Violence Reduction Partnership Proposal

Phase 1: Qualitative primary data collection

Ethics Committee (13th September 2023)

> This project is at the proposal stage and is presented to the committee 'in principle' so that any immediate concerns can be raised.
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> This phase being presented to the committee is part of a bigger transition to have Violence Reduction Partnerships' data collection and management gaining ethical oversight through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Ethics Committee.
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> For the purpose of this phase, an example qualitative project has been used as a reference for the type of work that may be carried out upon approval.
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> A legal consultation has not yet been processed but is being considered. A DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment) can be conducted by the OPCC DPO (Data Protection Officer) to support the proposal if considered necessary by the committee board.

Tasking

In the January 2023 Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) strategic board meeting, board members highlighted the importance of community consultation and the lack of formal qualitative data collection taking place across the region. Members asked for the VRP to consider ways in which this could be explored, the benefits this would have for measuring VRP success, and enhancing insights through research and data. This request was then supported by the new Director of VRP in July 2023 as a key priority in the next financial year.

The aim of this phase of the project is to use the Violence Reduction Partnership skills and staff to develop resources of qualitative data that can be used by partners and organisations across the region to better understand and implement the public health approach to violence.

This will then feed into the wider aspirations to improve data sharing and the potential for a cloud-based system to support this enhancement.

Purpose

The purpose of conducting in depth primary data collection is to principally improve qualitative data on violence in the region.

Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data has the ability, to explore the "why" around violence crime which is crucial insight for organisations who are operating under a public health approach, focused on addressing and exploring the underlying drivers of violence and implementing preventative approaches.

It can also give a voice to those in communities who are most acutely affected by serious violence in ways static numerical data sets cannot.

Context

In the West Midlands, whilst data and evidence are used in strategic decision-making for tackling violence, the resource basis for qualitative data is low.

Across several organisations under the Serious Violence Duty, it has been highlighted that whilst overall data sharing and quality is one consideration for improvement, there is a distinct lack of community consultation and feedback which can uncover the 'dark figure' of crime[1]. Whilst there have been several evaluative pieces commissioned by the VRP to universities and research groups, these pieces focus on the impact of specific interventions instead of on overall trends or types of violence.

In addition, in the 2022 Home Office statutory guidance paper on the Serious Violence Duty, it stated that the duty is to be implemented under the WHO definition of the public health approach:

"With and for communities; localities will be required to embed the voices and lived experiences of the communities they serve in their Serious Violence Duty-related activity. Both the SNA and local strategy should reflect the voices and lived experiences of the communities they intend to support"

Intended activity resulting from the project

Once approval has been given by the ethics committee, we intend to undertake more in-depth qualitative data collection projects.

To date, the VRP have conducted three surveys, primarily focused on generally feelings of safety and perceptions on violence. However, these surveys have not conducted data collection from under 18s or collected personal data.

And so, the VRP are seeking advice on procedure and best practice for data collection with under 18s and personal data collection through methods such as focus groups, surveys and case study reviews.

The reason we believe it would be beneficial to collection data from under 18's is due to our Home Office requirement to focus on violence that particularly affects under 25s. Without being able to collect data from under 18's, there is a large proportion of that cohort that we cannot consult and gain insight from. And so, whilst we acknowledge that data collection from under 18 participants will require additional measures to ensure understanding and consent but we believe it is necessary and appropriate to be able to explore youth voice as part of our future data collections to enhance our understanding of violence amongst this age group.

Additionally, the reason we wish to explore the collection of personal data, is to enhance the type and depth of analysis we can conduct as this would enrich the findings of these projects. To date, we have done analysis with non-identifying demographic information from participants to explore the experiences, thoughts and perceptions of particular groups. However, by enhancing that demographic information with narrower cohorts that information becomes personal data as it may be identifiable. We acknowledge that additional measures will be taken to ensure the security and management of this data

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[1] "The dark figure of crime is crime that is neither reported nor recorded by law enforcement agencies" *Penney, T. L. (2014). Dark figure of crime (problems of estimation). The encyclopaedia of criminology and criminal justice, 1-6.*

and additional consent will be sought. However, for the purpose of gaining a richer insight into cohorts most affected by violence and implementing this information into commissioning decision there is a public good cause for this collection which makes it necessary and appropriate.

Ethical Considerations

Psychological impact on participants

Context:

Asking questions pertaining to violence may be triggering for certain participants. Research may be reaching a cohort who have personal experiences of violence that may mean discussion about violence is distressing.

Proposed solution:

We would navigate and anticipate the nature of the discussion and what elements may be triggering. We could work with our evaluation team and/or our commissioned psychological support staff to assess the proposed discussion and questions. We would then draft an appropriate warning for participants with a thorough participant information sheet, and signpost resources and follow our safeguarding procedures where needed.

Disclosures

Context:

We plan for future projects, the focus groups and interviews will be semi-structured in nature to allow for participants to contribute insight outside of the question structure, which could lead to richer information. However, we acknowledge that at that stage of data collection and/or after data collection, a disclosure can occur. A disclosure in this instance would be reporting of what could be a crime or safeguarding concern relating to themselves or someone they know or the sharing of personal information outside of the scope of the data collection parameters.

Proposed solution:

We would navigate this consideration by deciding, before data collection, a system by which disclosures can be managed if they do occur. This would include working with our WMP colleagues to create a procedure around admissions of potential crimes. There would also be a disclaimer and follow up explanation of the disclaimer by the researchers to advise participants on what disclosures are and the liabilities around disclosing, allowing for participants to be fully informed.

Under 18 participants:

Context:

We hope to conduct projects which involve participants who are under 18 years old. Under 18's can be classified as children and young people and we would be exploring topics around crime, faith, safety, drivers of violence and community engagement.

Proposed solution:

We acknowledge there are additional GDPR and research procedure considerations to take into account when collecting data from under 18s. And so, we will be seeking informed consent from legal parents and guardians before any direct data collections. We will also be creating participant information sheets for both parents and young people so there is clear understanding of the research project. We will also be creating a bespoke guidance and materials for the collection itself and we recognise these topics may be more inaccessible for a under 18 participants than an adult participant and so we will be working with education experts to ensure that these materials are using appropriate terminology and comprehension levels.

<u>Personal data collection</u>

Context:

For future projects we wish to explore the collection of personal data from participants. This in the context of our projects, would mean using narrower, selected cohorts of participants. We may also be asking personal demographic questions as part of our data collection e.g. a postcode for geospatial mapping analysis or what school or university they may go to.

Proposed solution:

For each project we will outline in the proposal how data will be managed, stored and used. This will then be given to our designated DPO (Data Protection Officer) who will conduct a DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment). We will ensure that we follow all legal requirement around the holding of this information and have clarity with the participant on this. We will also ensure high levels of anonymity and confidentiality where possible so that where personal data is collection, it is only done so when necessary for the project.

Data

Data to be used: Primary qualitative data
Reliability of data: Reliable - sourced from participants in a relevant cohort. Some information may be factually inaccurate or some information may not be shared to researchers, this will be taken into consideration and data will be cleansed before analysis. **Sample or entirety:** Entirety
Type of analysis: ☑ Exploratory ☐ Explanatory ☐ Predictive ☐ Optimisation ☐ Dashboard **Proposed methods:** Focus groups, Surveys, Interviews, Case study reviews, Literature reviews. **Proposed methodology:** Grounded theory (an explorative theory that develops structure based on the results of the study and the insight provided by participants). Discourse theory (another explorative theory that analysis commentary and written evidence such as case studies and academic research to understand the current state of research on a chosen topic from past to present).
Will the project eventually be automated?

☐Yes
☐No

Semi-automated – surveys maybe automated in collection but focus groups and interviews will be conducted by a researcher or analyst.

Means of evaluation:

Not applicable – no explanatory or predictive element to this project.