

Derby and Derbyshire Serious Violence Interventions 2024 – 2026

Report to accompany the Derby and Derbyshire
Serious Violence Strategy 2026 - 2028



Derby & Derbyshire
Safer Communities

Since the first Serious Violence strategy for Derby and Derbyshire was published for 2024-2026, a lot of work has taken place, with the aim of reducing and preventing serious violence. Some of this work has been in partnership and some of it has been delivered by specified authorities through their own organisation's strategic objectives. The latest Serious Violence Strategy for 2026-2028 builds on the achievements of the partnership to date.

As well as partnership and specified authority funded work to try to reduce and prevent serious violence, a number of Home Office funded interventions have been delivered and several are still in the delivery phase as follows;

Home Office funded interventions

Focussed deterrence

Work led by Derbyshire Constabulary and the Derby and Derbyshire Violence Reduction Unit:

- StreetDoctors

Home Office funding supported Derby City's Youth Justice Service (YJS) to secure two additional StreetDoctors sessions. They were attended by 13 young people at risk of involvement in serious violence and six members of staff. StreetDoctors sessions engage young people in discussions around violence, helping to dispel common myths around knife crime and teach practical first aid skills to help someone who is bleeding or unconscious. The YJS are now looking to support delivery of further sessions in the 2026/27 financial year.

- A summer music diversionary programme in Derby City

The programme was led by Derby YJS and was attended by eight children known to the YJS (pre and post court). It ran over the Summer Holidays between July and September 2025 and was delivered by Unit 03 Music, allowing the young people access to a fully equipped music studio. The aim was to develop their confidence and keep them safe in a constructive activity. There is the potential that this will spark an interest in the music industry as a career and a move away from offending.

In September 2025, there was a YJS and Unit 03 Music programme Showcase at Electric Daisy in Derby. It was attended by parents and caregivers of the young people who completed the programme, as well as the professionals supporting them.

The young people have been praised highly for their dedication to the programme.

- Operation Knightlow: Integrated Offender Management (IOM) additional out of hours visits in Derby City for offenders who have been involved in serious violence incidents:

Additional out of hours visits have been completed by Derbyshire Constabulary's IOM Team to a selected cohort of offenders who are at risk of involvement in serious violence in Derby City. The aim is to prevent reoffending via officer engagement, signposting to services and intelligence gathering.

These 'out of hours' visits have been targeted via the IOM tasking meetings and used for a wide variety of intelligence led compliance, such as testing the requirements of the offender's license conditions, curfews and associates. The visits are an opportunity for further engagement and referral for support that the scheme can offer to reduce the frequency and severity of offending.

- Support for Operation Vigilance:

Operation Vigilance focuses on identifying potential perpetrators and victims of serious violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the night-time economy. It operates in hotspot areas during periods when the above concerns have been shown to be at higher rates. The operation helps to keep potential victims safe via partnership working with Police Officers, CCTV operators and street pastors and disrupts those who may be looking to act in a pro-criminal manner.

- Wrapping of a Police car in the 'Shattered' knife crime related logo to spread the anti-knife crime message across Derbyshire.
- Provision of a Supporting Communities youth bus in Normanton (City area) and Chesterfield (County area).

There continues to be a high number of young people engaging with the youth bus sessions in Chesterfield town centre. Even during the winter, staff have maintained strong engagement and worked closely with McDonald's and other local partners to ensure effective collaboration. The presence of Supporting Communities on Friday evenings has been positively received by McDonald's and provides them with some relief from large groups congregating in the restaurant.

Provision in Normanton has remained fairly consistent across several locations. There has been a slight drop-off in activity on the streets during the colder winter evenings, particularly among younger age groups, with fewer young people spending time there.

Engagement is summarised as follows;

- Total attendance: 773
- Average attendance per session: 25
- Total number of sessions delivered: 30

Work with high-risk groups in Derby City

Mentoring West Midlands is a joint funded (Derby Youth Justice Service (YJS) and Home Office) community and custodial mentoring service that has been introduced as a YJS resource in Derby. This provision is relatively new to the YJS, having been established in 2024 following investment from the Public Health and Community Safety Team at Derby City Council.

The allocation of this funding has enabled the YJS to develop a collaborative partnership with Mentoring West Midlands (MWM), strengthening the range of targeted interventions available to children and young people. Through this partnership, specialist mentors are allocated to children and young people who present with complex needs and are assessed as being at high risk of reoffending, posing a risk of serious harm, and/or experiencing significant safety and wellbeing concerns.

The mentoring service operates across both community and custodial settings, providing consistent, relational support that complements existing YJS interventions. The focus of the work is on building positive, pro-social relationships, improving engagement, addressing underlying vulnerabilities, and supporting desistance from offending. This additional resource enhances the YJS' capacity to respond to high-risk cases and contributes to wider public health and community safety objectives, by promoting safer outcomes for individuals, families, and the wider community.

For 2026, it is proposed that the referral pathway will be extended to include Y2A (Youth to Adult) cases, with mentoring support offered for 8–12 weeks. Sessions will be delivered on a weekly or fortnightly basis, determined on a case-by-case assessment.

Over the last 18-months, 12 young people have been mentored, with nine of those desisting from re-offending.

Active Bystander Training in schools across Derby and Derbyshire

Safe and Sound have been commissioned to deliver Active Bystander Training to young people in Primary and Secondary schools, in school years six to nine, across Derby and Derbyshire. The workshops, called 'I can I will', include discussions around what is a bystander, who can be a bystander, the Bystander Effect, the differences between Passive and Active Bystanders, why taking action can make a difference, Peer on Peer Abuse, keeping safe and reporting, examples of serious violence and young people's views and concerns.

By the end of 2025, 139 workshops had been delivered in 37 schools across Derby and Derbyshire, reaching 2991 young people. Impacts so far include a 61% increase in knowledge of serious violence and a 53% boost in understanding of how to be an active bystander, and positive feedback from both teachers and pupils. The project is now focussing on establishing links with children's residential care homes, and Alternative Education providers to reach more vulnerable young people.

Vulnerability Hub in Chesterfield's night-time economy

The Chesterfield Vulnerability Hub was created as a response to feedback from licensed premises and other stakeholders, such as Derbyshire Constabulary, who consistently faced demand in managing and supporting individuals who had become vulnerable through the use of alcohol or drugs in the night-time economy. These issues often meant that vulnerable individuals became victims of crime, and/or suffered injury or experienced mental health issues. The Vulnerability Hub was created to operate on Friday and Saturday evenings in Chesterfield Town Centre. The Hub was staffed by Enforcement Officers, Paramedics and Street Pastors, and was supported by Derbyshire Constabulary Officers.

Vulnerable individuals were identified by the bars and clubs and referred to the Vulnerability Hub via the Town Centre radio system. The team would then provide appropriate support and care to the individual to ensure they were safe. During a six-month period from April 2025 to October 2025, the Hub dealt with approximately 16 individuals per night of operation, the majority of whom were vulnerable through use of alcohol or drugs. 23% of the individuals were experiencing mental health issues, and 14% were considered homeless.

Since October 2025, due to difficulties in staffing the Vulnerability Hub, following resignations and recruitment delays, the Hub has had significantly reduced capacity to continue its function. In the meantime, youth related violence has emerged as an issue in the Town Centre, and as a result the local Community Safety Partnership has diverted some of this funding to work closely with Chesterfield Football Club Community Trust (CFCCT), to establish outreach work on Saturday nights (complemented by Derbyshire County Council Public Health funded outreach work on Thursday nights).

On average, 55 young people are engaged in each outreach session, and approximately 21 young people are diverted to the Youth Hub in the town centre on these evenings. 22 young people have been referred into CFCCT's Reboot programme, which is an intervention project working with local schools to support young people at risk of involvement in violence and anti-social behaviour. Derbyshire Constabulary have reported a decrease in incidents of violence and anti-social behaviour during the times that the outreach work takes place.

Schools' exclusion programme for Roma children in Derby City

The New Communities Achievement Team (NCAT) Roma project is a targeted programme of work with local schools and academies, Roma students and their families, with the aim to improve Roma families' access to education and academic/education outcomes. The aims of this objective are:

- to reduce the number of permanent exclusions and persistent absences of Roma children and young people in Derby schools,
- to reduce the number of Roma children and young people who are out of education / (CME) Children Missing Education,
- to reduce the number of Roma children registered as (EHE) Elective Home Education,

- to reduce the number of Roma young people who are (NEET) not in Education, Employment and/or Training or are at a significant risk of going to be NEET after finishing secondary school.

Latest Update:

There have not been any permanent school exclusions of the targeted Roma students recorded in Quarter 3 (1st Oct -5th Dec 2025).

There has been improved parental engagement in school activities (parents' evenings and school events) in this period. There have been 187 Roma parents who were supported in this period to attend parents' evenings at eight primary and secondary schools.

Two workshop sessions have been delivered to Roma parents of secondary school children to improve their understanding of the UK education system. 21 people attended the sessions.

Roma families continue to access universal / specialist services by using the team's Drop-in service at Rosehill Family Hub (school admission, free school meals, school transport, health, housing, interpreting / translation service, SEND, benefits). 284 appointments delivered in the period (1st Oct – 5th Dec 2025)

21 Roma children who were recorded as Children Missing Education (CME) have been supported to apply for school places in Quarter 3.

12 Roma children / YPs who were recorded as NEET have been supported to access Post-16 provision.

EHE support and advice has been delivered to 12 Roma families in Quarter 3.

The team has started delivering a homework club at a local secondary school. 10 Roma students has been targeted for this support.

The team continues to monitor attendance of the targeted Roma pupils / students.

The team has completed 74 school application forms and 15 school appeal forms with Roma parents in this period (1st Oct – 5th Dec 2025).

- Total number of young people 24 and under this intervention has reached to date (this financial year): 203.
- Total number of people 25 and over this intervention has reached to date (this financial year): 197.
- Total number of professionals trained (if applicable) this intervention has reached to date (this financial year): 43.

Virtual Reality Violence Reduction programme in Derby City schools

Virtual Decisions is the creator of the Virtual Reality (VR) experiences, and they deliver the workshops in secondary schools across Derby city. Virtual Decisions: KNIVES is an interactive, multi-narrative VR film and workshop that explores the reasons why young people carry knives, what the dangers are and the potential consequences. Aimed at young people aged 10-15, the programme allows each participant to make their own decisions within the VR film, with each decision having varying outcomes. These decisions are then explored in a safe, non-judgmental workshop with expert facilitators, to understand the consequences of actions.

The learning also helps to dispel the myths surrounding knife crime, as well as changing mindsets with a view to keeping young people safe and positively impacting on our wider communities. They also deliver a VR experience, titled INFLUENCE, which focuses on County Lines.

Since April 2025, the programmes have been delivered in seven different city education establishments, with some having multiple visits. They have reached a total of 856 young people from year seven to 11, with further visits planned at the time of writing.

Leaving Care Service Wellbeing offer in Derbyshire County Council's Leaving Care Service

The Leaving Care Service Wellbeing offer is a therapeutically informed approach, working alongside additional practical support – it is aimed at older children in care, supporting them to make an effective transition to adulthood. Since the project started it has supported 45 young people. The approach has increased engagement with vulnerable young people, helping to steer them away from involvement in criminality and has supported some young people into sustainable accommodation.

Leaving Care Service Wellbeing offer – Case Study

A young person in care had experienced a number of unstable moves between care homes, which was impacting on their wellbeing, vulnerability and risk. The young person was feeling rejected by the numerous moves between care homes. Therapeutic oversight was provided to support practical tasks relating to stability which informed the whole network. This was alongside intensive work with a supported accommodation provider to ensure they could offer a long-term home post-18. With this support the child was moved to sustainable long-term accommodation which they could remain in after turning 18.

Mentoring for young people aged 10-17 who are risk of involvement in violence

Remedi have been commissioned to deliver their Restorative Mentoring service to young people in Derby and Derbyshire who are involved in, or at risk of involvement in serious violence. The Restorative mentoring approach utilises restorative practice, recognising that harm experienced by young people presents significant barriers to engagement and ability to not reoffend. The creative approach combines holistic mentoring with restorative practitioner skills resulting in young people being able to address underlying needs, including healing their harm and enabling sustained change.

The trauma-informed model is based on Remedi's successful evaluated model used in Greater Manchester. The approach is needs/assessment led, takes a child first approach and is outcomes based. The model uses restorative principles to work with young people, empowering them to identify what they want from mentoring, and supporting them to develop a plan around how they will get there.

Between April 2025 and November 2025 there were 48 referrals into this service from professionals across the City and County. Serious violence risk factors are identified as part of the referral process and considered as part of joint planning with the referrer. A needs assessment is completed with the young person and an individual support plan created, giving access to a diverse range of staff across Remedi to support individual needs. Remedi then work in partnership with other agencies to address these needs and holistically support the young person.

Remedi – Case Study

The young person was referred to the Serious Violence Team following information shared with Derbyshire Constabulary indicating alleged involvement in drug supply and possession of a knife. His name had also been repeatedly linked to intelligence relating to violence and weapons. During initial engagement, the young person disclosed that he had been out of education for nearly two years and felt this had had a significant negative impact on his life, increasing his vulnerability to involvement in criminal activity. Both he and his mother expressed a strong desire for him to return to school or engage in an appropriate form of education or training.

His mother explained that she had deregistered him from education after he was permanently excluded from school and subsequently placed in an alternative provision which she felt was unsuitable, unsafe, and unable to meet his needs. A support plan was developed collaboratively, identifying the young person's priorities and key areas for intervention. Following this, weekly one-to-one sessions were established to provide consistent support and guidance.

Targeted work commenced focusing on knife crime awareness and the development of healthy relationships, alongside ongoing discussions regarding the young person's re-enrolment into education. GCSE subject options were explored, and the mentor discussed the young person's aspirations and future goals. The young person's previous school was contacted to outline the work currently being undertaken, highlight the positive impact this has had, and evidence the progress he had made. Enquiries were made about the possibility of his return to the school. Following this, an in-year school admission application was submitted and is currently awaiting review.

The young person engaged very positively with the programme and has made a conscious and sustained effort to stay out of trouble and focus on re-engaging with education. He has also begun exploring apprenticeship opportunities and potential labouring work. He attends sessions consistently, demonstrates a strong willingness to engage, and maintains a positive and motivated attitude throughout. Positive feedback about the mentoring service has also been received by Derbyshire Constabulary and by the young person's mother.

Hope Hacks engagement events for young people in Chesterfield and Derby City

Hope Hacks were delivered in Derby on 11th November 2024 and in Chesterfield on 12th February 2025. Hope Hacks are day long engagement events for young people, focusing on topics which were selected via focus groups. Topics included relationships with police, connection, substance use, social media, and racism.

The Derby and Derbyshire Violence Reduction Unit and partnership colleagues have been working very closely with Chesterfield Football Club Community Trust (CFCCT) over the last six months under funded arrangements. Part of this has involved CFCCT supporting with the development and delivery of a Hope Hack Action Plan, for which updates are given at the Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership meetings. This has focused on the Hope Hack topics of relationships with police, connection, substance use and social media. CFCCT have made significant progress with this, involving young people in the various interventions they deliver and by creating safe spaces with information available on the topics. They work closely with Safer Neighbourhood Team officers, who have been invited to many interventions to engage with the young people. This has been seen a very positive step to build relationships with officers and has received significant praise from young people and professionals.

Similar work is being delivered in Derby City and other areas within the county by colleagues from Safe and Sound and Remedi via funded arrangements. Remedi, Safe and Sound and CFCCT also collaborate with one another to combine resources, experience, and reach. This is helping positive practice to be shared and replicated across the county.

Case Study

The VRU, Derbyshire Constabulary and wider partners have been supported to deliver against workstreams on the Serious Violence Action Plan by CFCCT.

This more in depth and structured working relationship has allowed the VRU and partners to really benefit from the expertise and community reach of CFCCT. In practice, this has allowed for a significant amount of community engagement, specifically with young people on topics we know are important to them.

The following comments from the young people below demonstrate the benefits of Police getting involved with existing projects-being invited in, if you will, by youth leaders the young people already trust. It is really helping the young people to see police officers as people, not just a uniform and to recognise that they are there to support them to engage with pro-social activities to build healthy connections.

Feedback from staff is that the young people typically engage really positively with police officers and PCSOs from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. They described a situation where a young person, after engaging with an officer for the first time in a session, told them they had an air rifle. The officer explained why this wasn't allowed and collected the air rifle following this. This went positively and the young person understood why this needed to happen and seemed relieved. This may be unusual, but it shows how a single interaction has already had a significant impact and may have prevented a negative outcome.

Below is some feedback from the young people.

Thoughts on or experiences with police - Premier League Kicks session:

'Some young people are brought up not to like them.'

'If they know the officers, then they are sound.'

'Explain calmly and talk through why they are being trouble and just be a bit more respectful.'

Safety:

'They make us feel a bit safe, but sometimes they can also make us feel unsafe as we don't know if we can trust them.'

Building trust and relationships:

'Engage with us more often.'

'Come and play football or sports with us.'

What can help build better relations between young people and the police?

'Attend schools more often.'

'Dress in normal clothes when talking to young people.'

'More Police on the streets to make sure young people feel safe.'

Walk Away night-time economy campaign in Derby City, Chesterfield, Ilkeston and Ripley

The Walk Away campaign was first developed by Leicestershire Police and subsequently rolled out nationally by the Home Office.

Research shows that most incidents of serious violence on a night out are caused by an error in judgement, a spilled drink, or a rude comment. The campaign aims to target potential offenders by encouraging them to simply 'walk away'.

The campaign prompts perpetrators and bystanders to recognise the links between characteristics, behaviours, and potentially violent incidents. The campaign targets males aged 18-30, as data has shown this demographic has an increased risk of being involved in serious violence within the Night-Time Economy (NTE).

The campaign has now been successfully used in four key areas for NTE violence in Derbyshire. These areas are Derby City, Chesterfield, Ripley, and Ilkeston. These four areas have the highest amount of NTE violent incidents, as evidenced by the Derby and Derbyshire Strategic Needs Assessment 2024. Phase one was delivered in Derby City and Chesterfield and phase two in Ilkeston and Ripley. Both used physical and digital campaign methods to best reach the target audience. Both elements were completed in full within their respective campaign timelines. The VRU found that both the physical and digital elements worked well in this campaign. However, as assumed at the start, there were positive results from digital advertising of Walk Away messaging. On apps like Instagram and TikTok, there was direct access to the target audience of males aged 18-30, as they are the key demographic for the apps themselves.

By targeting the ads at a granular level (specific personal attributes, days of the week and times), it was possible to get a positive return on investment.

As far as the physical methods, these have included distributing materials to pubs, bars and other NTE venues. In the second phase of the campaign, this extended to bus advertising in Ilkeston and Ripley. As this is a behavioural change campaign, tangible metrics to prove its success are limited. However, the campaign was well-received and had great stakeholder engagement from both partners and the public.

In addition to the events detailed above, the Walk Away Campaign materials were also used by partners to promote NTE safety during the 2025 festive period.

Derbyshire County Council – Public Health funded interventions

In addition to the interventions funded by the Home Office, Derbyshire County Council's Public Health department has funded a number of other interventions in the County area as follows:

Moving Men's Minds

Places for People were commissioned to deliver a programme of diversionary activity for young males aged 11-19 in the Amber Valley area of Derbyshire. The programme, Moving Men's Minds, ran across three leisure facilities in the area – Alfreton Leisure centre, Ripley Leisure Centre and William Gregg VC Leisure Centre (Heanor). Free to access boxing-based fitness classes, and open access to the gym and swimming facilities, were offered for a period of 12 weeks to young males at risk of involvement in serious violence, who were referred into the programme by partner agencies. This programme ran from March 2024 to August 2025, engaging 47 young males, in over 400 unique visits to the facilities. Those who were fully engaged for the first 12 weeks were offered the opportunity to access the facilities for a further 12 weeks, and 11 young males took up this offer. The age range of those most engaged was 16–17-year-olds. Almost half of those engaging with the programme were from areas which have neighbourhoods ranked in the most deprived 20-30% nationally.

Moving Men's Minds – case study

Male A was referred to the service in September 2024 and engaged in 1-1 sessions with an instructor. This including swimming, group cycling, gym sessions and personal training. The instructor gave Male A an induction into the gym, after which he slowly built up his confidence in the gym environment. Male A worked through a mix of strength, fitness and boxing pad work in the fitness studio and engaged in conversations with the instructor around stress management, mind talk and positive goals for the future. The instructor was able to mentor Male A as a positive role model and Male A took an interest in the instructor's other role as an on-call Fire Fighter.

Operation Knightlow - Integrated Offender Management (IOM) additional out of hours visits for offenders at risk of involvement in serious violence

Additional out of hours visits are undertaken by Derbyshire Constabulary's IOM Team to offenders living in the county, who are at risk of involvement in serious violence. The aim of this tertiary level intervention is to prevent re-offending. It is now being replicated in the city area as it has been successful in the county. IOM Officers undertake additional out of hours visits (evenings and weekends) to a selected cohort (those at risk of serious violence offending), as part of the programme of management of offenders. Up to the end of December 2025, there had been 270 additional out of hours visits undertaken, 252 of which had a positive outcome; that is any visit that contributes towards preventing re-offending (for example, engaging with the Officer,

signposting to services and intelligence gathering).

Breaking Barriers

Breaking Barriers was a project commissioned to deliver a targeted early-intervention programme in three secondary schools identified through Derbyshire's serious violence hotspot analysis. The programme focused on addressing harmful peer norms, misogyny and rigid masculinities through workshops on empathy, mental health and masculinity, supported by staff CPD and a whole-school approach. It generated measurable improvements in pupils' attitudes—particularly at one school, where all ten survey measures improved, including significant gains in empathy and confidence to challenge harmful behaviours. Delivery also highlighted variation in school culture and staff readiness, with strong engagement at one school contrasting with resistance at another school, reinforcing the need for senior-led framing and consistent whole-school implementation. Despite capacity-related barriers, the project produced scalable resources and demonstrated that compassionate, evidence-informed work with boys can reduce key risk factors linked to serious violence and support more respectful and safer school environments.

Personalisation Budget

Providing diversions for vulnerable young people, away from potential involvement in serious crime, allows those young people to become involved in other activities and interests that they may not have otherwise had access to. Often these activities and interests, or access to training and employment opportunities can come with an initial cost outlay, which may be unaffordable for the young person and their family. The Personalisation Budget provides an effective way to improve vulnerable young people's access to appropriate support and improve outcomes in a timely, flexible, and personalised way. Sustainable activities/opportunities can take a number of forms, ranging from (for example) funding a fixed-term course of music lessons, to paying for taxi fares for a young person who does not live on a bus route to attend a five-week educational course, to purchasing a camera for a photography course at college, or an enrichment activity such as a trip out with their support worker. By enabling access to diversionary activity and opportunities, those vulnerable young people identified will be less likely to engage in criminality. This intervention is open to young people in Derbyshire, aged 10-18, who have been identified as vulnerable to involvement in criminality, and have four or more complex needs.

Bleed control kits

Bleed Control kits have been provided in all infant, primary, junior, secondary and SEND schools in Derbyshire county – over 450 bleed kits were funded by Public Health and distributed across the county's network of schools. All schools had the opportunity to attend an in-person training session on how to use the bleed kits or access online learning, strengthening their first aid response should a serious bleed incident occur in or around their school.

Street first aid training delivery in selected secondary schools

First aid sessions have been commissioned in selected secondary schools with higher levels of serious violence in their communities. These aim to engage young people in discussing their perceptions of violence and to help them learn valuable first aid skills, enabling them to respond if they encounter someone who is bleeding or unconscious. Young people are encouraged to be a part of the solution to serious violence through these youth-focussed sessions, delivered by award winning organisation StreetDoctors. Initial feedback from students at The Pingle Academy includes:

"This was very useful because I had a lot of misconceptions on what to do in a situation like this"

"I feel more confident with this information"

"This was a fun way of learning the basics"

Outreach work with young people in Erewash and Chesterfield

Outreach work is taking place in both Erewash and Chesterfield.

In Erewash, outreach work is delivered by Safe and Sound and will run for a year between September 2025 and September 2026. By the end of 2025, 37 sessions had been delivered in Ilkeston and Long Eaton with 679 young people spoken to and engaged in the community, mainly in parks and public spaces. Discussions take place with young people about themed topics; to help to build trusted relationships with outreach workers and to help services to understand what concerns young people have about serious violence. Outreach workers are able to signpost young people to diversionary activities and support services in the area.

In Chesterfield, a shorter more intense project of outreach work is being delivered by Chesterfield Borough Council via Chesterfield Football Club Community Trust (CFCCT), which involves engaging with young people in and around Chesterfield Town Centre on a Thursday evening, complementing outreach work already taking place on other evenings. Outreach workers are able to signpost young people to The Hub, a youth provision run by CFCCT in the town centre, and other diversionary activities and support services.

Youth Justice Services

The Youth Justice Services in the City and County are also leading on delivery of a number of key initiatives.

In the City these include the following:

Real Direction Digital Platform

This digital platform was introduced to enhance engagement with children through realistic, relatable stories addressing issues such as knife crime, relationships, county lines, serious youth violence, and wider lived experiences. Following the positive impact observed over the initial period of the project, Derby's YJS has committed to a further two-year investment, reflecting confidence in the platform's ability to support meaningful engagement, reflection, and learning.

In October 2025, the YJS partnered with Real Direction to deliver a creative film production project that was devised, led, and shaped by children, with practitioners providing facilitative support throughout. The project aimed to give young people a safe and empowering platform to express their experiences, challenges, and aspirations through storytelling and filmmaking. The approach was deliberately child-centred, strengths-based, and participatory, ensuring young people were not passive recipients but active leaders in every stage of the process.

The young people led the entire creative journey, supported by Real Direction professionals who acted as facilitators rather than directors.

- **Story Development:**
The group brainstormed ideas collectively, drawing on lived experience, observation, and issues relevant to their lives. Together, they shaped the core themes and narrative of the film.
- **Synopsis and Scriptwriting:**
Working collaboratively with Real Direction, the young people developed the synopsis and script. Particular attention was given to:
 - Authentic language
 - Tone and phrasing
 - Realistic dialogue reflective of their lived realities

This process allowed young people to feel ownership of the story and confidence that it truly represented them.

- **Auditions and Casting:**
Auditions were held due to the competitive nature of the lead role. Throughout this process, young people demonstrated strong peer support — encouraging one another, celebrating effort, and managing disappointment constructively.

- Location Scouting:
Filming locations were selected and presented by the young people themselves, further reinforcing leadership, responsibility, and creative control.

Through participation, young people developed a wide range of transferable skills, including:

- Communication and expression
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Confidence and leadership
- Creative and media production skills
- Problem-solving and decision-making

Boys group

From February 2026 a six-week programme of delivery commenced as follows;

1. What is Healthy Masculinity?

This is delivered by Mental Roots who deliver youth workshops and projects which use original animation and other forms of creativity, to improve mental wellbeing and cultural representation for underrepresented communities. Mental Roots' focus is on (but not limited to) representing young people of African/Caribbean decent. This is to help address higher rates of severe mental health issues developing amongst black people.

The first workshop covers the following:

- What does culture say it means to be a 'real' man? What is helpful and what's harmful?
- Stats on men's confidence and wellbeing – how do we reverse this?
- What's a positive male role model? How can you become one? (developing skills)
- Healthy dynamics with females
- Creative activity and affirmations

2. Identity and Influence of Social Media

Delivered by Mental Roots and covers the following:

- What is your culture and how has this impacted your beliefs?
- What's your 'mask' and what's the real you? (worksheet/discussion)
- How does social media impact your view of self and the world?
- Sphere of influence – make peace with what you can/can't control
- Learning Six Pillars of Self-Esteem (beliefs, right and wrong)

3. Why Mental Wellbeing Matters

Delivered by Mental Roots and covers the following:

Mental health myth-busting

- Stigmas – why do they exist?
- Risk factors and protective factors (strength-based)
- Emotional regulation – stressors and safety
- Key MH terms: trauma, anxiety, depression, PTSD

- Men's mental health challenges
- How can YOU become an advocate for change? (presentation activity)

4. Safety in Communities

Delivered by StreetDoctors and covers the following:

- How to prevent violence in your neighborhood
- How to attend to a violent crime casualty

5. Types of Exploitation

Delivered by Safe and Sound and covers the following:

- What is criminal exploitation
- What is sexual exploitation
- Peer-on-peer safety
- Consent – what does it mean
- Identifying safe people and places

6. My Goals, My Future

Delivered by Mental Roots and covers the following:

- Reflection: what have you learned in the program?
- Principles of goal setting (e.g., S.M.A.R.T. goals)
- What are transferable skills? What careers could you apply yours to?
- Discussion/presentation on how YJS can support growth from young man to adult man

Knife crime prevention work with the National Justice Museum – Choices and Consequences

The Choices and Consequences exhibition was delivered in partnership by the Ben Kinsella Trust and the National Justice Museum in Nottingham, until 31/07/2025. The exhibition mirrors the ground-breaking prevention approach to combating knife crime pioneered by The Ben Kinsella Trust in Islington, London.

It tells the story of Ben Kinsella, who was tragically killed in 2008 aged just 16, and is a vehicle to encourage young people to think about the consequences of carrying a knife and the choices they can make to avoid becoming impacted by violence.

Themes covered;

- The dangers of carrying a knife
- The consequences of carrying and associating with those carrying knives
- The law and how it applies to knife crime cases
- The realities of prison life
- Making positive choices to stay safe
- Making safe decisions when it comes to good friends

The exhibition has ended, but the YJS continue the learning through StreetDoctors and support

from their wellbeing worker, who involves young people in outdoor activities such as fishing, football, rock climbing and hiking, to broaden their horizons and build confidence and trust.

In the County area, the Derbyshire Youth Justice Service are working on;

The Safe For Us approach

This approach is being used to intervene early with children with adverse childhood experiences. This enables practitioners to receive oversight on interventions from a Psychologist an early stage, meaning children get the help they need when they need it, not when it is too late.

Derbyshire County Council Leaving Care Service

The Leaving Care Service is offering an enhanced package of support for a group of care experienced young people transitioning to adulthood. This is therapeutically overseen by a Psychologist and combines enhanced practical and emotional support.

Derbyshire Constabulary

Derbyshire Constabulary have led on the local response to Operation Sceptre, which is a national police initiative in the UK aimed at tackling knife crime through a combination of enforcement, education, prevention and community engagement. This includes enhanced knife sweeps and patrol work in Erewash, working with a gym in Amber Valley to deliver diversionary activity to young people, and outreach workers patrolling alongside the Safer Neighbourhood Teams every Saturday evening in Chesterfield Town Centre.

Operation Zao is a force-wide long-term initiative which commenced on 1st December 2025 and has been launched to identify, monitor and disrupt individuals who habitually carry knives, reducing the risk of serious violence and safeguarding communities across Derby and Derbyshire.

The operation targets anyone who habitually carries knives or offensive weapons, through intelligence-led stop searches and educational home visits. Those found carrying knives face positive action, including arrest where appropriate. Young people will be referred to the Youth Justice Service for support and education. Officers will also encourage the surrender of weapons as part of the ongoing knife amnesty.

This operation aims to identify, monitor and disrupt these individuals through enforcement and prevention strategies.

Since the operation began, arrests have been carried out and positive engagements have taken place, with individuals being offered advice and access to diversion options.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner work

The Derbyshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office have led on work to implement the Young Futures Prevention Partnerships Panels pilot with Derbyshire Constabulary, the Youth Justice Services in Derby and Derbyshire and other partners. This government initiative is aimed at reducing serious youth violence, knife crime, anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls. The panels bring together professionals from different services to identify and support children and young people aged 10-17 who may be at risk of being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour. Focused on early intervention, the pilot will support children before they become involved in crime. Panels meet regularly to review referrals and agree support plans.