



NPCC National Homicide Prevention Strategy

A photograph showing a white car with a 'POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS' tape stretched across it. The tape is white with blue borders and blue text. The background is a blurred library or office setting with bookshelves.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS



College of
Policing

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Foreword



Chief Constable
Alan Pughsley QPM



The loss of life through homicide has a devastating impact, shattering families, affecting local communities, increasing the fear of crime, and challenging the trust and confidence that the public have in policing.

Offences of homicide can be varied in their nature and are ultimately the most tragic ending to a broad range of criminal offences, types or behaviours. These crimes include but are not limited to domestic abuse, knife crime, drug-related crime and serious violence. Policing and its partners have a fundamental role to play in the prevention of homicide through the development of strategies and plans, and the employment of effective activity designed to tackle the drivers and criminality that lead to homicide to create safer environments and reduce risks within both public and private spaces.

In July 2021, the government published the [Beating crime plan](#), which places an absolute focus on homicide. The Prime Minister, the Policing Minister and all of policing are intent on reducing homicide rates in our communities. Policing is fully committed to this and is absolutely focused on its mission to tackle all forms of criminal behaviour and activity that can, and does, lead to homicide – indeed the protection of life is one of our central priorities.

It is important to remember that the prevention of homicide requires a whole-system approach. Therefore, the approach to homicide prevention will be developed collaboratively by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the College of Policing, the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, National Crime Agency, academia and, of course, policing colleagues from around the UK.

The NPCC Crime Co-ordination Committee has a key role in supporting policing in preventing homicides with a consistent approach from policing and partners in this regard.

In developing this strategy, we will also seek to enhance and develop a more precise request of established and wider partners to support and evolve the public health approach, offering further ranging interventions and prevention methodology.

Everyone deserves to feel safe. Policing is intent on improving that feeling of safety to the public and provide confidence that we, other agencies and our partners are focused with our collective efforts to combat this highly impactful crime.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Pughsley'.

Chief Constable Alan Pughsley QPM
NPCC National Crime Co-ordination Committee Chair

Introduction

Homicide rates across the UK are increasing. Figures have fluctuated, with data suggesting that the coronavirus pandemic may have impacted on the number of homicides with a drop in 2020, but figures rose steadily again in 2021. This suggests that the number of homicides being committed each year is rising again¹.

Calendar year	Number of homicides
2019	683
2020	604
2021	691

Homicide cases will always be unique as they are the culmination of different criminal behaviour, acts or drivers, with the most common being domestic abuse, knife crime, drugs, serious violence and alcohol. If we are to be successful in tackling homicide, then policing and partnership activity must be focused on tackling the causes and drivers that lead to homicide.

As such, this strategy sets out the development of a National Homicide Prevention Framework, which will be housed within a single, easily accessible, location on the College of Policing website. The framework will be underpinned or based on the best available evidence and will support forces to analyse and understand their problems, develop and implement effective interventions and tactics and identify where partnership support is needed. This iterative framework will be used by forces to evolve and enhance their existing local arrangements in a way that is tailored and relevant to the nuances of their policing areas.

Policing cannot do this on its own. The tackling of homicide and the criminal behaviours and acts leading to homicide require a public health approach. This means pivoting the whole system, whether that be education, primary care, social care, local government, wider industry

¹ Office for National Statistics – Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2021

or academia to work in collaboration with policing through shared responses, joint initiatives, shared use of data and effective partnerships to tackle the causes and drivers of homicide.

The development of this framework will be iterative and predicated on the development, testing and sharing of innovative approaches by policing, partners, wider agencies and ultimately a wider system approach to create a cycle of progression. This will involve the periodic capturing of good practice, new research and 'what works'. This practice and research will be subject to assessment, shared with partners and accessible by policing. Together with partners and agencies, policing can then build, offer insight and innovate – the steps within the process leading to a cycle that can be repeated and revisited.

This is not about waiting for a framework to be built – we are all part of building it.



Our approach

Our mission is to prevent homicides by tackling the causes and drivers of homicide.

Our approach is to capture, assess and collate good practice, academic research and key strategic approaches that are being progressed now with a view to:

- developing a prevention framework for homicide founded on ‘what works’ and supported by tried and tested toolkits
- identifying evolving work and innovation that can be accelerated
- identifying gaps and develop solutions
- creating further insight as to how a public health approach can be enhanced and/or evolved

By a public health approach, we mean an approach that:

- focuses on the needs of the public, or population groups, involving interventions delivered at population level and targeting resources effectively through increased understanding of the population
- looks at the causes of the causes (often known as ‘social determinants’ or ‘structural factors’) such as housing, education, financial status and whether this may make individuals more or less likely to be a victim of or a perpetrator of crime
- interprets and analyses data, evidence and outcomes to create effective interventions
- engages with partnerships, communities and systems to incorporate the most relevant and effective mechanisms and levers to the intervention approaches

The public health approach is underpinned by the idea that prevention is better than cure. There are three prevention categories in line with the National Policing Preventative Strategy that we will align to.

Primary prevention	Prevent or minimise the risk of harm to individuals through a focus on large populations, for example a public health approach.
Secondary prevention	Target those individuals at high risk of offending, to divert them from involvement, for example an early intervention approach.
Tertiary prevention	Reduce or prevent existing reoccurring problems by tackling the vulnerability of the victim or location, or reducing the motivation of the offender to readdress the situation, for example problem solving and community engagement.

The Homicide Prevention Framework will be formed of:

- fundamental strategies that will have a clear impact on the drivers and causes of homicide
- the establishment of ‘areas of focus’ to tackle criminality that will reduce the drivers of homicide. These will be founded in ‘what works’, methodology, academia and innovation
- good practice toolkits that forces can use to develop their strategies and activity in respect of the ‘areas of focus’, based on what works and promising practice, which will be available for forces to access based on their particular needs

The framework will be iterative and regularly updated to ensure that forces have access to information based on current trends, the latest innovation and tried and tested methodology.

Our approach

Methodology

The pathfinder work, which will form the first Homicide Prevention Framework, is being undertaken in collaboration with policing, the College of Policing and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and will be split into five key phases, creating a cycle that can be reviewed every 18-24 months.

Phase 1

Scoping to understand the current landscape

Engagement with forces, partners and relevant National Police Chiefs' Council portfolios to understand the current good practice activity in relation to homicide prevention.

Phase 2

Problem identification

The development of a national homicide strategic problem profile by the College of Policing.

Phase 3

Development of the Homicide Prevention Framework

This phase will be used to

- collate and develop the good practice, 'what works' and toolkits
- identify innovation that can be accelerated
- identify the gaps between the totality of policing activity and strategic profile findings

The framework, set out on page eight of this document, identifies key strategies and areas of focus that we are already aware have an influence on homicide. We will use the analytical and academic work described in Phase 2 to develop more 'areas of focus', enablers and 'what works' to inform the overall framework.

Phase 4

Establishment of the Homicide Prevention Framework

The framework will be hosted by the College of Policing, facilitating a single, accessible platform which can be reviewed and updated with relevant materials and trends. This framework will evolve with ongoing analysis and a refresh of the phases periodically incorporating further strategies, areas of focus, priorities, enablers and 'what works' as we identify them.

Phase 5

Accountability and the wider system

Accountability arrangements will be created, analysis and data sets will be developed and scrutiny and accountability arrangements of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioners will be devised.

This phase will also seek to develop insight into the enhancement of a wider public health approach based on the understanding of Phases 1 to 4. The wider use of big data, joint intervention opportunities and the role of other departments and agencies can be better defined and considered with the insight from the preceding phases.

Strategic objectives

We will develop a comprehensive national framework, achieved by focusing on the following key objectives.

Prevention activity developed in line with a public health approach

In line with the National Policing Preventative Strategy, we will ensure that identified good practice, strategies and 'what works' are categorised by primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

Establishment of an effective data set that supports analytical interrogation

We will work with the Home Office, College of Policing, National Police Chiefs' Council Strategic Hub, policing and analytical teams to establish effective analysis metrics and methodology that can be used to inform activity and understand trends.

Development of a detailed understanding of the drivers, trends and root causes of homicide

We will interrogate the analytical and academic work undertaken to establish the drivers, trends and root causes of homicide.

Creation and aligning of easy-to-use toolkits to tackle the crimes that lead to homicide

Working closely with the College of Policing, we will develop a series of toolkits that policing can use to enhance its strategies to prevent and focus on areas of criminality to tackle homicide.

A whole-system partnership approach where everyone is focused on the key drivers that have the greatest impact

We will engage with partners and encourage local arrangements in forces to ensure that the response to homicide remains a multi-agency whole-system commitment. We will seek to identify further insight as to how we can further support and evolve a more sophisticated public health approach.

Utilisation of academia to support policing

We will coordinate and support relevant academic work in relation to homicide to publish within our framework.

Mechanisms to quickly identify new and emerging scalable opportunities to prevent homicide

Our phased approach for homicide prevention allows for review, reassessment and refresh at key periodic times, ensuring that the materials published remain relevant to current trends.

Recognition that our homicide approach will need to be consistent with future smarter system arrangements

We will ensure that our approach provides continuity against other workstreams. We will encourage the use of the framework as a way for future relevant work to be published or linked to maintain easy access.

Remain cognisant and aligned to the Race Action Plan and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

We recognise that cases of homicide and some prevention methods may disproportionately impact specific communities. An equality impact assessment will be completed alongside the build of our framework and against the practices we seek to include.

Homicide Prevention Framework (illustrative)

Themes			
Serious violence	Drugs	Vulnerability	Domestic abuse

Areas of focus			
Knife crime	Offender management	Night time economy	Mental health
Alcohol	Child protection	Youth violence	Threat to life
Safeguarding	Gang	County lines	Gun crime

Toolkit/what works			
Violence reduction unit	Safer streets	Problem solving	Post homicide reviews
Electronic monitoring	Hot spot policing	Vulnerability identification	Risk identification
Safeguarding	A&E Navigators	Op Orochi	Analytics
Crime reduction toolkit	Big data	Youth endowment fund	

The framework will be built iteratively and adapted as progress takes place to incorporate newly identified approaches to tackle homicide, allowing for continuous development to ensure that the data and information in the framework is relevant and contemporary to support forces to prevent homicide.

The framework will be developed across three levels:

- (1) themes
- (2) areas of focus
- (3) toolkits based on what works methodology.

The themes will be based on the key drivers that lead to homicide.

The areas of focus will be those that, if tackled effectively, would have the greatest impact on homicide.

The toolkits will be used by forces to inform the activity in the areas of focus.

Appendices

[Appendix A - National Policing Crime Prevention Strategy](#)

[Appendix B - Beating crime plan](#)