

# Scottish Violence Reduction Unit Five-Year Strategic Plan

## Vision: A safer Scotland for all

At the SVRU we believe violence is preventable, not inevitable. Our vision for Scotland is ambitious but achievable:

Together we can make Scotland the safest country to live in the world.

## The journey so far:

In 2004/05 Scotland was branded the most violent country in the developed world with 137 victims of homicide. It was against this backdrop the SVRU, with its public health approach to violence, was set up with the remit to 'do something different'.

## Where are we now?

Scotland currently has one of the lowest numbers of recorded homicide cases for a single year since 1976. Between 2010/11 and 2019/20 there's been a 35% reduction in homicides, with Glasgow city accounting for 41% of that fall.



**Challenges:** The big decreases in non-sexual violence initially seen have now levelled off with the number of homicides in Scotland remaining relatively stable recently. There have been between 59 and 64 homicide cases recorded each year since 2012/13. COVID-19 will undoubtedly have an impact upon violence in Scotland, which will require an evidence-based response.

**Opportunities:** Scotland is a world-leader in the public health approach to violence with England and Wales recently setting up Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) which we can now benefit from by sharing knowledge of what does and doesn't work. The pandemic has also created a renewed appreciation for public health work.



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## How will the SVRU work to make Scotland safer?

As members of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA) the SVRU remain committed to a public health approach to reducing violence. This approach seeks to improve the health and safety of everyone by addressing the underlying risk factors that increase the chance someone will become either a victim or perpetrator of violence. Based on this model the SVRU will take six actions for a safer Scotland for all:

**01 Better use of data**  
The SVRU is committed to working with partners across Scotland to identify opportunities to share and analyse data with the aim of identifying opportunities to enhance the safety and wellbeing of Scots, while protecting the rights and individual liberties of all.

“ This framework will be the first of its kind. ”

**02 Addressing the vulnerabilities**  
The SVRU is committed to addressing the factors which make people and communities more vulnerable to violence. By using best evidence and innovative approaches we will identify what works and demonstrate how this can be adapted and expanded across Scotland.

**03 Place-led approach**  
The SVRU is committed to creating, testing and evaluating evidence-based, place-led approaches which work with communities to improve life in their area. We will do so by taking a holistic look at the needs of those communities to make their area a safe and healthy place to live, grow and work.

**04 Expanding the delivery**  
The SVRU is committed to increasing the reach of delivery across the country by working with local partners to develop regional centres or hubs that will look to address the specific needs of the local communities.

**05 Thought leadership**  
The SVRU is committed to constantly seeking out innovative evidence-based solutions to violence and sharing our knowledge of what does and doesn't work with all those individuals, organisations and institutions who may benefit from that information. We will seek out new ways of doing this to overcome any restrictions brought by the pandemic.

**06 Joining the dots**  
In partnership with all those involved in tackling violence and its many drivers the SVRU will develop a single strategic framework for Scotland. This framework will be the first of its kind.