

26th April 2024

Ref: FOI744 CON-036153/RM

Sent via email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI744

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) office have now completed the search for the information which you requested on the 28th March 2024.

Your request:

I am writing to make an information request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I am interested in the following information:

1. Please confirm if the VRU has a detailed Theory of Change or Logic Model which underpins the Violence Reduction Programme. If yes, please provide:
 - a. A copy of the Theory of Change and/or Detailed Logic Model or a link to where the Theory of Change is published.
 - b. The date the Theory of Change was formally adopted by the VRU to underpin its Violence Reduction Programme.
 - c. A summary of how the Theory of Change and Logic Model was developed.
2. When commissioning services for delivery to the VRU programme, please confirm whether the VRU routinely requests details of the Theory of Change/Logic Models from proposed commissioned providers. If yes, please provide copies of the Theory of Change documents/evidence provided by the last three service providers commissioned by the VRU.
3. Please confirm how often the VRU's Theory of Change has been formally evaluated by the VRU since 2018. Please confirm the dates of any evaluation(s) and a copy of (or link to) any evaluation reports or supporting documents.

4. Please confirm the level of funding received from the Home Office to support VRU activity since 2018.
5. Please confirm the number of commissioned services procured by the VRU each year since 2018.
6. For each year since 2018, please confirm how many of these individual commissioned services have been evaluated by the VRU or independently, over and above any overarching evaluation of VRU performance itself.

Our response:

1. Yes

- a. A&S VRP TOC Dec23 v1_1 attached.
- b. This updated version was issued December 2023.
- c. In the first half of 2023, the Avon & Somerset VRP reviewed all aspects of its organisation, with independent support from Crest. We had a considered ready status for the Serious Violence Duty (which went live January 2023).

From this, a programme of work was identified in August 2023 to review and refresh the existing Theory of Change which had not been previously updated. This work was launched in September 2023 and concluded in December 2023. Applying the Deming cycle of plan, do, check, act, the main work consisted of:

- a. Plan: seek and collate current best practice on TOC/Logic model including HO Serious Violence guidance on TOC, HO commissioned workshops from Ecorys, reapplying material from Op Soteria Bluestone, seeking what exists with other VRU/VRPs, pulling TOC related guidance from HO/YEF/EIF and completing a literature review of other material available online.
- b. Do: Aware of the existing TOC, a simpler one was designed, focussing on the key areas of what to continue and what to improve that were identified in the above Crest review. This was an iterative process as the VRP Strategy was being created concurrently, plus we were looking ahead to how to introduce a new VRP Performance Framework.
- c. Check. Two approaches were taken. Firstly, we asked for independent scrutiny from Crest. Overall, they were positive on the design. The key recommendations they shared were, to more clearly stratify between People, Places, Partners; and upfront rigour checks on what is easily measurable (output) as opposed to longer-term/ requiring more qualitative approaches but ultimately focussing on the 'so-what' outcomes. The second approach was to engage with our various governance levels,

including our A&S VRP Delivery Group, local VRP leads and co-ordinators and data and performance specialists.

- d. Act. Based on findings from the above 3 activities, there were several iterations. The TOC was reviewed at Delivery Group in November, and with a few minor word changes, again to align with the strategy, it was issued in December.

2. The Avon & Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership (was Violence Reduction Unit until mid-2023) operates a Hub and Spoke model. The Hub issues funds to the five local Violence Reduction Partnerships (one per local authority area) who are then responsible for local activities, including the commissioning of interventions.

This approach enables us to select and implement approaches based on local understanding of need and what works. Under this model the Avon & Somerset VRP does not directly commission any interventions, this role is undertaken by the local VRPs.

The A&S VRP is continuing to evolve – with an enhanced focus on central strategic oversight. During 2023, we updated the reporting from the five local VRPs to include whether interventions had TOCs in place. Some TOC are in place but it varies across interventions and across local VRPs. We have not routinely requested details of TOC from the five local VRPs into the central Hub but this will be part of 2024/25 activity. We are currently developing a new Data and Evaluation Strategy for the Avon & Somerset VRP which will support the development and sharing of Theories of Change from within the local VRPs.

3. The Avon & Somerset VRP regional TOC had not been formally reviewed prior to the exercise undertaken in 2023.

4. The Home Office VRU Grant amounts for each year for the Avon & Somerset area are set out below:

2019/20 - £1,136,829
2020/21 - £1,156,170
2021/22 - £1,159,999
2022/23 - £2,042,646
2023/24 - £1,528,667

5. The central Avon & Somerset VRP does not directly commission any interventions, this role is undertaken by the five local VRPs.

Across the five local Violence Reduction Partnerships the total numbers are:

2020/21 – 30
2021/22 – 42
2022/23 – 34
2023/24 – 45

6. As explained above, the Avon & Somerset Violence Reduction Partnership operates a Hub and Spoke model. The central Avon & Somerset VRP does not directly commission any interventions, this role is undertaken by the five local VRPs. The local VRPs have carried out evaluations of some of the interventions but we do not hold record for the total number of local evaluations per year.

In terms of evaluations carried out by the Avon & Somerset VRP Hub (was VRU Hub), Cordis Bright were commissioned to review education inclusion projects within the area. This evaluation concluded in July 2022. For the financial years 2023-2024 and 2024-25, the Avon & Somerset VRP have commissioned Crest to provide evaluation. Having completed an initial feasibility study, they are process reviewing interventions related to mentoring. This evaluation is ongoing and will report in 2025.

We are continuing to develop the strength of the partnership, to incorporate good practices on organisational maturity (ref CMMI). As part of this we are creating a A&S Data and Evaluation Strategy, due June 2024. One strand in this is to set the standard for what good looks like for local evaluation, pulling heavily from learning in the National Learning and Evaluation Network, which our Senior Evaluation and Impact Lead co-chairs, and from other learning opportunities e.g. the YEF Cafes on what exists elsewhere.

If you have any queries about this letter then please contact me, quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy about how your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of the decision then you should write to:

The Chief Of Staff
Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's Office
Valley Road
Portishead
Bristol
BS20 8JJ

Please note, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's office provides you with the right to request a re-examination of your case under its review procedure. The appeals document is attached for your reference.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner's office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <http://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Officer

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioners Office