

OFFICE OF THE AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (OPCC)

**SPECIFICATION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANCY SUPPORT:
AVON AND SOMERSET VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT REVIEW**

APRIL 2023

Overview

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, on behalf of the Avon and Somerset Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), invites a proposal to undertake a review of the operation of the Avon and Somerset VRU.

The aim of the review is to provide recommendations on the future ways of working and roles and responsibilities to ensure the most efficient and effective approach to tackling and reducing serious violence across Avon and Somerset, in line with Home Office guidance.

We are looking for an individual or organisation with good knowledge and understanding of the roles and requirements of the Violence Reduction Units and the Serious Violence Duty in order to support the project requirements.

Background

Avon and Somerset were awarded funding in autumn 2019 from the Home Office to establish a Violence Reduction Unit to help embed the public health approach to violence reduction. It was agreed to create a 'hub and spoke' model – effectively devolving funding and responsibility for intervention and risk reduction approaches to the local authority level. The five spoke VRUs are: Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES), Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset and South Gloucestershire

The OPCC hub offers a central coordination function, in overseeing all 5 spokes, coordinating the Home Office grant allocation and ensuring that Avon and Somerset is working towards meeting the objectives of the public health approach to tackling serious violence.

Each local authority VRU has a dedicated coordinator who leads on local plans, working alongside this, is a dedicated Police team made up of PCSO's and police officers lead by a Sergeant in each area. All VRUs have used a multi-agency partnership approach, working closely with various services including their Local Authority, Social Care, Health, Education, Youth Justice, and Probation Services. Together these partnerships identify risk and vulnerability; in doing so they work to address the underlying causes of violent crime, deliver bespoke care plans, offer specialist interventions and/or work with the family or education service to ensure diversion is achieved.

This multi-agency approach is based on the findings of the [Developing a Serious Violence Strategy for Avon and Somerset Report \(PDF\)](#) which was the foundation for the A&S model.

Each local VRU is expected to produce its own individual Strategic Needs Assessment or Problem profile and Response Strategy or local plan. These strategies, along with other partner data, form an Avon and Somerset Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment which helps inform the direction of our work and ensure adherence to Home Office requirements.

In 2020-21 an [external evaluation](#) was conducted on the efficiency and effectiveness of the VRU hub and spoke model in Avon and Somerset. The evaluation concluded that it was an appropriate approach for Avon and Somerset, primarily due to the importance of enabling localised responses needed, to tackle serious violence across a geographically diverse area.

Scope of the Project

Since the introduction of the VRU in 2019 the model and ways of working have evolved as have the requirements of the Home Office. The initial intention was to devolve as much funding and responsibility to local VRU spokes as possible, in order to achieve a truly local response. Since that point increasing levels of prescription have come from the Home Office – including the need for centralised products, increased mandation on the types of interventions commissioned, the need for robust evaluation and the desire for a greater degree of consistency across Avon and Somerset. This has increased the demands on the hub and spokes at all levels. It has also created a level of potential confusion and overlap given the founding principles were a devolved approach with flexibility to develop local models and tailor local approaches according to the need. We are now at a point where we need to review the approach and agree longer term ways of working to ensure we maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

Work is currently taking place to ascertain the approach to the implementation of the new [serious violence duty](#) across Avon and Somerset. As far as possible the intention is to use the existing infrastructure already in place given the focus and mandates of the duty are similar to the VRU, in order to ensure a complimentary approach and avoid duplication. The VRU review will need to be cognisant of ongoing work on the duty and ensure appropriate liaison with those leading that work. Some of the recommendations coming from the VRU review are likely to have an impact on the approach taken to the duty. These interdependencies will be discussed in the set up phase.

Review Scope and Deliverables

- Key deliverable: **Outline and recommend the key functions and focus (operationally and strategically) of the Avon and Somerset VRU based on the guidance and best practice and recommend focus moving forwards**
- Reflect on the comparison of hub and spoke v other VRU models. What learning can we take from this to build into hub and spoke model where possible?

- Recommend what activity is undertaken centrally and what is done locally (and where input from both is required providing clarity on roles and responsibilities). To include strategic needs assessment, response strategy development, evaluation and communications
- To ascertain what skills (and roles) we need to deliver the above activity and functions
- Specifically consider whether a dedicated full time lead is required for the VRU – and if so what is this role (for example VRU Director), what are the key responsibilities and accountabilities and at what level should the role be pitched
- Review the role of the local VRU coordinators – are the current flexible arrangements suitable? Should there be a consistent role profile for the coordinators?
- Review the role of the Strategic VRU Board. Consider the most appropriate focus of the Board moving forwards
- To define lines of accountability and decision-making processes – which decisions are made where and by whom.
- Draft a clear MOU setting out roles and responsibilities - including recommending what activity is undertaken centrally and what is done locally

Timeline

There is a need to move at pace with this review and this will be discussed further with the successful bidder.

Deadline for proposals – Friday 21st April

Review of proposals and appointment of successful bidder – by Friday 28th April

Review and recommendation report complete – Friday 23rd June

Terms of Appointment and Funding

Funding

Funding to a maximum of **£20,000** is available for delivery of this review. Funding has been made available subject to the conditions set out below.

Reporting

Governance for delivery of the project will be provided by:

- Office of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (meetings on a fortnightly basis)
- Avon and Somerset Strategic Violence Reduction Unit – or a sub group thereof (meeting dates to be advised)

Payment

Payment for the project will either be in full at successful completion or in two instalments – one mid way through the project and one at the end.

Security

Vetting clearance is not anticipated to be required for this work. Details of the individual(s) who will be working on this review to be provided as part of the bid.

Your Proposal

Please provide your proposal to marc.hole@avonandsomerset.police.uk by **Friday 21st April**.

Your proposal should include the following:

- You proposed methodology for the delivery of the project.
- A detailed timeplan for delivery of the project.
- Full details of the personnel which will be used for the delivery of the project including details of their qualifications and past experience in delivering similar projects.
- A fixed price for delivery of the project, including a full breakdown of the day rates for each member of the project team and the number of days to be charged. The fixed price should include all travel and expenses.

Please direct enquiries to:

Marc Hole
Director of Policy and Partnerships
Marc.hole@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Charlotte Pritchard
Senior Policy and Commissioning Manager
Charlotte.pritchard2@avonandsomerset.police.uk