

18th February 2022

Violence Reduction Unit Funding (sent by email)

Dear Becky and Charlene,

We are writing to you to inform you of the Home Office funding settlement for the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) initiative. As you will know we have received a 3 year settlement which for Avon and Somerset is as follows;

Funding allocation	Difference on previous (£1,160,000)
22/23 – £2,042,762	+£882,762
23/24 - £1,528,667	+£368,667
24/25 - £1,512,572	+£352,572

This is a great settlement for the local area and we hope you agree that it offers an ability to build upon the strong foundation that has been created already and will enable us to continue to sustain our approach to tackling serious violence.

It will not go un-noticed that there is significant uplift to the annual grant amount. The Home Office inform us that this uplift reflects the two intervention projects that's were funded separately in 21/22; the teachable moments Education Inclusion project and the Trauma Informed Training. We must therefore consider this in our approach to allocation.

The central OPCC VRU team have been working to develop a proposal on how the 3 year settlement should be allocated. It must be noted there is still detail that the Home Office are yet to commit to and share in terms of their expectations, mandates and requests around the use of the grant. Consequently, at this stage any proposal is very much in draft and based on the detail we know at this point. The detail that needs refining as part of the proposal relates to the Ministerial ambitions that were presented at the last Strategic VRU Board, with these in mind the OPCC would like to give prioritisation to the following areas going into the next 3 years; impact and evaluation, commissioning of interventions, community engagement, communications/awareness, data sharing and operational spoke development. It is likely we may need to amend some of our thinking once we hear from Home Office officials.

A new feature of the funding opportunity is a mandated request that we achieve a level of match funding each year, this can be either cash or in-kind resource. The below table sets out the value that we must achieve in match funding;

22/23	10% of £1,160,000	£116,000 *
23/24	15% of £1,160,000	£174,000
24/25	20% of £1,160,000	£232,000

*For year one we are certain that we can meet the match funding of £116,000 through roles that are dedicated to VRU work that are not funded through the Home office grant. In the main this will be OPCC roles and Police VRU roles (collectively amounting to over £1,000,000), therefore we do not expect local VRUs to seek match funding at this point in time. However our intention is to explore opportunities for new contributions and collaborations so to meet future match funding of the lifespan of the settlement. In addition, where partners feel there is opportunity to reflect on other additional resource that is committed to the VRU or Serious Violence agenda which can be reflected to the Home Office as part of the bid, we would also be keen to include this added value.

1.1 Local allocations

The OPCC would like to propose that over the 3 year settlement local VRU spokes will receive as a minimum, allocations divided over £1.16 million (in line with previous rounds of funding). This of course is subject to any changes made or required by the Home Office and any learning throughout the course of the allocation period that leads us to revise our approach. For **22/23**, in using the same formula (serious violent crime Vs population size), the core local allocations are as follows;

Local Authority area	Core allocation
Banes	£112,503
Bristol	£389,947
North Somerset	£136,178
Somerset	£365,582
South Gloucestershire	£155,790
Total	£1,160,000

1.2 Local allocation uplift proposal for 22/23

With an uplift to the overall annual grant allocation we have considered how we can best maximise impact locally. We are proposing that each local VRU spoke will receive an uplift to continue their Education Inclusion project or where this is already funded as part of the core grant, the use of the uplift is set against Early Help approaches. The second part of the proposal is that each local VRU spoke will be awarded an uplift to increase admin or business support, so to enable resilience and capacity building for monitoring and reporting purposes. The proposed allocations are as follows;

Local Authority area	Education Inclusion/Early Help allocation*	Admin/Business support allocation**
Banes	£45,583	£20,000
Bristol	£157,996	£20,000
North Somerset	£55,176	£20,000
Somerset	£148,124	£20,000
South Gloucestershire	£63,122	£20,000
Total	£470,000	£100,000

*these allocations have been calculated utilising a similar total value (excluding evaluation costs) 21/22 for the delivery of the project, processed through the same formula as the core grant. We feel this is reflective of the allocations that local areas received for the project in 21/22. It is recognised that 21/22 was for 6 months delivery and the 22/23 allocation is for 12 months, however we would encourage VRU spokes to seek additional contributions from Education leads to uplift the project where required.

**an equal allocation for admin/business support has been considered as fair, given the same level of requests are being made of each VRU spoke where monitoring and reporting is concerned.

NB: As the funding allocation reduces over years 2 and 3, we would not be committing to the 22/23 local uplifts into 23/24 and 24/25. Therefore where this level of funding is required to sustain established roles or projects VRU spokes will need to identify mechanisms to make these sustainable beyond 23/24

1.3 Overall total local allocations for 22/23

Local Authority area	Total local allocation
Banes	£178,086
Bristol	£567,943
North Somerset	£211,354
Somerset	£533,706
South Gloucestershire	£238,912
Total	£1,730,000

2.1 Central grant retention

To date, none of the Home Office allocation has been utilised to support any of the central work of the VRU, despite the very significant workload this has created (increasing year on year). As such we propose to retain circa 15% of the grant to utilise for both OPCC staffing dedicated to the VRU strategic delivery (circa 10%) and to support enabling some of the central system change work (circa 5%). The detail of how the central system change funds

could be used is to be defined and something we would like to work with VRUs and the Board in agreeing.

Below is a summary of the proposed central retention and thoughts as to how we would like to use this;

OPCC resource	Allocation
Evaluation and Impact lead (Inc. evaluation budget) <i>We see this role leading on the centrally held monitoring framework, supporting and enabling VRUs to robustly evidence their impact and reach. The role would also work closely with VRUs and their providers to enable locally led evaluation and to upskill statutory and 3rd sector partners in embedding a culture of evaluation. The role could also retain a function on centrally led independent evaluation of interventions and VRU approaches.</i>	Circa £150,000; £60-70,000 role cost (with on costs) £60-70,000 central evaluation resource
Admin/business support <i>With increasing demands and scope set against the VRU landscape, the OPCC require additional support to free up capacity so to enable delivery of strategic priority focused work.</i>	Circa £40,000 role cost (with on costs)
Investment in OPCC dedicated Communications resource <i>The central VRU team have had no dedicated comms resource which has significantly impacted opportunities around consultation, awareness raising, branding and engagement. This would aim to overcome these gaps. We would envisage this resource working closely with VRU spokes to support joint comms approaches.</i>	Circa £20,000
Total OPCC investment from Home Office grant	£210,000
Central systems change work ideas	Total remaining 22/23 funding to consider: £102,762
Investment in data <i>This maybe a review of the VRU App or invest in an alternate product to support sophisticated data sharing.</i>	
Investment in trauma informed training/approaches	
Investment in small grants <i>For example PCC community small grants/WeSport/SASP</i>	

2.2 Central retention intentions

Our intention is that any additional OPCC staff roles will be initially recruited on a one year fixed term contract in order to enable us review performance and consider the success of the intended outcomes. If it were deemed these roles being a positive attribute to the central VRU team, we would look to continue to retain these funds from the Home Office grant centrally in years 2 and 3.

The central system change work will only be one year funding and any continuation for agreed work stream investment will need to come from other funding sources. This could be an area where future match funding benefits from.

3. An opportunity to discuss

The 3 year settlement has brought a lot of opportunities and consequently scope to change how we operate. Therefore we would like to work with you on this proposal and have open discussion about the challenges or opportunities that this presents us all with.

We therefore propose a workshop style meeting on **10th March 2022 11.30-1pm** (meeting invite to follow) where we will invite VRU spoke representatives and VRU Strategic Board Members. Our intention is to provide the other core Board members with a summary briefing for the content of this letter.

We would also like to use this meeting to reflect on the Strategic Needs Assessment and consider how we collectively wish to review and carry forward the priority recommendations.

4. Home Office timeline

We have not received any confirmed timeline for the VRU bidding process, but it has been suggested that it should land in late February/early March. As such it seems likely that as in previous years we will not receive formal confirmation of the funds until into the new financial year. We appreciate this is far from ideal and have fed this back to the Home Office. However based on previous experience and the clear commitment of government to the VRU model we feel the risk is low and are keen to work with you to ensure there is no adverse impact to local work and delivery.

Thank you for your hard work to date and the dedication, leadership and expertise that you all bring to this vital area of business. We continue to be impressed by the achievement of the VRU spokes on a day to day basis and we hope that this proposal reflects how much we value what you are doing but equally how much we want to continue to develop the Avon and Somerset VRU response over the next 3 years. We look forward to discussing this with you, please do get in touch if you would to share any early thoughts.

Kind regards,

Marc Hole; OPCC lead - VRU Strategic Board & **Charlotte Pritchard**; OPCC Central VRU Lead

