

Using data-driven policing to reduce violence across England and Wales

Published on 27 March 2025

Addressing serious violence through hot spots policing

Listicle

Research shows that targeting problem-solving efforts in serious violence hot spots effectively reduces crime. Accurately identifying these crime hot spots helps direct resources to the right places.

Over the past three years, the College of Policing and University College London (UCL) have run the Serious Violence Problem-Solving Learning Programme (SVPSLP).

The programme has provided extensive training to all forces across England and Wales. It equips police analysts with the skills to identify hot spot areas and understand the underlying reasons for crime. Training to support police practitioners to carry out problem-solving activity in hotspots was also delivered.

Sharing progress

In February, forces gathered to share their progress and build on the success to date. West Midlands reported that their problem-solving team, Operation Fearless, works with partners to address crime and anti-social behaviour. This has resulted in over 100 arrests and the recovery of over £1.5m of illicit goods.

Since April 2024, serious violence in Merseyside has fallen by 48.6% within the 25 hotspots areas.

Success factors include:

- structured 30-minute patrols
- a dedicated problem-oriented policing (POP) team
- community feedback using QR codes.

Their Mathew Street initiative showcases effective partnership working, with improvements to lighting, CCTV, and security, leading to purple flag status for night-time safety.

Support from the College

As part of the programme, the College has produced the guidance [problem solving violent crime: a guide for analysts](#) to support forces to implement problem-solving strategies for serious violence.

This includes:

- a range of practical tools and techniques to help improve understanding and respond to problems involving violence
- key concepts and theories proven useful when applying a problem-solving approach to reducing violence

Online resources

The College offers a variety of online resources to support forces to implement problem-solving strategies:

- [serious violence hot spots policing guide](#)
- [effective implementation of problem-oriented policing](#)
- [problem-solving policing](#)
- [knife crime – a problem-solving guide](#)
- [homicide problem-solving guide](#)

You can also access our [practice bank](#) to find and share practice with organisations on problem solving.

Tags

Evidence-based policing