline professionals across Scotland, enhancing their ability to respond to youth violence and weapon-related issues using evidence-informed approaches.

### Key Training Milestones

- **School Engagement Officers:** In December 2024, the SVRU hosted an in-person development day for 90 school based police officers, focusing on best practice in youth engagement and violence prevention.
- **St Kentigern's Academy:** Delivered Relationship-Based Practice and Conflict Management training to 110 teachers, supporting safer school environments.

39 [Chief Constable updates Scottish Police Authority - Police Scotland](#)

40 [Aid & Abet - More than a number.](#)

- **HomeStart Scotland:** Provided tailored input to 29 staff working with families and young children, strengthening early intervention efforts.
- **Children and Families Social Work:** Delivered a solution-focused session to 18 social workers in North East Scotland, supporting families at risk.
- **North Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership:** Presented contextual safeguarding approaches, which seek to understand, and respond to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families, to 120 statutory and third-sector partners, promoting multi-agency strategies to keep young people safe.
- **Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution:** Delivered an online session on recovering from violence to 67 attendees, sharing trauma-informed insights.

Medics Against Violence's (MAV) School Academy uses clinical volunteers to deliver violence prevention lessons to secondary and occasionally primary school age young people with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging them to make safer choices. Lessons focus on medical and other consequences of violence, alcohol, drugs and include busting some myths commonly held by young people, such as there being safe places to be stabbed. Over the year, MAV medical volunteers spoke to 4,996 young people in Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Perthshire, Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Borders and Glasgow as well as to organisations such as the Kibble and the Boy's Brigade.

Through the MAV Academy and On the Edge programmes, MAV has contributed to violence prevention by educating young people on the dangers of weapon use, including both sharp and blunt force injuries and supporting safer decision-making. Over the past year, nearly 5,000 young people have engaged with MAV Academy lessons, while 20 at-risk young

people participated in On the Edge, focusing on choices in the night-time economy.

Additionally, MAV is working in partnership with youth organisations, Police Scotland, and the SVRU in the East End of Glasgow, supporting young people in a community affected by a high-profile violent incident. Regular collaboration ensures a coordinated and compassionate response.

Through the Hospital Navigator programme, MAV has worked with older people who have been involved in violence often as a result of addiction. Violence is often a symptom of underlying addiction and past trauma and by supporting them to change and recover we anticipate this will reduce their likelihood of involvement in violence in the future. The Hospital Navigators have worked with 2,672 individuals across eight hospitals in Scotland over the year.

### Peer Education - No Knives Better Lives

Over the last year, 80 Police Scotland Youth Volunteers<sup>41</sup> completed peer education training focused on the dangers of weapon carrying.<sup>42</sup> These trained volunteers now share their learning within their peer groups, using a peer-to-peer approach that is more relatable and impactful than adult-led messaging. This method helps challenge social norms around knife carrying and encourages open dialogue and positive alternatives. The initiative contributes to safer communities and supports a wider culture of non-violence.

### Peer Education - Restorative Approaches Training

In partnership with YouthLink Scotland, a restorative approaches course was delivered across all 12 Police divisional areas. 208 PSYV students completed the one-day training. The course equips young people with conflict resolution

41 [PSYV - Police Scotland](#)

42 [Peer Education - No Knives Better Lives](#)

skills, confidence to support restorative practices, and leads to an SCQF qualification through Fife College. PSYV participants will cascade their learning within their groups, enhancing peer education efforts.

The PSYV were the first cohort to undertake this course, providing valuable feedback to Youthlink Scotland to support future delivery. These initiatives empower young volunteers to be active bystanders, challenge harmful behaviours, and support safer communities.

YouthLink Scotland's No Knives, Better Lives<sup>43</sup> programme has achieved a record level of practitioner engagement this year, equipping professionals across youth work, education, policing, social work, and other sectors with the skills to address key drivers of youth violence. These include harmful masculinity, poor mental health and emotional illiteracy, and weak conflict resolution skills. A total of 309 practitioners participated in focused training sessions delivered both in person and online, while a further 2,061 e-learning courses were completed via the Learning Hub. This broad reach reflects the programme's commitment to early intervention and capacity building, ensuring that those working directly with young people are empowered to promote safer, more supportive environments.

### **Better Lives Toolkit and Training - Strengthening Violence Prevention and Knife Awareness**

Over the year, targeted content on weapon carrying prevention was embedded across regional practitioner training days, peer education modules, e-learning courses, interactive games, and toolkits. In partnership with the SVRU, four regional practitioner days were held in Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Aberdeen, and West Lothian, directly training 83 practitioners.

A major milestone was the launch of the Better Lives Toolkit and its accompanying e-learning course, Better Lives: Understanding Violence Prevention and Knife Carrying.<sup>44</sup> Designed for a wide range of professionals—including teachers, youth workers, housing and social workers, campus and community police officers, and volunteers—the toolkit supports informed, confident engagement with young people on violence prevention.

**Action 6** – The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit will lead work with YouthLink Scotland and with other partners to identify opportunities to develop a collaborative plan with actions for harm reduction and violence prevention specifically targeting the effects of social media on violence.

### **Update on progress**

In response to the growing influence of social media in its use of encouraging violent behaviour, the SVRU, in partnership with NKBLs and MAV, developed and launched the Quit Fighting For Likes<sup>45</sup> campaign in September 2024. The campaign was co-produced with young people (Medics Against Violence's On the Edge first cohort of young people) across Scotland to ensure relevance, authenticity, and impact.

### **Campaign Highlights**

The campaign was co designed by young people using relatable language, memes and visuals to explore the risks of online violence and peer pressure. Additional Educational Resources were developed which included a suite of teaching materials to support schools and youth services in delivering lessons that

43 [Home - No Knives Better Lives](#)

44 [Better Lives: Understanding Violence Prevention and Knife Carrying - No Knives Better Lives](#)

45 [quitfightingforlikes | violence prevention campaign](#)

encourage young people's critical thinking and self-reflection.

### Training and Reach

Eight online sessions were delivered to nearly 120 practitioners post-launch, plus training for 90 school engagement officers and over 100 campus officers. Nearly 300 professionals trained to deliver campaign lesson plans and a Snapchat campaign ran for one month, supported by organic social media promotion with targeted digital outreach via Instagram and Snapchat to reach key audiences.

### Impact

- **An average of 80,000 impressions was achieved per day during the initial 4-week campaign**
- **The campaign generated over 6,000 unique visits landing page—exceeding industry benchmarks**
- **Post-training evaluations showed positive reception from practitioners.**

The campaign was rerun in April 2025. The Snapchat campaign was run for a second time, and this resulted in over 15,000 unique visits to the website weekly during the three-week run, mostly from people within Scotland with over 4,000 from the Glasgow area. Each visitor spent an average of just over six minutes on the site and the majority of referrals came via Snapchat. Further evaluation is planned to assess its effectiveness and inform future iterations.

Over the years, using official data, the majority of non-sexual violence involves males against males. However, using intelligence from stakeholders, a growing concern arose on violence between girls, which is different to violence against women and girls, (typically perpetrated

by men and boys). Therefore, Youth Link Scotland's NKBLs explored this issue of violence between girls and developed a practitioner guide,<sup>46</sup> a toolkit/online campaign aimed at girls to help them recognise violent behaviours in themselves and their friends, to understand where this might come from, and support them to prevent it.

YouthLink Scotland co-developed and delivered focus groups with young people to explore their thoughts and feelings on social media and online violence. A range of practical resources was created to support those working with young people:

**Practitioner Toolkit<sup>47</sup>** - Activities addressing the 6 Cs of online harm: content, contact, conduct, contract, cyberaggression and compulsion.

**Upper Primary Toolkit<sup>48</sup>** - Supporting children aged 10+ to navigate social media safely.

**Assembly Pack<sup>49</sup>** - Activities for school assemblies based on the Quit Fighting for Likes campaign.

**Peer Education Module<sup>50</sup>** - Sessions designed to be delivered to young people, by young people, on social media and violence.

**Quit Fighting for Likes E-Toolbox<sup>51</sup>** - Online e-learning format that gives a step-by-step guide to the Quit Fighting for Likes activities.

As part of its youth engagement strategy, NKBLs supported the delivery of a targeted digital awareness campaign on Snapchat and TikTok, aimed at raising violence including knife crime prevention awareness among young people. Their Snapchat Awareness & Engagement Campaign achieved over 2.8 million

46 [NKBL\\_GirlPower\\_R3B.pdf](#)

47 [Quit-Fighting-For-Likes\\_Main-Toolkit\\_R5.pdf](#)

48 [Quit-Fighting-For-Likes\\_UPPER-Primary-Toolkit\\_R5.pdf](#)

49 [Quit-Fighting-For-Likes\\_Assembly-Pack\\_R2.pdf](#)

50 [Social Media - No Knives Better Lives](#)

51 [Quit Fighting for Likes - Toolbox - No Knives Better Lives](#)

impressions. These figures reflect strong reach and engagement, demonstrating the effectiveness of using digital platforms to connect with young audiences and promote violence prevention messaging.

**Action 7** – By August 2023, we will review the findings from our stakeholder engagement with the Scottish Community Safety Network, to consider the next steps for work to prevent and tackle antisocial behaviour.

### Update on progress

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Safety Network completed widespread engagement to examine the challenges posed by antisocial behaviour across Scotland. This culminated in the joint publication of **Reviewing Scotland's Approach to Antisocial Behaviour**<sup>52</sup> in November 2023.

Following this, the Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour, commissioned by the Minister for Victims and Community Safety, undertook a comprehensive review of Scotland's approach to preventing and tackling antisocial behaviour. The group engaged with over 250 stakeholders and published its final report on 25 February 2025.

The report<sup>53</sup> sets out 45 recommendations including reviewing current legislation, definitions, and guidance on antisocial behaviour.

The Government is currently considering the recommendations of the Independent Working Group in consultation with COSLA and Police Scotland. A formal Government response will be given in late 2025, with implementation of agreed actions to follow. Additional investment

is already being committed through the announced launch of Phase 7 Cashback funding in June this year.

Police Scotland and local authorities hold the statutory responsibility for developing ASB strategies under section 1 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004.

### We participate in healthier and more respectful relationships

**Action 8** – We will consider the findings from our forthcoming Behaviour in Schools Research, which is due to be published in late 2023, and will work with partners to develop a response to any emerging issues relating to violence.

### Update on progress

Whilst the majority of young people are respectful and behave positively, we are concerned about violent and abusive behaviours by some young people. Our schools should be safe and consistent learning environments for all. We want all pupils to behave in a respectful positive manner towards their peers and staff. It is for schools and local authority employers to decide what action should be taken depending on the individual circumstances of challenging behaviour.

We have produced national guidance for local authorities and schools to promote positive relationships and manage behaviour through the **National Relationships and Behaviour in Schools Action Plan**,<sup>54</sup> published in August 2024. This plan outlines 20 key actions to be delivered between 2024 and 2027, in response to the findings of the **Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research 2023**.<sup>55</sup>

52 [Scotland's approach to antisocial behaviour: review findings - gov.scot](#)

53 [Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour: review report - gov.scot](#)

54 [Relationships and behaviour in schools: national action plan 2024 to 2027 - gov.scot](#)

55 [Behaviour in Scottish schools: research report 2023 - gov.scot](#)

Jointly owned with COSLA, recognising councils' statutory responsibility for education delivery, the Action Plan includes measures to reduce violence in schools and improve relationships and behaviour. It also addresses wider issues such as attendance, mental health, exclusion, and staff empowerment.

As part of this work, new national guidance was published earlier this year to help school staff foster positive, inclusive, and safe environments.<sup>56</sup> This includes advice on appropriate consequences and additional guidance on conducting risk assessments for violent, aggressive, or dangerous behaviour.<sup>57</sup>

**Action 9** – During 2023-2024, the Scottish Government will fund the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit to work with partners to explore further roll out of situational Bystander training to more organisations and communities, to improve the effectiveness of the approach and promote existing resources for wider use across Scotland.

### Update on progress

In 2024/2025, the SVRU began creating practical training to help communities keep young people safe in everyday places like parks, streets, and online spaces. This training is based on **contextual safeguarding**,<sup>58</sup> which means recognising that harm to young people doesn't just happen at home—it can also happen in public places, schools, or peer groups. SVRU worked closely with the National Contextual Safeguarding Lead for Scotland to design training that

combines traditional child protection methods with the Bystander approach (encouraging people to safely step in when they see something wrong) and SVRU's relationship-based practice, which focuses on building trust and strong connections.

Frontline workers, such as those in retail, hospitality, security, and transport, have highlighted the need for industry-specific training to address rising violence and antisocial behaviour, particularly involving young people. In response, and in support of wider initiatives like Street Guardians, SVRU has collaborated with partners including North Lanarkshire Social Work to adapt training to better meet community needs.

Initial pilots with Glasgow retailers and security staff led to improvements in the training's practical delivery. A further pilot with Lothian Buses in 2025 is helping staff respond to violence, including violence against women and girls on public transport.

Youthlink Scotland's NKBLs made a significant contribution to the development and expansion of the Nae Danger Active Bystander Package,<sup>59</sup> aimed at equipping young people (aged 10 to 16) with the skills and confidence to intervene safely and effectively in harmful situations.

They conducted four focus groups with 27 young people to evaluate messaging and the use of the 5Ds of bystander intervention,<sup>60</sup> directly shaping the final package, providing a comprehensive suite of resources:

- **Toolkit for practitioners and facilitators**<sup>61</sup>
- **Young Person's Guide to active bystander behaviour**<sup>62</sup>

56 [Schools - fostering a positive, inclusive and safe environment: guidance - gov.scot](#)

57 [Violent, Aggressive and Dangerous Behaviour](#)

58 [national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023-practice-insights.pdf](#)

59 [No Knives Better Lives - Active Bystander Package - Nae Danger](#)

60 [No Knives Better Lives - Active Bystander Package Consultation](#)

61 [No Knives Better Lives - Active Bystander Package Practitioner Guide](#)

62 [No Knives Better Lives - Active Bystander Package Young Persons Guide](#)

- **Peer Education Module for youth-led delivery**<sup>63</sup>
- **Presentation Pack for group sessions**<sup>64</sup>
- **VR and Online Game Guides for immersive learning**<sup>65</sup>
- **Two Posters promoting the new STEPS approach**<sup>66</sup>
- **Young People's Consultation insights integrated into design**<sup>67</sup>

Three online training sessions on the **Nae Danger** Active Bystander package were delivered to 21 practitioners, with a further 9 practitioners trained in using the accompanying online game. Additionally, 15 VR workshops were facilitated, engaging young people across secure units, residential homes, youth groups, and other settings.

This work supports the wider violence prevention agenda by empowering young people to act as active bystanders, promoting safer communities and peer-led change.

**Action 10** – The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit will deliver a pilot, based on our Suicide Prevention principles of Time, Space and Compassion. This will be in place in 2023 and will help connect people and reduce the risk of harm and violence.

### Update on progress

No further update. The SVRU completed this work in 2023/24.

Medics Against Violence's Navigator and Youth Navigator services work to the Suicide Prevention principles of Time, Space and Compassion. Both of these services work with vulnerable people who are at risk of or who have attempted suicide.

### People at risk of experiencing violence are supported to live healthier, more productive lives

**Action 11** – In 2023-2024, we will fund the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and Medics Against Violence to extend their Navigator-style approaches, to help support more people with multiple complex issues, including problematic drug and alcohol use, to access and engage with appropriate services, to stop the revolving cycle of harm. In partnership between Medics Against Violence and the NHS, this will include further roll out of the Hospital Youth Navigator pilot, to ensure more young people will be able to access the help they need at an earlier stage in their lives.

63 [No Knives Better Lives - Active Bystander Package Resource](#)

64 [No Knives Better Lives Active Bystander Package - Assembly-Pack](#)

65 [No Knives Better Lives - Nae Danger Game](#)

66 [No Knives Better Lives - Nae Danger poster](#)

67 [No Knives Better Lives - Active Bystander Package Consultation](#)

## Update on progress

MAV continues to expand the Navigator approach widening its reach and impact across Scotland, offering trauma-informed support to individuals at risk of violence. Over the year, the Hospital Navigator service, operating in eight Emergency Departments, offered support to 2,672 patients, with over 60% moving on to positive destinations. Several staff members, including sessional and full-time workers, have lived experience and were previously supported by the programme.

Youth Navigator services in Glasgow and Aberdeen supported 216 new patients, adding to their existing caseloads. Pathfinder Phase 2 restarted in Crosshouse, Lanarkshire, Dundee, and Glasgow. The Family Navigator programme supported 228 vulnerable families in Glasgow with emotional and practical assistance.

The evaluation<sup>68</sup> of Youth Navigator in Glasgow undertaken by a medical student from Glasgow University demonstrated a 37% reduction in ED attendance after contact with Youth Navigator.

## SVRU's You Decide Team (YDT)

YDT refined its referral pathways to focus on individuals with high levels of vulnerability, including those with significant offending behaviour and addiction issues. Supporting around 150 clients annually, the service delivers long-term, person-centred support, enabling most clients to transition to specialist services when ready.

## Custody Navigator

The Custody Navigator pilot launched in Saltcoats, North Ayrshire with funding from the SVRU and SACRO. The Saltcoats pilot has seen 131 referrals, with 112 clients successfully transitioned to specialist services. Early evaluation from the initial Fife test site shows promising

results with referrals increasing to 308 over 2023/2024 compared to the previous year from 240. There is a high demand for mental health and addiction support with 86% of service users reported life improvements and 93% would recommend the service.

## Community School Navigators

A pilot at Castlebrae School in Niddrie, in partnership with Heavy Sound, has been established, supporting vulnerable young people both in school and the community. Two navigators were recruited and became operational in April 2025. The programme is funded through a mixed model, including local policing, and will be evaluated by Napier University.

## Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL)

In West Lothian, SVRU partnered with Police Scotland to expand early intervention efforts through the SOL programme, targeting youth violence. The initiative supports individuals aged 10 to 15 through mentoring and collaboration with schools and colleges. Within four weeks of launch, 10 young people engaged (ages 13 to 19). Early successes include school re-engagement and reduced alcohol misuse. One participant is now pursuing an apprenticeship with mentor support.

**Action 12** – During 2023-2024, Medics Against Violence will lead work, co-ordinating with other partners, to test out delivery of a new model of support for young people based within the community to prevent harm from violence escalating.

68 [Changes in emergency healthcare use following intervention by Navigator, an emergency department social support programme: a multi-centre retrospective before-and-after study](#)

## Update on progress

Medics Against Violence's On the Edge<sup>69</sup> is a co-produced, school-based programme developed as part of the Navigating Communities approach. Led by a School Navigator, it delivers a 12-week intervention alongside ongoing support for young people at risk of violence or risky behaviours, as well as the wider school population.

In 2024/2025, the programme was delivered in one school in Lanarkshire and expanded to two schools in the East End of Glasgow. A short evaluation highlighted positive outcomes including increased confidence, trust, engagement with school, and the creation of safe spaces for discussion. This programme demonstrates the value of early intervention, peer education, and trusted adult support in promoting safer choices and reducing youth involvement in violence.

**Action 13** – We will fund the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit during 2023-2024, to work with partners to develop an approach to tackle repeat violent victimisation, linking in with the Victims Task Force. This will be informed by the findings from the Scottish Government funded Repeat Violent Victimisation Research, which is being conducted by researchers at the University of Glasgow and is due to be published later this year.

## Update on progress

### Supporting Victims and Communities Affected by Violence

Following the findings of the Scottish Government's **Repeat Violent Victimisation Research**,<sup>70</sup> the SVRU has strengthened its focus on supporting those affected by hidden and stigmatised forms of violence: groups often less likely to seek help. The research provided valuable insights into the factors that increase vulnerability among high-risk individuals.

### Violence Anonymous

SVRU launched Scotland's first in-person Violence Anonymous groups, a community-led, 12-step programme designed to be self-sustaining and low-cost. The initial site at SISCO in Glasgow generated strong interest from the recovery community. With additional groups launching, participation is expected to grow significantly in 2025/2026 without requiring further financial investment.

69 [Medics Against Violence](#)

70 ['No one is coming to help' - New research paints bleak picture of repeat violence in Scotland - SCCJR](#)

## Support for the Homeless Community

Recognising the high prevalence of violence among people experiencing homelessness, SVRU partnered with the Simon Community<sup>71</sup> to co-design a training programme for staff and attendees at community cafés. Pilots will run at two Glasgow sites, with training materials made available to other organisations working with homeless communities.

## Reducing Community Trauma

To address the impact of violent incidents on communities, responding to a homicide of a young person, the SVRU, partnering with local policing, co-developed and funded the Switch Project, a place-based therapeutic intervention delivered by the SPARK initiative.<sup>72</sup> The 15-week pilot engaged directly with those affected or who witnessed violence, showing significant benefits in trauma recovery and resilience. A support plan has been created for future incidents to ensure a collaborative approach across all agencies, with efforts underway to embed a baseline response within local policing across 2025/2026.

MAV's Hospital Navigators and Youth Navigator services regularly see patients who have been repeat victims of violence and the work they do is contributing to a reduced likelihood of people becoming victims of violence in the future.

**Action 14** – During 2023-2024, the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit will lead work to identify opportunities to intervene earlier to reduce and prevent harm by those that have been, or at risk of being, care-experienced.

## Update on progress

### Empowering Young People Through Peer Support and Lived Experience

The SVRU has made strong progress in developing peer-led and lived experience-informed programmes to support vulnerable young people and communities.

### Peer Navigation Programme - North Lanarkshire

The SVRU helped establish and secure funding for a Peer Mentors programme supporting care-experienced young people. In 2024/2025, SVRU provided training and co-developed a contextual safeguarding framework to guide service delivery. Supporting 8-10 young people at a time, the programme is now fully embedded locally.

### Glasgow Guardians & Common Ground

These city-centre outreach projects identify and support at-risk young people, many of whom are care-experienced. In the first week alone, over 150 young people were engaged, with several child protection concerns referred to appropriate agencies. SVRU played a key role in securing the partnerships that enabled effective street work and outreach.

### Advisory Board for Lived Experience

SVRU developed a framework to recruit up to 12 lived experience advisors, including those with care experience, to guide policy and practice. Recognising the value of their input, advisors will be remunerated for their time. Includem was confirmed as the delivery partner and recruitment started in April 2025. The board will ensure SVRU's work is trauma-informed and shaped by those with direct experience of violence.

Recent survey data shows that 7% of Police Scotland Youth Volunteers

71 [Simon Community Scotland - Home - Support for people experiencing homelessness in Scotland](#)

72 [The Spark - Igniting Change](#)

self-identified as care-experienced, significantly higher than the national average of approximately 2%. This is a strong and positive indicator that PSYV is actively contributing to the delivery of The Promise,<sup>73</sup> Scotland's commitment to improving outcomes for care-experienced children and young people.

Care-experienced youth bring valuable lived experience and unique perspectives that enrich the PSYV programme and its engagement with communities. Their involvement helps challenge stereotypes, build trust between care-experienced individuals and the police, and foster greater understanding. These young volunteers act as positive role models, demonstrating that a care background is not a barrier to personal growth, leadership, or meaningful community involvement.

Their participation reflects PSYV's commitment to inclusion and representation, and by engaging care-experienced volunteers in local policing priorities, PSYV benefits from a broader range of insights and approaches, enhancing the effectiveness of its community work. Their involvement not only supports individual development<sup>74</sup> but also contributes to violence prevention and safer communities across Scotland.

Medics Against Violence Hospital Navigator youth programme, gathers data on young people who are care experienced and who present to our Youth Navigator service. During this reporting year, the service in Glasgow has supported 21 young people with care experience and the service in Aberdeen has supported seven young people with care experience.

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73 [Website - The Promise Scotland](#)

74 [Police Scotland Youth Volunteers \(PSYV\) Academic Evaluation - Police Scotland - Citizen Space](#)

# Conclusions

The activity recorded in this update highlights the work which has been taken forward in 2024/2025 by partners to implement the **Violence Prevention Framework**. It summarises some of the progress being achieved against the actions during the second year of implementation of this three-year programme. It also shows how the £6 million of funding provided since the publication of the Framework in 2023 by the Scottish Government is being deployed to support delivery of a wide range of partner activities to deliver some critical and often grassroots work to prevent violence over 2024/2025. While good progress is being made in a number of important areas, there is still much more to be done to fully deliver on the actions and vision set out in the **Violence Prevention Framework**.

Over 2025/2026, the Scottish Government and its partners are continuing to focus on prevention and early intervention and will provide an update of that activity in our next, and third, annual progress report in 2026.

We will continue to direct effort and spending to achieve the aims of the Framework so that more communities across Scotland are safe and that more people live free from violence and the threat of violence.





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