



Title: Lancashire Violence Reduction Network: Trauma-Informed Programmes

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Introduction and aims

The Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN) is a network of multi-agency partners and specialists working together to implement a Public Health approach (PHA) to tackle violence and its root causes. The LVRN is made up of team members from health, education, police services, youth offending and probation services, community safety partnerships, local government and social care. A key aim of the LVRN is to support Lancashire to be a ‘trauma-informed county’ and to embed trauma-informed (TI) practice within their workforce and partnership organisations. The aim of TI practice is to ensure practitioners are informed and skilled in recognising the wide impact of trauma on the causes and effects of violent behaviour and to prevent the re-traumatisation of clients.

As part of this approach to embed TI practice, the LVRN has commissioned four programmes of work (please see table below).

Adult DIVERT	A police custody intervention programme, in partnership with local football community trusts, that helps to reduce reoffending in young adults aged 18-25 who have been detained for violence.
Emergency Department (ED) Navigators	A scheme which helps people to access support services. ED navigators look to talk to young people who attend hospital with violence related injuries and who feel they are living in difficult or dangerous situations and feel anxious for their own safety.
Trauma-informed Education	A scheme which seeks to increase resilience in children and young people, reduce exclusion rates, increase attendance, and raise attainment.
Trauma-informed Training & Workforce Development	A scheme which focuses on developing the TI skills-base of professionals.

The evaluation was conducted by ARC-NWC Equitable Place-based Health and Care theme (EPHC). The evaluation aims were:



- To explore the extent to which staff from LVRN and partner organisations understand and implement TI approaches and to identify training needs.
- To explore how TI approaches support LVRN clients
- To explore how data collection systems can be developed and improved to support sustainable, long-term evaluation that result in improvements to LVRN service delivery.

Methods:

11 interviews, 1 paired interview and 7 focus groups were conducted with a total of 52 participants.

Participants included:



- DIVERT coaches (7);
- Football community trust managers (7);
- Police custody staff (8);
- ED navigators (3);
- School staff, including leaders, pastoral and classroom staff (20) and;
- Professionals who had attended LVRN Leaders and Managers training (7).

Participants were asked to reflect on their understanding of working in TI ways, the use of TI approaches and how such approaches could be evaluated in the future.



Findings

There is a good understanding of TI approaches and evidence of implementation in all programmes of work. Participants reflected that the TI approach encouraged those working with traumatised individuals and groups to look beyond presenting issues and behaviours to try and understand factors that might be contributing to an individual's situation.

There was recognition that a multi-agency, joined up approach needs to be taken if TI approaches are to be embedded in practice. This could be achieved through raising awareness and promotion of the LVRN and TI approaches, as well as delivering further training across organisations and professional groups.

'(it) puts us in a good position as a trauma-informed organisation to raise our expectations of others, to ensure that people aren't just getting one good level of service from one organisation, instead that a really good level of trauma-informed service is available throughout all the services which they might encounter, whether or not that's statutory or non-statutory, whether that's education or children social care, adult social care, (...) trauma-informed being a baseline level of support which people can expect'

The evaluation identified that greater understanding of how trauma presents in young women and girls and how front line professionals respond is needed and should be a priority area for consideration.

We were unable to include service users in this evaluation, however, we made recommendations on how to involve service users in both sensitive and meaningful ways.

We found that data collection systems are in development, with future work needed to strengthen data sharing and to support sustainable long-term evaluations.

Conclusion

Overall, participants in the evaluation considered trauma-informed approaches as an acceptable approach and way of working with clients. More work is needed to consider how data may be used in meaningful ways to understand current activity and inform future LVRN activities/interventions. Future work should seek to embed research processes that involve clients/service users and members of the public in the design and development of evaluations. Qualitative research may provide opportunities for participants to tell their personal stories in ways that are experienced as empowering. However, care must be taken not to re-traumatise or burden potentially vulnerable individuals.

Implications for Practice, Policy and research

Service delivery: It is important to consider the needs of specific groups such as young women and girls and how professionals can provide appropriate support. Collaborative working across multi-disciplinary teams is also required to create a shared understanding across services sectors/organisations

Future Research & Evaluation: It is important to consider what data is required to measure impact/outcomes and ensure data sharing agreements are in place to support access to data for evaluations.

Public Involvement: Steps should be taken to ensure service user voices are represented across service planning, delivery and research in order to help tailor service provision and capture meaningful impact.

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