

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 1st July, 2026**

**10.00 am**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County  
Hall, Maidstone**







## AGENDA

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, 1st July, 2026, at 10.00 am**  
**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,**  
**Maidstone**

Ask for: **Anna Taylor**  
Telephone: **03000 416478**

#### **Membership**

- Reform UK (7)                    Mr J Defriend, Mr J Eustace, Mr T Mallon, Mr T Mole, Mr T L Shonk,  
Dr G Sturley and Mr D Truder
- Liberal Democrat (2):        Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE (Chair) and Mr A J Hook
- Conservative (1):             Mrs S Hudson
- Green (1):                      Mr M A J Hood
- Labour (1):                     Mr A Brady (Vice-Chair)
- Restore Britain (1):         Mr P Thomas
- Church  
Representatives (3):         Mr J Constanti, Mr M Reidy and Mr Q Roper
- Parent Governor (2):        Ms R Ainslie-Malik and Ms H Carter

*County Councillors who are not Members of the Committee but who wish to ask questions at the meeting are asked to notify the Chairman of their questions in advance.*

## **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

*(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)*

### **A - Committee Business**

- A1 Apologies and Substitutes
- A2 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A3 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2026 (Pages 1 - 10)

### **B - Scrutiny Committee meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee**

- B1 Kent Community Safety Agreement (Pages 11 - 62)

### **C - To Note**

- C1 Work Programme (Pages 63 - 66)

## **EXEMPT ITEMS**

*(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)*

Benjamin Watts  
Deputy Chief Executive  
03000 416814

**Tuesday, 23 June 2026**

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 13 May 2026.

PRESENT: Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE (Chair), Mr A Brady (Vice-Chair), Mr W Chapman, Mr J Defriend, Mr J Eustace, Mr A J Hook, Mr M A J Hood, Mrs S Hudson, Mrs M Lawes (Substitute for Dr G Sturley), Mr T Mole, Mr T L Shonk, Mr P Thomas and Mr D Truder

ALSO PRESENT: Mr B Collins, Mr J Henderson, Miss D Morton, Mr J Moreland and Ms C Russell

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms R Anderson (Head of Business Information, Strategy and Assurance), Miss M Bundy (Democratic Services Officer), Dr A Ghosh (Director of Public Health), Mrs S Hammond (Corporate Director Adult Social Care and Health), Mr A Jeffery (Head of Resilience & Emergency Planning), Mr S Jones (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Mr M Smyth (Director of Environment and Waste), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mrs A Taylor (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)) and Mr M Thomas-Sam (Director of Operations (Short Term Support))

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS****45. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item A1)*

Apologies were received from Dr Sturley, for whom Mrs Lawes was substituting and the Church and Parent Governor representatives.

Mr Moreland was present virtually.

**46. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting**

*(Item A2)*

There were no declarations of interest.

**47. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March and 1 April 2026**

*(Item A3)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 3 March and 1 April 2026 were a correct record and they be signed by the Chairman.

**48. KCC Preparedness for Winter**

*(Item B1)*

1. The item was introduced by Diane Morton, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, who highlighted the importance of scrutinising winter preparedness and

system reliance across health and social care. She also relayed encouraging progress in reducing corridor care through collaborative working across partners and thanked Adult Social Care staff for their contributions to improvements.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:
  - a) Members praised the report for its level of detail and clarity and expressed their appreciation to officers for their work in its preparation.
  - b) Sarah Hammond, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health, advised that staff vacancies were being addressed through national and local recruitment initiatives, and that approval had been given to recruit to all identified frontline roles; however, attracting sufficient applicants remained the key challenge. Michael Thomas- Sam, Director of Operations (Short- Term Support), added that the strategy intended to focus on staff retention, support and career development, alongside recruitment. The importance of the enablement function in managing demand, particularly during winter, was emphasised, and vacancy rates across the sector continued to be monitored.
  - c) Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health, acknowledged that flu vaccination uptake in schools remained low, reflecting national challenges such as vaccine hesitancy and operational issues. He also outlined that work was ongoing with partners to improve uptake, although delivery sat with NHS organisations.
  - d) Dr Ghosh agreed to explore future reporting including comparisons showing vaccination uptake alongside flu incidence rates, to better understand correlation. However, he advised that while population- level data may be available demonstrating that vaccinations were generally effective, impact varied from year to year. It was explained that flu vaccination uptake was continuously monitored and supported through ongoing campaigns and targeted engagement with underrepresented groups. Catch-up arrangements were also in place, particularly within schools, although coverage in wider populations relied on continued promotion and access. It was also advised that vulnerable individuals at risk of isolation were identified and supported through joint working between NHS and Adult Social Care services.
  - e) Mr Thomas- Sam outlined that the Technology- Enhanced Life (TEL) programme was delivering positive outcomes by supporting monitoring and early intervention. It was highlighted as a key part of the prevention agenda, with further work required to expand uptake, including increased awareness and use across care settings. Ms Hammond further highlighted ongoing engagement work to increase acceptance of the technology, alongside plans to pilot its use with care providers to support vulnerable residents and reduce the risk of falls. Miss Morton added that a digital patient monitoring system in nursing homes across the county had delivered positive outcomes in supporting residents to remain at home. She confirmed that funding had been secured to continue and expand the programme into the future.

- f) Ms Hammond explained that reducing reliance on residential care pathways would require more flexible, community- based services, combining social care with elements of health support. She highlighted that while the enablement service had been effective, further integration was needed. Furthermore, no additional government funding was currently anticipated, although opportunities would be pursued if they arose. Mr Thomas- Sam also outlined that in- house residential provision supported discharge and rehabilitation, enabling a significant proportion of individuals to return to their own homes, and emphasised the importance of a coordinated system response to manage demand pressures.
- g) Mr Thomas- Sam confirmed that examples of good practice had been identified, particularly in the delivery of enhanced community- based support. Work was underway with partners to develop a countywide model to share and replicate successful approaches.
- h) Dr Ghosh advised that vaccination data was reported as percentage uptake. He explained that population changes and shifts between age cohorts created additional challenges, although overall population change in Kent was limited. He also offered to provide additional demographic information to contextualise vaccination data, including population trends across age cohorts. Miss Morton added that a Kent- wide vaccination strategy was in development and would be brought forward in due course.
- i) Miss Morton advised that responsibility for flu vaccination delivery and messaging largely sat with NHS providers and commissioned providers. Dr Ghosh emphasised that vaccination was a key public health intervention, but uptake was influenced by a range of factors beyond communication campaigns. Efforts to improve uptake included enhanced messaging, addressing logistical challenges, and reviewing broader system factors. Work was also underway with partners to refresh the vaccination strategy across all programmes.
- j) Ms Hammond explained that eligibility criteria, including changes to free vaccine access for certain groups, may have impacted uptake, alongside wider factors influencing vaccination rates. She added that, in her view, any impact on vaccine uptakes were not related to cost, but rather to the ease of accessing vaccination.
- k) It was acknowledged that vaccine uptake among care workers had declined, but this was addressed through a targeted post-Christmas programme, with assurance that lessons had been learned and actions taken.
- l) Ms Hammond advised that, although average lengths of stay in a care setting had increased, the overall number of people requiring adult social care had reduced. She indicated that this could suggest a positive impact on longer- term demand, while emphasising that the primary challenge remained the cost of individual care packages.
- m) Mr Thomas- Sam confirmed that, although there had been a delay, fire safety works at Broadmeadow were on track. He also reported that targeted approaches to TELs were being developed through integrated neighbourhood

teams, with a focus on identifying and supporting higher- risk individuals, and that further work would be considered to expand this approach. Miss Morton highlighted that additional TEL sessions would be delivered in libraries across Kent to improve accessibility and support public engagement with technology.

- n) Ms Hammond confirmed that a forthcoming review would cover all aspects of the Better Care Fund. Progress had been delayed pending resolution of financial arrangements with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), which was close to agreement after which work on its future use would proceed.
  - o) Dr Ghosh advised that it would not be possible to calculate the counterfactual impact of flu vaccination at a local level due to technical complexity, but that analysis would focus on correlations between vaccination uptake and flu incidence.
3. Following the questions, the Chairman welcomed comments and views from the Committee about the item. These included:
- a) A Member highlighted previous discussion on staff vacancies and vaccination uptake across cohorts and concurred with officers that these be kept under regular review. It was further suggested that additional analysis be provided on how percentage figures related to absolute numbers, to give a clearer understanding of trends across different cohorts, and that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee receive a report on this topic.
  - b) A Member emphasised the role of local leaders in supporting Adult Social Care and Public Health by promoting the importance of the flu vaccination programme and encouraging consistent messaging within their respective groups.
  - c) A Member expressed support for amplifying flu vaccination messaging and highlighted the range of communication channels, including social media, available to support this effort.
  - d) A Member welcomed the identification of key issues and requested that updates on lessons learned, pilots, and rollout activity be reported back to support Members in providing reassurance within their communities.
  - e) A Member reiterated a request that comparable data on vaccine uptake and flu impact be presented side by side, where possible, to provide clearer understanding, while recognising the limitations of statistical comparisons. A Member also emphasised the importance of including the accuracy of predictions alongside this data.
4. The Chairman summarised the debate and highlighted key areas for onward consideration for the Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee, including the review of the Better Care Fund, the upcoming vaccination programme alongside the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee on that topic, and the role of local leadership in promoting uptake. The Chairman also commended the quality of the report and thanked officers for their work. The Chairman proposed to note the report and this was agreed by the Committee.

5. RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee note the report.

**49. Call-in of Decision 26/00007 - Heritage Conservation Strategy Amendment (Item C1)**

*Michael Payne, representative of mill managers and volunteer groups, David Denman, Meopham Windmill Trust representative and Paul Allen, Chillenden Windmill Manager, were present for this item.*

1. The Chairman invited Sarah Hudson, one of the call- in members to provide reasons for the call- in. Mrs Hudson spoke in support of preserving the eight windmills owned by the Council, highlighting their historic, cultural, educational and economic value. She argued that the windmills represented an important part of Kent's heritage and identity, and that their loss would be irreversible. Mrs Hudson also highlighted that the costs of maintaining the windmills were modest in comparison to their wider public value. Finally, she emphasised the benefits of preservation, including support for tourism, community engagement and education, and argued that further work should be undertaken to explore the creation of a trust to secure their long- term future.
2. Claudine Russell, another call-in member, expressed concern that the option of establishing a trust for the windmills had not been fully explored or appropriately assessed against value for money, deliverability and strategic outcomes. Ms Russell further questioned whether the decision aligned with the Council's strategic objective of delivering sustainable outcomes and best value for residents. She highlighted the collective value of windmills, the significant contribution of volunteers in their upkeep, and the relatively low and controlled maintenance costs. Ms Russell urged the Committee to recommend the decision be reconsidered with a view to exploring the potential for a trust to secure the windmills' long-term future.
3. Another call- in Member, Mark Hood, highlighted the significance of the windmills as valued community assets and expressed concern regarding the decision to depart from a previous Cabinet Committee recommendation. Mr Hood requested clarity on the rationale for this decision and whether it was supported by sufficient analysis in line with constitutional requirements. The importance of the windmills in terms of heritage, education and community identity was also emphasised by Mr Hood, and it was requested that a clear explanation of the benefits of not pursuing a trust be provided.
4. Michael Payne, addressing the Committee on behalf of mill managers and volunteers, also raised concerns about the decision- making process and whether sufficient analysis had been undertaken in departing from the previous recommendation to explore a trust. He reiterated the heritage significance of the windmills, the long- standing contribution of volunteer groups, and concerns regarding transparency of maintenance costs and current management arrangements. Mr Payne also questioned the lack of consideration of alternative options, including a heritage trust or community asset transfer, and cautioned against progressing with disposal without further examination of these options.

5. Jamie Henderson, Cabinet Member for Environment, Coastal Regeneration, and Public Health, explained that the decision to divest the Council of its eight windmills had been taken under a previous administration following a full assessment of options, and clarified that the current item related to amendments to the Heritage Conservation Strategy to reflect that decision. He also outlined that the updated strategy presented to the Growth, Environment and Transport (GET) Cabinet Committee, included a number of proposed changes and updated policy positions.
6. Matthew Smyth, Director for Environment and Waste, explained that the amendments to the Heritage Conservation Strategy reflected the earlier decision to divest the windmills and ensure consistency with that position. He outlined that establishing a Council- led trust was not pursued as it would reduce flexibility for locally driven solutions, would be inconsistent with the decision to divest, and had already been considered and discounted as part of the 2023 options appraisal. Mr Smyth also clarified that community- led trust proposals would not be precluded and could be supported if brought forward and reiterated that Council funding for non- statutory services should be a last resort.
7. The Chairman invited questions and comments from Members, and the subsequent discussion covered the following:
  - a) Mr Smyth advised that proposals for a community-led trust would be supported by KCC. However, he explained that establishing a Council-led trust would be inconsistent with the approach of enabling local communities to determine the most appropriate arrangements following the decision to divest.
  - b) Members discussed the call-in procedures and the nature of the recommendation under consideration, including the requirement for the Cabinet Member to demonstrate that due regard had been given to the Cabinet Committee's recommendation and the clear reasons to not accept it. Mr Smyth further stated that the call-in provided an opportunity to clarify the rationale for the decision, which had been set out in the accompanying report. He explained that the option of establishing a trust had been considered previously as part of the wider options appraisal on whether to divest, and that proceeding with divestment reflected the outcome of that earlier assessment.
  - c) It was advised that support would be available to local groups seeking to take forward divestment, including guidance from Council officers. It was also explained that existing arrangements already supported collaboration and best practice sharing among windmill managers, and that while such cooperation would continue to be encouraged, this was distinct from establishing a formal trust, which would carry legal and financial implications for the Council.
  - d) In response to questions regarding the flexibility of a trust model, Mr Henderson stated that the Council's approach was for divestment to take place first, with any consideration of a trust to follow. He also indicated that pursuing a trust prior to divestment would be inconsistent with the agreed strategy.

- e) Mr Smyth advised that, following the GET Cabinet Committee recommendation, they reviewed the meeting discussion and previous documentation, and considered the implications of establishing a trust. This included internal officer discussions and engagement with Members, which informed the rationale and the reasons set out in the Scrutiny Committee report.
- f) Brian Collins, Deputy Leader, clarified that the Council's position was to fully support the establishment of community-led trusts or similar arrangements for individual windmills where appropriate, but not to create or operate a single Council-led trust. He further explained that the Council remained open to considering a range of options, that each windmill may require an individual solution, and that all proposals, including potential community asset transfers, would be considered over time.
- g) Rebecca Spore, Head of Infrastructure, outlined that while the Council did not have a formal community asset transfer policy, it operated under a disposal freehold policy that allowed for broader considerations. She set out that the disposal process was designed to ensure the sustainable future of the assets and was weighted accordingly, with community proposals welcomed. She also stated that freehold disposal did not preclude arrangements similar in nature to community asset transfer.
- h) Mrs Spore explained that the Council assessed disposal proposals against a range of criteria, not solely on achieving the highest receipt. Lower- value proposals may be supported where they delivered wider community benefits, in line with existing practice.
- i) Mr Smyth confirmed that the consultation responses were fully considered, with a report presented to Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee in 2024 including the consultation findings.
- j) It was clarified that the approach did not exclude the use of trusts, rather communities were empowered to decide for themselves whether to establish a trust or pursue another model. It was also confirmed that asset protection would be secured through conditions in the divestment process, separate from any decision on using a trust.
- k) Mr Smyth stated that financial considerations were a key factor in the decision to divest, particularly to remove ongoing costs, and that the trust model was considered inconsistent with this approach alongside broader policy factors.
- l) It was advised that the procedural issue under Reason 1 of the call-in arose from the absence of an explanation in the original decision paperwork for not following the Cabinet Committee's recommendation, although this had been since been addressed in the report to the Scrutiny Committee. Mr Smyth also confirmed that there had been no previous call-in made in relation to the August 2024 decision prior to the current call-in.

- m) Mr Collins clarified that while the Council remained open to proposals and aimed to be accommodating, no guarantees could be given on outcomes due to the unique nature of the sites.
  - n) Mr Smyth explained that the Council was open to community- led proposals and that the 2024 decision required both divestment and retention as community assets. He confirmed that criteria was in place to ensure a sustainable future and continued community access, with proposals not meeting these requirements excluded.
8. Following the questions, the Chairman welcomed comments and views from the Committee about the call-in. These included:
- a) A Member argued that Members had sufficient information to scrutinise the decision both in 2023 and in 2026, and that the process had been carried out appropriately. They emphasised the need to focus on the decision- making process rather than the emotive aspects of the subject matter and concluded that there was no evidence the process was improper, or that any escalation of the call- in was justified.
  - b) A Member expressed concern that the decision could reduce future availability of windmills and criticised the dismissal of a trust option as based on subjective reasoning. They stated that a cross- party Committee had supported exploring a trust and felt there had been no thorough explanation for rejecting it. Finally, he argued that the decision appeared primarily financially driven and not in residents' best interests.
  - c) It was raised that Cabinet Member decisions should clearly address and respond to recommendations made by Cabinet Committees to avoid gaps and the need for further scrutiny.
  - d) A Member highlighted strong public opposition to divestment and stated that, although no formal recommendation for a trust was made, the Cabinet Committee had requested reconsideration which had not taken place. They argued that a trust would support local groups and align with policy, and that rejecting it could increase, rather than reduce risks for the Council.
  - e) A Member emphasised that the call-in was valid and reiterated support for a trust to protect the mills and manage costs. They argued that, if a trust was not pursued, the Council should prioritise safeguarding the mills' long- term heritage use in future decisions.
  - f) A Member clarified that the Council was not proposing to establish a trust itself, but to support local groups in forming their own. They acknowledged that some mills may pass into community or private ownership, with the Council's role focused on facilitation rather than direct control.
  - g) A Member stated that the mill's listed status limited their potential for conservation and highlighted that the existing strategy committed to establishing a trust to coordinate management and support volunteer groups. They emphasised that this did not require the trust to directly manage the mills. It was also added that all windmills were listed, mostly Grade II\* or

Grade I, providing strong internal and external protection and preventing conversion to residential use.

9. Following the debate, the Chairman welcomed proposals from the Committee:

- a) Mr Hood proposed and Mrs Hudson seconded option (d) in the report to 'require implementation of the decision to be postponed pending review or scrutiny of the matter by the full Council.' The Chairman emphasised that this option was generally reserved for the most serious matters of fraud or mismanagement by the Council.
- b) Members voted on the motion. The motion failed.
- c) Mr Thomas proposed and Mr Eustace seconded option (b) in the report to 'express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision'. The Committee expressed the following comment:
  - i. The administration should seek to ensure the protection of windmills going forward in accordance with the policy of the Council.
- d) Members voted on the motion. The motion passed by majority vote.

10. RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee express comments but not require reconsideration of the decision. The Committee expressed the following comment:

- i. The administration should seek to ensure the protection of windmills going forward in accordance with the policy of the Council.

## **50. Short Focused Inquiry - Water Supply Issues**

*(Item D1)*

1. The item was introduced by John Moreland, Chairman of the Water Supply Short Focused Inquiry (SFI), who highlighted the cross-party collaboration and input from officers and community stakeholders in shaping the recommendations, including actions for KCC and wider considerations for other relevant organisations.
2. In response to questions and comments from Members, discussion covered the following:
  - a) The SFI was praised as a strong example of cross-party collaboration, highlighting the significant work undertaken by the Chairman, officers and relevant stakeholders. Various Members commended the report as clear, concise, and containing recommendations that would benefit the people of Kent.
  - b) It was clarified that the term 'regulatory legal instruments' referred to standard regulatory requirements applying to treatment works, rather than special measures.

- c) It was indicated that updates to the water disruption plan were expected within two months, reflecting the SFI's recommendation for prompt action.
  - d) It was confirmed that upon the Committee's formal noting of the report, the recommendations would be sent to the administration, with a response expected within two months.
  - e) A Member highlighted that various wider issues such as funding and infrastructure recognised during the SFI may have fallen outside of KCC's control and therefore may require future lobbying at a national level.
3. The Chairman proposed the Committee note the Short- Focused Inquiry Report into Water Supply, and confirm that it be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members along with a request for a formal response to the recommendations within two months. This was agreed by the Committee.
  4. RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee note the Short- Focused Inquiry Report into Water Supply, and confirm that it be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members along with a request for a formal response to the recommendations within two months.

**51. Work Programme**  
*(Item D2)*

RESOLVED to note the Work Programme.

By: Anna Taylor, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)

To: Crime and Disorder Committee – 1 July 2026

Subject: Kent Community Safety Agreement

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Summary: This report outlines the background of Community Safety Agreements and the development of Kent's Agreement. It also explains the role of the Committee in scrutinising the Kent Community Safety Agreement as a 'critical friend' to the Community Safety Partnership.

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## 1. Community Safety Agreements

- 1.1 Community Safety Agreements (CSAs) are mandatory for two tier authorities and are used by the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to meet their statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006). Additionally, the 2006 Act required CSPs to include anti-social behaviour (ASB) and substance misuse within their strategies. The Police and Crime Act 2009 added reducing reoffending to the areas to be addressed by CSPs and most recently the Police, Crime and Sentencing Courts Act 2022 introduced Serious Violence as a statutory duty.
- 1.2 The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 revised the 1998 Act, altering the manner in which District and Borough Council evaluated their Community Safety arrangements. The previous method of three yearly audits was replaced with an annual strategic assessment, triennial partnership plan and public consultations. These district/borough level assessments feed into the higher authority's CSP and influence the Community Safety Agreement.
- 1.3 The broad range of public safety considerations addressed by CSPs requires joint work from the partners that serve as responsible authorities:
  - Police
  - District and Borough Councils
  - County Council
  - Health
  - Fire and Rescue Service
  - Probation Service
- 1.4 The CSA brings together the key strategic aims of all relevant partners in the crime, disorder and public safety sectors, promoting a joint approach that enables more effective, co-ordinated inter-agency planning to deliver improved outcomes.

- 1.5 Each CSA reflects its own area's priorities based on needs assessment and shared intelligence between the partner agencies. Since the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) Community Safety Partnerships must give due regard to the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. The strategic assessments undertaken by local Community Safety Partnerships are reviewed for common issues and priorities, which are then consulted on with relevant stakeholders to confirm their inclusion in the CSA. This engagement with stakeholders also provides opportunities for gaps to be identified and broader cross-cutting themes to be taken into account.

## **2. Kent Community Safety Agreement**

- 2.1 Responsibility for delivering the CSA priorities rests with the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP). The CSA is reviewed annually and refreshed as appropriate, along with the associated CSA Action Plan to ensure it remains aligned with local priorities and emerging risks.
- 2.2 The Kent CSP has delegated performance monitoring to the senior officer led working group and relevant priority leads from the partner agencies. Any points of concern or anomalies are reported to the KCSP for consideration.
- 2.3 The most recent refresh of the Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA), attached at Appendix A, was completed in April 2026 and introduces a revised framework for 2026/27 onwards based on three overarching strategic aims. This updated structure reflects the partnership's shared priorities and is intended to provide a more streamlined and focused approach to delivery. Cabinet Members are invited to review and comment on the refreshed CSA as it will guide future partnership activity.
- 2.4 Appendix B provides a summary of partnership activity undertaken during 2025/26, which was delivered against the previous framework of eight specific priorities. It includes an overview of activity, supported by contextual information and data to assist the Committee in its scrutiny role. This approach ensures continuity in reporting on agreed priorities, while supporting the transition to the new strategic framework. Effective delivery across both the previous priorities and the new strategic aims continues to rely on coordinated activity and strong partnership working across the statutory responsible authorities.

## **3. Committee Role**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is required to meet annually in the form of the Crime and Disorder Committee to review and scrutinise work undertaken by relevant partner agencies and authorities responsible for managing crime and disorder in the County. This duty arises from the Police and Justice Act 2006 which introduced Crime and Disorder Committees to fulfil this scrutiny function.

- 3.2 The Committee exists as a 'critical friend' of the Community Safety Partnership, considering the strategic level approach to crime and disorder and should not seek to challenge operational level actions.
- 3.3 Reviewing, considering and commenting on the current Community Safety Agreement and the activities undertaken to address the priorities serves as a constructive approach for the Committee to fulfil its statutory requirement to scrutinise strategic activity in relation to crime and disorder.
- 3.4 The focus of the Committee's scrutiny should be on the collective work of the partnership rather than the activities of the individual agencies, with particular attention to areas of risk, performance challenges and gaps in delivery where identified.
- 3.5 All district/borough CSPs across Kent have scrutiny functions in place meeting the benchmark for annual scrutiny set out in the legislation; with some local Scrutiny Committees meeting more frequently to review the CSP plans as well as other Community Safety related topics.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 The Committee may resolve to:

- Note the refreshed Community Safety Agreement (April 2026) and make no comment.
- Make comment on the refreshed Community Safety Agreement (April 2026) and the year-end action plan and performance summary for 2025/26.
- Offer recommendations to one or more of the responsible authorities, particularly where further improvement or clarification is required.

#### **Appendices:**

- Appendix A - Kent Community Safety Agreement April 2026
- Appendix B - Kent CSA Priorities and Actions 2025/26

#### **Contact details:**

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# Kent Community Safety Agreement



April 2026

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## 1. Introduction

This Community Safety Agreement (CSA) sets out the countywide priorities for community safety in Kent and reflects the shared commitment of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) to protect residents, support vulnerable people, and strengthen partnership working. As in previous years, the landscape of community safety continues to evolve; shaped by new legislation, emerging threats, and the wider social and economic environment. The CSA provides a clear framework for partnership working with three identified strategic aims for Kent. It outlines ambitions for the year ahead and reaffirms the commitment of all responsible authorities to work collectively to keep communities safe.

The responsible authorities to this Agreement are:

- Kent County Council
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service
- Kent Police
- Local District / Borough Authorities
- NHS Kent and Medway
- Probation Service

## 2. Purpose and Statutory Context

The formation of a Community Safety Agreement (CSA) is a statutory requirement for two-tier areas under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended). Its objective is to provide a high-level framework for community safety across Kent through setting out the shared priorities agreed by responsible authorities at a countywide level. The CSA is intended to be:

- Aligned with local and national priorities, including the Kent Police and Crime Plan
- Clear and accessible for partners and stakeholders
- Focused on outcomes and joint action, not process

The CSA does not replace district / borough Community Safety Plans; rather, it draws together recurring themes, cross-boundary issues and countywide risks identified through local plans, data analysis, horizon scanning, and partner intelligence and contributions into a cohesive agreement for Community Safety. Informed by this process, the CSA identifies the most significant Community Safety themes across Kent in order to: support strategic coordination; strengthen collaborative working; and help partners collectively fulfil their statutory duties.

The statutory framework for delivery of community safety activity is primarily set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended), as well as the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011. Collectively this legislation specifies the requirement for responsible authorities and co-operating bodies to form partnerships at both a District and County level to address Community Safety issues.

Thereby meeting the requirements of:

- **Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**, which places a duty on responsible authorities to work together to formulate and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder
- **The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007**, which require a **county-level Community Safety Agreement** in two-tier areas
- **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**, which requires authorities to consider crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour) in all their functions.
- **The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011**, which requires Community Safety Partnerships and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to have regard to each other's priorities

### 3. How Community Safety Works in Kent

Community safety in Kent is currently delivered through a structured two-tier partnership framework designed to ensure both local responsiveness and effective countywide coordination.

At a countywide level, the **Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP)** provides strategic leadership, coordination and oversight. The KCSP adds value where issues extend beyond local boundaries, where collective action strengthens impact, or where consistency and alignment across Kent are required.

At a district and borough level, **Local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)** are responsible for identifying and addressing local priorities. These priorities are informed by annual Strategic Assessments and are delivered through locally agreed **Community Safety Plans** and targeted interventions.

### 4. Kent's Community Safety Strategic Aims

The strategic aims detailed below encompass the Community Safety issues that benefit from a coordinated strategic approach and where shared insight, learning and collaboration add value. The aims are numbered for reference purposes only.

- **Strategic Aim 1** - Stronger, safer and resilient neighbourhoods: addressing ASB, neighbourhood crime, and local concerns.
- **Strategic Aim 2** – Reducing violence, abuse, and high-harm offending.
- **Strategic Aim 3** – Protecting vulnerable people: reducing exploitation, susceptibility, and repeat harm.

These strategic aims enable previous priorities from the 2025 Kent Community Safety Agreement to be incorporated into a simpler, more accessible framework by bringing together local and county-wide priorities as well as aligning with the Kent Police and Crime Plan. The strategic aims, including key drivers, are explored below.

## Strategic Aim 1: Stronger, safer and resilient neighbourhoods: addressing ASB, neighbourhood crime and local concerns

Feeling safe in your local area matters. This strategic aim is about creating places where people feel safe, supported and confident, and where communities are resilient and inclusive. It focuses on the issues that most affect everyday life, including anti-social behaviour (ASB), environmental crime (i.e. fly tipping), neighbourhood crime, retail crime / shoplifting, hate crime, community cohesion, and road safety.

### Key drivers:

- **Statutory Duty:** CSPs have a statutory duty to address crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.
- **Community Safety Plans:** All district/borough CSPs in Kent identified ASB as a priority or core business within their Community Safety Plans, and most have explicitly referenced hate crime and Prevent (reducing the risk of radicalisation), as well as communities, and public spaces within their priorities
- **Policing Priorities:** The strategic aim aligns with 'Protecting Places' and 'Protecting Property' within the Kent Police and Crime Plan including ASB, Road danger and vision zero, retail crime, etc.
- **Horizon scanning:** Rising tensions and community cohesion fuelled by misinformation were noted as emerging issues in the horizon scanning process. A recent Government policy paper sets out the steps the Government is taking to improve social cohesion and protect what matters: "*Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom*".
- **Upcoming changes:** The Crime & Policing Act aims to introduce new ASB powers as well as changes that are aimed at tackling rising retail crime and improving protection for shopworkers.
- **Community views:** Resident surveys commonly identify issues such as ASB as one of the top concerns. In Kent's Annual Policing Survey 2025, over 50% of respondents had experienced ASB with the most common types experienced were 'Rowdy Inconsiderate Behaviour', 'Littering' and 'Vehicle Nuisance'<sup>1</sup>.

## Strategic Aim 2: Reducing violence, abuse and high-harm offending

This strategic aim brings together work to prevent and respond to the most serious forms of violence and abuse, particularly where harm is severe, persistent or escalating, including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Domestic Abuse (DA), Serious Violence and Serious and Organised Crime.

### Key drivers:

- **Statutory Duty:** The Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced the Serious Violence Duty for CSPs. Organised crime is recognised as a driver of serious violence and exploitation. CSPs have a statutory duty to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [Annual Policing Survey Report - 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup> The KCSP fulfils county-level responsibilities on behalf of all Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Kent and Medway for **Domestic Homicide Reviews**. These arrangements are transitioning to Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024.

- **Community Safety Plans:** All (or almost all) district/borough CSPs in Kent have identified VAWG, Violence / Serious Violence and Domestic Abuse (DA) as priorities within their Community Safety Plans.
- **Policing Priorities:** It aligns with 'Protecting People' within the Kent Police and Crime Plan including DA, VAWG, Serious Violence, etc.
- **Horizon scanning:** The Government has committed to halve both 'violence against women and girls' (VAWG) and 'knife crime' within a decade. The Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council have described VAWG as a national emergency.
- **Crime rates:** Violent crime offences represent 47% of all police recorded crime in Kent (exc. Medway). For Domestic Abuse related offences, 83% are Violent crime offences. 22% of all recorded crime in Kent is VAWG related<sup>3</sup>.

### Strategic Aim 3: Protecting vulnerable people: reducing exploitation, susceptibility, and repeat harm

This strategic aim focuses on protecting people who are vulnerable and susceptible to harm, exploitation and/or repeat victimisation. It brings together safeguarding, substance misuse, mental health, family need, and interventions that reduce youth and adult reoffending. It includes activity to address: safeguarding vulnerable people, substance misuse, reducing reoffending, preventing / or reducing the risk of radicalisation and extremism, exploitation (including Serious Organised Crime (SOC) related harm), mental ill health, etc.

#### Key drivers:

- **Statutory Duty:** CSPs have a statutory duty to address the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in an area and to reduce reoffending.
- **Community Safety Plans:** The majority of district/borough CSPs in Kent have included a priority relating to safeguarding vulnerable people within their Community Safety Plans and approx. half have explicitly identified issues such as substance misuse, serious and organised crime (exploitation), mental health & wellbeing, reducing or preventing offending and re-offending within their priorities.
- **Policing priorities:** It aligns with 'Protecting People' within the Kent Police and Crime Plan including supporting victims.
- **Prevent Duty:** Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are not specified authorities and do not hold a statutory Prevent duty. However, all CSP responsible authorities are specified bodies under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and are individually subject to the Prevent duty, which is often coordinated through CSP governance arrangements. Kent remains the only Prevent priority area for the South East.

<sup>3</sup> Between November 2024 – October 2025

## 5. Delivering the Agreement

The strategic aims set out in this Agreement will be delivered through a coordinated, partnership-led approach, as outlined below:

- Oversight and direction provided by the responsible authorities through the Kent Community Safety Partnership.
- Strong engagement with countywide multi-agency partnership groups\*, supporting delivery, partnership working, and coordinated campaigns.
- Working closely with district and borough Community Safety Partnerships to identify shared priorities and opportunities for joint working.
- Strategic alignment with the Police and Crime Commissioner’s priorities supporting delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.
- Use of shared data and intelligence to identify emerging risks and ensure a consistent data-led approach to planning and decision-making.
- Promotion of shared learning and good practice across all partners to support continuous improvement and strengthen partnership effectiveness.

Many of the focus areas identified within the strategic aims are already supported by established multi-agency governance and delivery arrangements as detailed below. These provide oversight, system leadership, joint working and a coordinated approach to action across partner organisations. The following list is not exhaustive:

### Multi-Agency Partnership Groups

Strategic Aim 1	Strategic Aim 2	Strategic Aim 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Safer Roads Partnership</li> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Prevent Duty Delivery Board</li> <li>• District / Borough Community Safety Partnerships (local level)</li> <li>• Kent Police Hate Crime Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group</li> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway DHR / DARDR Steering Group</li> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Channel Panel</li> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Safeguarding Adults Board</li> <li>• Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership</li> <li>• Kent Substance Misuse Alliance</li> <li>• Kent &amp; Medway Reducing Reoffending Board</li> </ul>

Where appropriate, these existing arrangements can be further strengthened through clearer links to the Kent Community Safety Agreement, including the development of suitable cooperative arrangements and joint interventions to address shared priorities or emerging issues. Collectively, these partnerships work collaboratively, alongside other key stakeholders, to deliver the commitments set out in this Agreement.

## 6. Governance, Accountability and Assurance

The Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) provides the strategic forum for responsible authorities to fulfil their statutory duties and coordinate countywide activity. In doing so, the Partnership provides assurance in relation to statutory community safety responsibilities. The KCSP has ownership of the Kent Community Safety Agreement and oversight of partnership activities and performance.

The Partnership is supported by governance and delivery structures, including the KCSP Working Group and the multi-agency Kent Community Safety Team (KCST). These structures play a vital role in facilitating collaboration, sharing intelligence, and providing practical support to partners. The KCSP Working Group is responsible for developing the Kent Community Safety Agreement, the associated action plans<sup>4</sup>, and monitoring progress and performance which will help inform future priorities and actions.

While Local district/borough Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) remain independent in setting their own priorities, they provide essential insight through local plans and strategic assessments. This structure ensures that countywide activity is informed by local need, while recognising that delivery takes place at multiple levels across the system.

The KCSP is subject to democratic oversight through the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, which meets annually to review partnership activity and performance. The Committee acts as a critical friend, providing constructive challenge, scrutiny and assurance in relation to the effectiveness of the Partnership's governance, priorities and delivery.

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<sup>4</sup> To ensure clarity and accessibility, detailed delivery plans and operational activity will be maintained outside of this Agreement.

For Further information on this Community Safety Agreement please contact the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST):



Email: [kentcommunitysafetyteam@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentcommunitysafetyteam@kent.gov.uk)

Tel: 03000 410234

This document is available in other formats; please contact the KCST above by email or telephone.

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions



The Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) has delegated monitoring of the Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) to the senior officer led sub-group known as the KCSP Working Group, alongside relevant priority leads from partner agencies. This collaborative approach ensures that the CSA priorities are regularly reviewed, with any significant developments or concerns escalated to the KCSP governing group as part of the reporting cycle.

This 'Priorities and Actions' report provides an overview of the KCSP's performance against the priorities identified within the 2025/26 CSA. It has also been structured to support the transition from the eight existing priority areas to the three strategic aims set out in the 2026/27 CSA. Diagram 1 illustrates how priority areas have been consolidated and streamlined by grouping related areas of concern under broader themes. This approach is intended to reduce complexity, enhance clarity for partnership working and the wider community, and maintain continuity across reporting periods.

The creation of three strategic aims also reflects a broader alignment with districts in Kent that have adopted a similar approach to community safety, as well as with partner agencies in the delivery of their respective responsibilities. This alignment supports greater consistency and transparency in identifying shared focus areas. The revised structure has also been informed by feedback from the Crime and Disorder Committee (October 2025), which highlighted the need for a more targeted and streamlined framework.

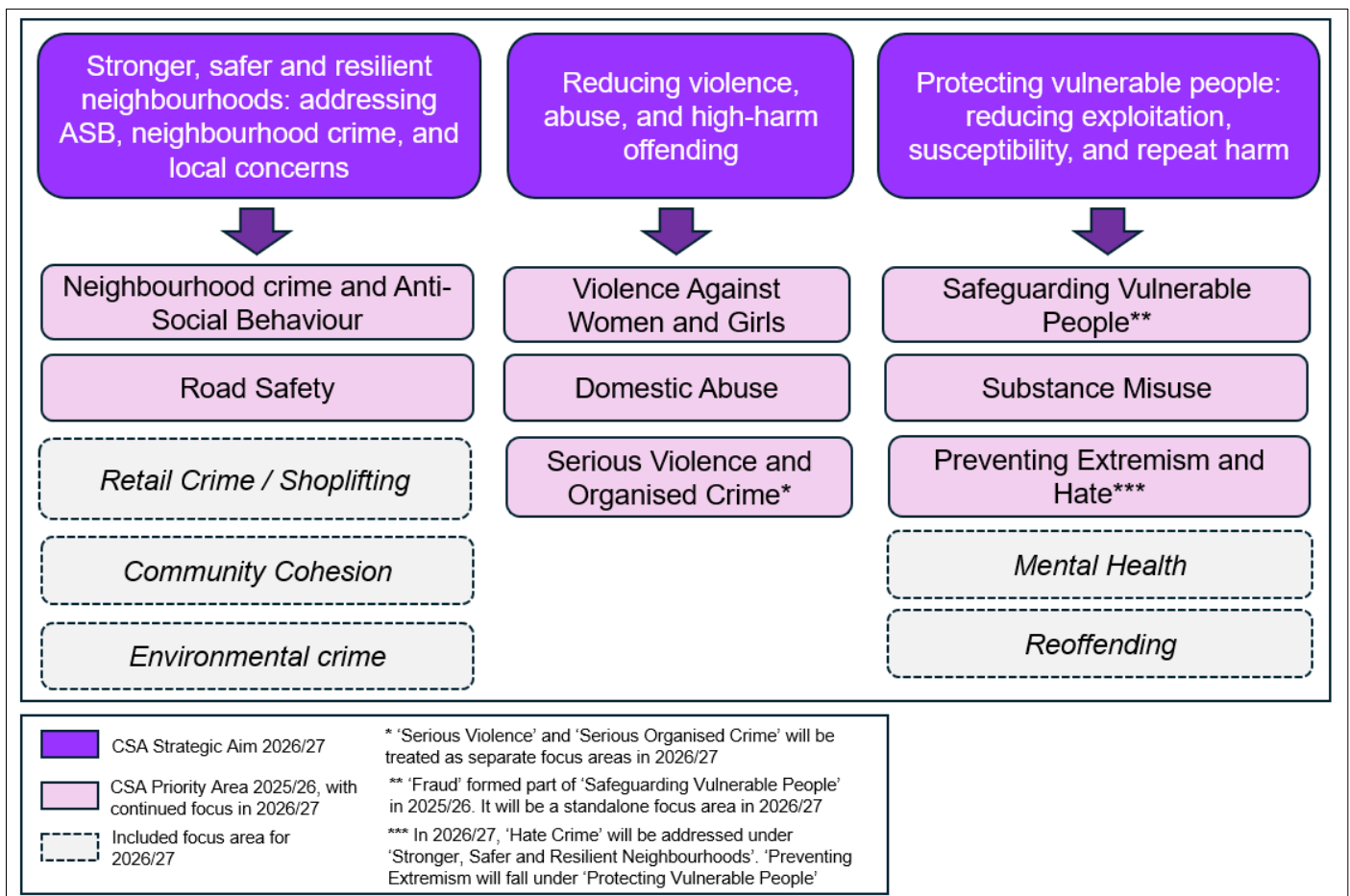


Diagram 1 – Mapping of Priority Areas 2025/26 to Strategic Aims 2026/27

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

Within this report, the historic 2025/26 priority areas have been aligned with their corresponding 2026/27 Strategic Aim under the relevant heading. The exception to this is for 'Hate Crime', which is grouped under 'Protecting vulnerable people', but will be positioned under 'Stronger, safer and resilient neighbourhoods' in the 2026/27 framework, separate from 'Preventing Extremism'

As with previous years, this document includes, where available, the most recently published Office of National Statistics (ONS) data and other reputable sources, alongside local partnership datasets, Government reports, and strategic needs assessments. The data provides a snapshot to support the inclusion of priorities within the CSA and to evidence KCSP performance against priority areas.

Due to the timing of the previous Scrutiny Committee, national or local data may be repeated where no updated datasets have been published. National data is provided for contextual purposes only and may not be directly comparable due to differences in recording methods, timeframes, or other technical factors. It is intended solely to inform an understanding of the wider community safety landscape outside of Kent.

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## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

**Strategic Aim: Stronger, safer and resilient neighbourhoods: addressing Anti-Social behaviour, neighbourhood crime, and local concerns**

**Priority: Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (including Environmental Crime)**

### Context

#### Overview and Prevalence

#### Anti-Social Behaviour

##### **National Context**

Published in April 2026, the most recent Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) results for year ending December 2025<sup>1</sup> by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that an estimated:

- 39% of people experienced or witnessed ASB. This was deemed as a statistically significant increase from the previous year (36%).
- 25.2% of people aged 16 and over said anti-social behaviour is a very/fairly big problem in their area<sup>2</sup>

The top 5 types of ASB experienced/witnessed as taken from the CSEW, were:

- 'Vehicle related behaviour'<sup>3</sup> (13.4%),
- 'Groups hanging around on the streets' (13.2%),
- 'People using or dealing drugs' (12.2%),
- 'Inconsiderate behaviour'<sup>4</sup> (11.5%), and;
- 'Litter, rubbish or dog-fouling' (10.4%)

There was an increase in all of the above types of ASB witnessed/experienced when compared to the previous year. These were classed as statistically significant for year Dec 2025<sup>5</sup>. However, there was a change in ordering of questions which may have had an impact on the estimates.

Police recorded ASB incidents (year-ending December 2025), including those recorded by British Transport Police, remained at a similar level with approximately 1 million incidents when compared to the previous year<sup>6</sup>. The vast majority of ASB incidents related to 'Nuisance' (73.6%), followed by 'Personal' (17.6%), and 'Environmental' (8.8%)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 April 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\) estimates of personal and household crime, anti-social behaviour, and public perceptions, by police force area, year ending December 2025 - Office for National Statistics](#) – Table 5

<sup>3</sup> Includes inconvenient/illegal parking; abandoned vehicles; speeding cars/motorcycles; car revving; joyriding, etc.

<sup>4</sup> Includes repeated use/inappropriate use of fireworks; youths kicking/throwing balls in inappropriate areas; cycling/skateboarding in pedestrian areas or obstructing pavements; people throwing stones/bottles/eggs, etc.

<sup>5</sup> [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables - Office for National Statistics](#) – Year ending December 2025 for edition of this data set – Table D1

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 April 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2025](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables - Office for National Statistics](#) – Year ending December 2025 for edition of this data set – Table D5

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

### Kent Context

According to a CSEW estimate for year ending December 2025 for the police force area covered by Kent (including Medway):

- 40.8% of people aged 16 and over experienced or witnessed ASB in their local area, and;
- 30.7% said that ASB is a very/fairly big problem in their local area<sup>8</sup>

These statistics, based on small sample sizes, are less robust than national level estimates and should be treated with extreme caution.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Kent Police recorded 27,183 ASB incidents in Kent (excluding Medway). This is a 21.2% increase (4,760 more incidents) when compared to the previous year. This is likely attributable in part to a change in recording practices in June 2025 inhibiting the ability to cross refer data.

For the same timeframe, the highest proportion of ASB incidents recorded related to:

- 'Rowdy or nuisance gathering in public / impeding public access' with 8,663 incidents (31.9%). There were 1,540 more incidents, equating to a 21.6% increase when compared to the previous year
- 'Drunken or rowdy behaviour' with 5,552 incidents (20.4%). There were 668 more incidents, equating to a 13.7% increase when compared to the previous year
- 'Motor vehicle nuisance on road inc. noise' with 4,811 incidents (17.7%). There were 866 more incidents, equating to a 22.0% increase when compared to the previous year

These three ASB categories combined equate to 70% of recorded ASB incidents between April 2025 and March 2026. There were reductions in 'Animal nuisance/dog bites' incidents, equating to a decrease of -12.5% (99 less incidents), and 'Unlawful Encampment', equating to a decrease of -8.7% (4 less offences). The category with the largest percentage increase was 'Abandoned vehicle – reported to Local Authority', with 31 incidents (18 more than the previous year), equating to a 138.5% increase.

### Fly Tipping

#### National Context

The most recent statistics on fly-tipping (excluding large-scale incidents dealt with by the Environment Agency and the majority of private land incidents) for England as recorded by local authorities in England, covering April 2024 to March 2025 and updated in February 2026<sup>9</sup>, shows;

- Local authorities dealt with 1.26 million incidents. This is an increase of 9% compared to the previous year 2023/24, with 1.15 million incidents recorded.
- 62% of fly-tips involved household waste<sup>10</sup>, accounting for 777,000 incidents, and an increase of 13% in incidents.
- The most common place for fly-tipping was on highways (pavements and roads) and accounted for 37% of total incidents. This was an increase of 9% when compared to the previous year, from 427,000 incidents to 463,000 incidents.
- The most common size category for incidents was equivalent to a 'small van load' (31%) followed by the equivalent of a 'car boot or less' (27%).
- For large fly-tipping incidents, the cost of clearance to local authorities was 19.3 million.

<sup>8</sup> [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\) estimates of personal and household crime, anti-social behaviour, and public perceptions, by police force area, year ending December 2025 - Office for National Statistics](#) – Table 4b and Table 5

<sup>9</sup> [Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#). The data excludes large-scale incidents dealt with by the Environment Agency and the majority of private-land incidents.

<sup>10</sup> Includes household waste (black bags) and household waste 'other', which could include material from house or shed clearances, old furniture, carpets and the waste from small scale DIY works.

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

### Kent Context

As detailed in the KCC Scrutiny Committee report 1 April 2026<sup>11</sup> which provided an overview of fly-tipping in Kent (excluding Medway), between April 2024 to March 2025:

- There were 22,844 recorded fly-tipping incidents recorded by the Waste Collections Authorities (WCA's) in Kent. An increase of 2,174 compared to 2023/24, equating to an increase of 9.5%
- The highest number of reports since financial year 2012/13 was in financial year 2020/21 with 25,052 reports
- The concentration of incidents was on highways, accounting for 52% of incidents (11,966). This was followed by 'Other (unidentified)' incidents (2,617) and Council Land Incidents (2,612). Both separately account for 11.4% of concentration of incidents.
- The majority by tonnes was mixed fly-tipping (2,458 tonnes). Other categories included asbestos (27 tonnes), tyres (16 tonnes) and gas bottles (2 tonnes)
- Disposal gate fees for the 2,458 tonnes cost around £345,000. This does not include, as examples, haulage fees and staff, or site overheads.

In May 2026, the Environment Agency published a watchlist of 117 'high priority waste sites'<sup>12</sup> causing concerns within local communities. The watchlist aims to provide transparency, open information, and encourage reporting from the public. The list will be updated monthly and where possible, further details for specific sites shared by Summer 2026. At the time of reviewing the information (2 June 2026), the largest site on the watch list is in Norwich, Cheshire, with 281,000-tonnes of 'contaminated soil'. The smallest sites are 1-tonne, with three in Sussex.

### Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery

#### Fly Tipping

A campaign has been launched by KCC to keep communities clean, with collaboration from all local councils through the Kent Resource Partnership, for residents to take simple and practical steps to prevent fly-tipping, such as checking that the person taking the waste is registered as a licensed waste carrier. The campaign ran throughout May and continues into June<sup>13</sup>

Police support OP Assist, a joint operation run by local authorities to target illegal waster carriers through joint patrolling with marked police assets. The current agreement is that concerns around fly tipping are reported through the local Community Safety Units who co-ordinate joint working with Local Authorities.

On 10 July 2026, KCC will host a county-wide fly-tipping conference, bringing together councils, enforcement agencies, landowners and the waste industry with an aim to strengthen joint working and take coordinated action<sup>14</sup>.

#### Anti-Social Behaviour

Kent Police's approach to anti-social behaviour (ASB) is delivered through a structured, multi-layered model centred on **victim-focused policing, problem-solving, high-visibility neighbourhood policing**, and strong partnership working. The approach emphasises harm rather than incident volume, prioritising repeat and vulnerable victims, with the aim of acting early to disrupt behaviour and provide an enhanced service where impact is greatest.

<sup>11</sup> [Fly-Tipping, Scrutiny Committee 1st April 2026](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Locations of high priority waste sites in England - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>13</sup> [New campaign supports Kent residents to dispose of waste responsibly - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Kent brings partners together to tackle fly-tipping - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

### Victim focused

As outlined in the previous scrutiny report, Kent Police have revised its ASB recognition and recording procedures in July 2025. This ensures every call is assessed for personal ASB elements, whether or not a criminal offence has occurred. While still being embedded, the approach has improved data accuracy and contributed to increased recorded incidents from summer 2025 onwards.

The Kent Police ASB Action Plan<sup>15</sup> (published March 2026) sets out how the force will prevent, reduce and respond to ASB, aligning national expectations with local priorities. It recognises the significant impact of ASB on victims and communities, and promotes a coordinated response focused on early intervention and safeguarding those most affected.

The Action Plan advocates a problem-solving and partnership-focused approach, acknowledging that ASB is often complex and cannot be addressed by policing alone. It emphasises close collaboration with local authorities, housing providers, community safety partnerships, youth services, and third-sector organisations to deliver a coordinated and sustainable response.

### Problem solving

Between 2024 and 2026, Home Office funding supported targeted work to address serious violence and ASB in identified hotspots. This combined high-visibility patrols with problem-solving activity to tackle underlying causes. Funding increased slightly in 2025/26 to support the government's ambition to halve knife crime, further strengthening this approach. More than 100 initiatives were delivered, and although specific funding has now ended, the work continues within those areas

Through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, Kent Police are committed to understanding and responding to what matters most to local communities. Local priorities are identified at ward level using community feedback (via **My Community Voice**), officer insight, and partner intelligence. This ensures priorities reflect what matters most to residents. Importantly, this process includes clear feedback loops to the public: priorities are published online alongside updates on actions taken and outcomes achieved, and are regularly refreshed to reflect emerging issues. Where concerns fall outside policing, they are signposted to the appropriate partner agency, with progress communicated transparently. This two-way approach not only gathers local intelligence but strengthens public confidence by demonstrating that concerns are heard, acted upon, and reported back, supported by ongoing engagement activity and local outreach. The site also provides information on local crime, contact details for neighbourhood policing teams, and details of local meetings and engagement events where officers are available to offer advice.

Problem-solving is embedded locally. For example, reports received from the public in one ward regarding increased fear around the use of catapults in criminal and anti-social behaviour. In response, Kent Police scanned the problem to understand what was being reported, before analysing both police and partner data to identify the underlying causes. This informed a multi-agency response, which included the design of posters outlining the consequences of such behaviour, alongside educational sessions for local young people delivered in partnership with the RSPCA. Kent Police continue to assess the effectiveness of this approach and, whilst work is ongoing, have been able to share this as best practice internally and with local partners as this has led to a reduction in calls for the service and a decrease in the associated fear of crime.

### High-visibility neighbourhood policing

The **Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee** ensures that each ward or beat area has its own Beat Officers who are responsible for creating and maintaining community links. Beat Officers are contact points for the public and local people to speak to about issues relevant to them and the

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<sup>15</sup> [Kent - ASB Action Plan](#)

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

communities they may represent. Visible policing is at the core of the Neighbourhood Guarantee not only to prevent crime from happening, but to link in and liaise with the public about issues they are concerned about that go on around them. These Beat officers will remain at the heart of the community and feed back either individually or by using My Community Voice to show what they have achieved. Local examples demonstrate the value of this approach for instance in the Thanet Villages ward, the local beat officer provides a weekly update on not only his activity through the week but where he has been, what he has done and what is happening in the communities they serve. This helps to strengthen relationships, build trust, and improve confidence that local concerns are understood and acted upon.

### Partnership working

Tackling ASB requires a combination of partnership resources, expertise and information to work together to find a long-term solution. It's also backed by legislation such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Partnership working on a local, county and national level helps ensure early intervention, better protection, smarter use of resources, and more effective long-term prevention.

Every district in the county has a Community Safety Partnership (CSP); each focused on crime reduction, tackling ASB and Community Safety. Each CSP is made up of statutory and some non-statutory organisations. All statutory organisations are part of the Kent and Medway Information Sharing Agreement, which enables data sharing between them. Partnership working at district level is delivered through regular CSP meetings, problem-solving groups, neighbourhood tasking, and information-sharing agreements. Where relevant, Kent Police align this plan with partner-owned strategies, including community safety, youth intervention and violence reduction plans.

Community involvement is also key. Notably there are currently 740 Neighbourhood Watch schemes registered in Kent. Each scheme has a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, a volunteer who acts as the main point of contact between local residents, Neighbourhood Watch members, and Kent Police. Coordinators such as these help bring communities together by sharing crime prevention advice, circulating local policing updates, and encouraging residents to report concerns and suspicious activity. They play an important role in building community relationships, supporting local problem-solving, and helping residents feel more connected and informed about issues affecting their area.

Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
Consideration and implementation of the Crime and Policing Bill.	The Crime and Policing Bill was enacted on 29 April 2026, following parliamentary consideration during 2025/26. The Partnership has monitored its progress throughout the year to support local readiness for implementation, including alignment with emerging legislative changes. Work will be ongoing in 2026/27 to consider the implications and implementation.
Understand the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and associated activity.	Ongoing engagement with partners has supported development of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, including strengthened visibility of neighbourhood policing teams, dedicated responses to ASB, and targeted activity within town centres and retail environments. Community engagement mechanisms, including local surveys and My Community Voice, continue to inform priorities and support local problem solving.

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

<p>Work with partners to identify and share best practice.</p>	<p>Knowledge sharing has been supported through nine e-bulletins and nine Community Safety Information Sessions (CSIS) during 2-25/26, covering a wide range of topics including ASB, road safety, rogue trading and emerging risks.</p> <p>Sessions were attended by multi-agency partners, with recordings made available via the Safer Communities Portal to maximise accessibility.</p> <p>Feedback has been consistently positive, supporting ongoing professional development and strengthening partnership working across the county.</p>
<p>Development of Police ASB Strategy.</p>	<p>Kent Police have strengthened their approach to identifying and responding to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), including improvements to recognising personal ASB within calls for service. This ensures appropriate referral to neighbourhood policing teams for partnership-led problem solving.</p> <p>The use of structured approaches, such as the OSARA model, has supported more effective use of partnership data to understand underlying causes and develop targeted interventions.</p>

### Priority: Road Safety

#### Context

#### Overview and Prevalence

Road Safety is often raised by communities as a concern, especially the perception of road danger and speeding vehicles. Whilst most local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) do not explicitly include road safety as a priority within their local plans it is not simply because it is not a concern but that local partnerships are limited in their ability to impact on this particular issue. At a county level Road Safety remains a focus within the Community Safety Agreement.

Joint working between agencies is key to supporting Road Safety and in Kent the 'Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership (KMSRP)' brings together key partners to coordinate road safety interventions, enforcement, engineering and supporting publicity. The Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership have developed a joint strategy, to support Vision Zero and the Safe System. It is governed by a Strategic Board that is chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, a Kent Police Chief Superintendent and includes a Cabinet Member and Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport for KCC, Chairman of Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, Director of Protection, Prevention & Engagement, Customer Engagement & Safety from Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), Regional Safety Programme Manager - South East Region for National Highways, and for Medway Council the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement and the Head of Transport & Parking.

Data from personal injury crashes collected by Kent Police is then cleansed and validated by Kent County Council. Following this, the data is sent to the Department for Transport (DfT) for final review against national figures before it is made public.

At the time of writing the Department for Transport (DfT) is yet to publish the Annual Road Casualty Statistics for 2025, however the Reported Road Casualties Great Britain, provisional estimates can be found at the following link: [Reported road casualties in Great Britain, provisional estimates: 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

Provisional data for 2025 shows:

- 3,882 total Casualties (39 Fatal, 873 Serious and 2,970 Slight) resulting from collisions on Kent and National Highways Roads (excluding Medway).
- Compared to 2024 data overall there was a slight increase in casualties of 66 (+1.7%) across all severities.
- Kent County Council's Vision Zero strategy, launched in September 2021, aims to reduce the number of deaths or life changing injuries occurring on our network. Therefore, Killed or Very Seriously Injured Casualties (KVSII) are being looked at more closely rather than the traditional KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured). On this basis fatal casualties decreased by 4 and all KVSII casualties decreased by 20 compared to 2024.

This data is analysed to identify higher risk areas or road user groups. Data from other sources, such as connected vehicle data, is also used when prioritising road safety interventions.

### Strategies and Guiding Frameworks

#### National

**Road Safety Strategy, January 2026**<sup>16</sup> - 'The first road safety strategy in more than a decade will save thousands of lives on the nation's roads by tackling drink driving, improving training for young drivers and introducing mandatory eye tests for older motorists'<sup>17</sup>. The strategy sets out a clear and ambitious path to improve road safety in Great Britain. The government's commitments are grouped under four key themes, each supporting the overarching targets, as detailed below:

Overarching targets set out in the strategy:

- 65% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in Great Britain by 2035, using a 2022-2024 baseline
- 70% reduction in the number of children (under 16) killed or seriously injured on roads in Great Britain by 2035, using a 2022-2024 baseline

Strategy Themes:

- Supporting Road Users
- Taking advantage of technology, data and innovation for safer vehicles and post collision care
- Ensuring infrastructure is safe
- Robust enforcement to protect all road users

The new strategy follows safe system methodology; as KMSRP are already signed up to using a safe system approach, they will be well positioned to align with the national direction.

#### Local

**KCC Vision Zero Strategy, 2021**<sup>18</sup> (Refresh planned for 2026/07)

KCC adopted a **five-year Road Safety Strategy for Kent** and a **30-year vision**. The long-term vision behind the strategy is that by 2050 there will be zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries on our road network. The strategy uses a safe system approach. Safe System is an approach to road safety and traffic management that starts with the idea that everyone has the right to be safe on the highway network. This approach comprises the following themes:

- Safe roads and streets – designing our highway network to reduce the chances and consequences of collisions.
- Safe speeds – designing roads and enforcing speed limits appropriate to the usage and environment.
- Safe behaviour – education, training, publicity, engineering, enforcement, and technology to

<sup>16</sup> [Road Safety Strategy](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Thousands of lives to be saved under bold new Road Safety Strategy - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Vision Zero Kent](#)

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improve the way people use Kent's roads and streets.

- Safe vehicles – ensure the vehicles on the Kent network are as safe as they can be by promoting safer technology for car and goods vehicle fleets.
- Post collision response – react as quickly as possible to crashes, study the causes of the most serious collisions, and provide support for the victims of road crashes.

The multi-agency **Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership (KMSRP)** has been **developing a strategy for Kent and Medway** (due Summer 2026). The strategy will outline the Vision Zero commitment for Kent. It is undergoing final preparation before its publication. Alongside the Strategy there will be a dedicated delivery plan that will support the delivery of the strategy.

The structure of the **Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership (KMSRP)** reflects the safe system structure and methodology, with working groups for each of the five system themes as well as over-arching working groups focusing on the following:

- Tactical Coordination of the partnership.
- Communication and engagement.
- Performance monitoring.
- Weekly partnership activity.

The partnership brings together all key road safety stakeholders to coordinate activity, identify priority user groups and support national and local road safety campaigns.

KCC has introduced strong liaison with local communities through the Parish Council Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) process. Through liaison with dedicated community engagement officers local parishes can access information and advice on all relevant aspects of the safe system. This includes advice on highway infrastructure, local targeted information campaigns and community enforcement activity through the Community Speedwatch scheme that is managed by partners in Kent Police

Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
Raise awareness of road safety campaigns across partnerships.	Engagement with communities has been strengthened through partnership seminars, parish-level engagement and local initiatives. This has improved awareness of road safety priorities and supported closer collaboration between partners and local communities.
Support delivery of Vision Zero and safe system approach.	Progress has been supported through partnership engagement, including awareness sessions delivered through Community Safety Information Sessions. The Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership (KMSRP) Strategy is nearing final approval, with plans in development for its launch and wider partner engagement.
Reflect and Connect Project	The Reflect and Connect project enabled Community Wardens to deliver targeted outreach, with a particular focus on engaging young people in response to increased use of e-bikes and scooters. This has improved awareness of road safety and personal safety risks, while supporting more positive interactions between young people and local services. The distribution of personal safety resources, alongside focused engagement with young people, has contributed to increased confidence and improved perceptions of safety. Activity has also aligned with wider community safety priorities such as anti-social behaviour and strengthened relationships between Wardens, young people and local communities, contributing supporting longer-term prevention.

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### [Strategic Aim: Reducing violence, abuse, and high-harm offending](#)

#### Priority: Violence Against Women and Girls

##### Context

##### Overview and Prevalence

##### National Context

The most recent data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) (year ending March 2025) shows that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) remains widespread and persistent across England and Wales. Using the new ONS combined measure, an estimated **10.6% of adults (around 5.1 million people)** experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking in the last year. Women are disproportionately affected, with **12.8% of women (approximately 1 in 8)** experiencing at least one of these offences.<sup>19</sup>

Domestic abuse remains the largest component of VAWG. The ONS estimates **3.8 million victims (7.8% of adults)** in the last year, including **2.2 million women and 1.5 million men**<sup>20</sup>. Lifetime data shows the scale of harm, with **25.8% of adults having experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16**.<sup>21</sup>

Police data provides only a partial picture. In the same period, **816,493 domestic abuse-related crimes** were recorded by police, significantly lower than survey-based estimates due to underreporting.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the ONS highlights that VAWG remains both **high-volume and underreported**, requiring continued reliance on survey data to understand true prevalence and inform national monitoring and policy response.

##### Kent Context

In the 12 months ending May 2026, Kent Police recorded **33,511 VAWG offences**. This is a decrease of 2,752 offences (7.6%) compared to the previous year, with reductions seen across 12 of 13 districts. Of the total VAWG offences recorded, 18,310, **54.6% were domestic abuse related**.

At a divisional level, the numbers of recorded VAWG offences over the 12 months ending May 2026 were:

- North (excluding Medway): 7,258, a decrease of 632 (8.7%)
- West: 7,535, a decrease of 686 (8.3%)
- East: 12,939, a decrease of 857 (6.2%)

Of the total VAWG offences recorded, the number of DA-related VAWG offences over the 12 months ending May 2026 was:

- North (excluding Medway): 4,030, a decrease of 194 (4.8%)
- West: 4,049, a decrease of 248 (5.8%)
- East: 7,057, a decrease of 115 (1.6%)

The data reflects that VAWG remains a significant and sustained demand. Key areas for continued focus include East Division, which records the highest volume of offences; Medway and Thanet,

<sup>19</sup> [Developing a combined measure of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking, England and Wales \(released July 2025\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview \(released November 2025\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales \(released November 2025\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

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which have the highest district-level volumes; Canterbury, where a small increase is recorded; and domestic abuse-related VAWG, which accounts for over half of recorded offences. Police-recorded crime should be read alongside national prevalence data and partnership insight, as it reflects reporting and recording rather than the full level of harm experienced in communities. It is recognised nationally that women and girls do not always report offences, so encouraging reporting remains a priority for all agencies, enabling resources to be focused against the right people and places.

### Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery

#### National Frameworks

- The national framework for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is now clearer and more joined up than it has been previously. The **Home Office** cross-government strategy, ***Freedom from Violence and Abuse***, sets the ambition to halve VAWG within a decade and describes a whole-of-society response built around prevention, early intervention, pursuit of perpetrators and stronger support for victims and survivors. It places responsibility across government, policing, public services and communities, rather than treating VAWG as a single-agency issue.
- Within policing, the **National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection** is intended to improve consistency, professionalise public protection and bring a more coordinated national approach to VAWG and related vulnerability. This reflects the wider recognition that public protection harms are interrelated and that effective delivery requires stronger national standards, specialist knowledge and closer alignment with partners. The **Angiolini Inquiry** and **Operation Soteria** reinforce the same direction of travel: a clearer perpetrator-focused response, better recognition of patterns and escalation, stronger prevention in public spaces, and context-led investigation across policing and criminal justice.
- Recent legislation has also strengthened the framework. The **Protection from Sex-based Harassment in Public Act 2023**, commenced in April 2026, creates a specific offence for intentional harassment, alarm or distress because of a person's sex or presumed sex, strengthening the response to harassment in public spaces. The **Crime and Policing Act 2026** adds further measures relevant to VAWG, including stronger stalking provisions and wider powers in relation to Stalking Protection Orders. The **Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026** reinforces expectations around multi-agency child protection, information sharing and coordinated safeguarding practice, which is relevant for child sexual exploitation, abuse and wider public protection harm, these changes place greater duties on those working with children who suspect they may need protection to share information.

#### Local Frameworks

- Locally, Kent's focus is on making activity consistent, visible and effective across the county. The force has strong foundations through **Operation Soteria**, a perpetrator-focused approach, refreshed policy and governance, improved **MARAC** (*Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference*) referral oversight, proactive **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme** (DVDS) "right to know" decision-making and continuing professional development around risk assessment and clear decision-making. Kent Police was also an early adopter of a predatory behaviour policy and makes use of the Harm Intervention Tool – developed in Kent Police to identify the most harmful offenders, supported by behavioural detection training, drug-detection dogs and Project Vigilant deployments in the night-time economy and at large events.
- This local response is focused on strengthening prevention, early intervention and partnership delivery. It includes identifying repeat and high-harm perpetrators, using intelligence about people and places to inform activity, and supporting neighbourhood and specialist teams to respond to VAWG in a way that is visible, victim-focused and aligned to local need. Local oversight arrangements provide the route for sharing learning, monitoring delivery and supporting improvement across the county.

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

### Communication, Delivery and Outreach

- Communications and public confidence are being strengthened alongside operational delivery. Kent Police has a refreshed internal and external communications approach so that leadership messages on VAWG, standards and safeguarding are visible, consistent and translated into everyday practice. Externally, communications are being coordinated to improve public confidence, victim engagement and partnership understanding, with the VAWG Community Forum used as a reference group and further work planned with KCC participation officers and Kent Youth Voice to develop a youth reference group during 2026.
- Marketing campaigns support the operational response and wider public confidence work. The **Slam the Brakes on Abuse** campaign, continues to improve the identification of domestic abuse during everyday journeys by strengthening officer awareness at traffic stops. Training has been delivered to 100 officers from Local Policing Teams and cascaded by inspectors, supported by an internal campaign.
- Partner training has also been delivered with public transport providers including Stagecoach and local taxi drivers, alongside a high-impact out-of-home crime awareness campaign. This work directly supports the NPCC National Framework for policing violence against women and girls by improving professional curiosity, earlier identification and safe signposting.
- A separate digital marketing campaign supporting Project Vigilant was seen by more than one-and-a-half million people online. Running over eight weeks, the campaign highlighted the deployment of plain-clothes officers to safeguard the public and de-escalate situations as part of targeted activity in the Maidstone area. The campaign sought to empower women and girls to report as it is recognised that police-recorded crime provides an important measure, but it does not represent the full prevalence of VAWG. National survey data, local recorded crime and partnership insight should therefore be read together. Kent continues to strengthen data quality, reporting and analysis so activity can be targeted effectively and reported transparently.

A credible response to VAWG must combine visible enforcement with prevention, safeguarding, culture change and long-term partnership action. Future reporting will draw more explicitly on neighbourhood policing visibility, community safety partnership activity, specialist third-sector support, Neighbourhood Watch involvement and examples of best practice being identified and shared across the county.

Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
Work with partners to identify learning from reviews	Learning from national and local reviews has been shared widely across partnership forums, including targeted briefings to specific groups such as licensing and night-time economy partners. This has informed delivery of Community Safety Information Sessions and partnership activity, supported improved awareness and strengthened practice across multiple community safety themes.
Promote White Ribbon	White Ribbon activity has been delivered through a combination of internal and public engagement, including events, awareness campaigns and webinar delivery. This has contributed to increased awareness of violence against women and girls and supported the growth of the local network of champions and ambassadors, reinforcing prevention messaging and cultural change.
Raise awareness of stalking	Targeted awareness activity, including webinars and campaigns, has improved understanding of stalking and associated risk factors among professionals and the public. Partnership promotion has supported consistent messaging and increased engagement with prevention and support resources.

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Develop VAWG Support Champions (Schools)	Funding enabled the purchase of 39 White Ribbon School memberships (lasting three years), supporting a long-term approach to embedding prevention and cultural change within schools, promoting a whole-school approach. The initiative has been well received and supports the ambition set out in the Government's 'Freedom from Violence and Abuse Action Plan (Volume 2) to breaking the intergenerational cycle of abuse through early intervention and prevention – protecting young people, disrupting dangerous attitudes and stopping harmful behaviours escalating'. The project seeks to raise awareness of healthy relationships and promotes positive behavioural change. Future activity will focus on embedding delivery through school-based champions and awareness events, with potential reach of over 40,000 individuals across the schools involved.
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### Priority: Domestic Abuse

#### Context

#### Overview and Prevalence

##### National

According to the ONS Crime Survey for England and Wales, in the year ending March 2025<sup>22</sup>;

- An estimated 3.8 million people aged 16 and over (2.2 million women and 1.5 million men) experienced domestic abuse.
- The prevalence remained statistically unchanged from the previous year.
- Police recorded 816,493 domestic abuse-related crimes - a decrease from 851,062 the previous year - partly due to changes in recording practices.

##### Local (Kent)

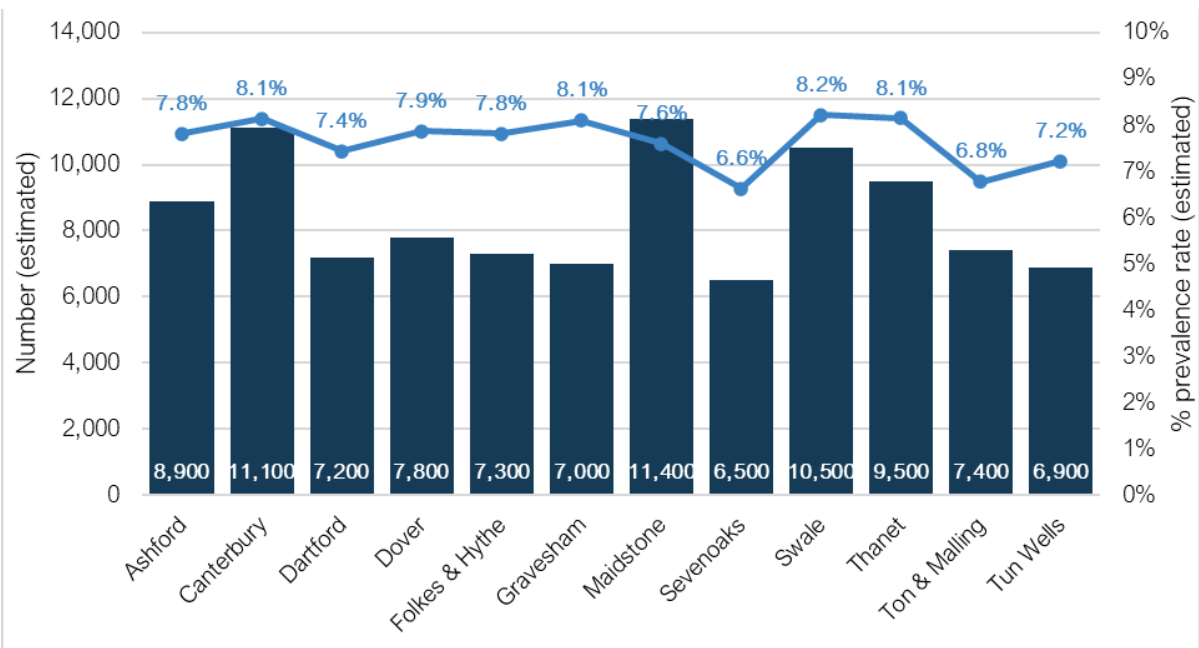
Kent Analytics have calculated estimated modelled prevalence of domestic abuse in each district.

- Swale had the highest prevalence rate (8.2%) and Maidstone the highest estimated number of domestic abuse survivors (11,400).
- Sevenoaks had the lowest prevalence rate (6.6%) and estimated number of domestic abuse survivors (6,500).

<sup>22</sup> [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

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Estimated modelled prevalence of domestic abuse in Kent by district



### Commissioned Domestic Abuse Services

- **Access to suicide prevention services** – The partnership recognises the relationship between domestic abuse, trauma, and mental health. Activity has focused on strengthening workforce capability through targeted training, practical tools, and responding to emerging evidence. Research has identified a significant link between **domestic abuse and suicide**, including the use of suicide threats as part of coercive and controlling behaviour. Learning has also highlighted the complex impact on those bereaved by domestic abuse-related suicide, gaps in services, and the need for specialist support, clearer language, and enhanced practitioner training. Consideration of factors such as **pets within abusive dynamics** has also been strengthened, recognising their role in control and victim decision-making.
- In 2025/26 two new suicide prevention services were commissioned specifically to focus on the links between suicide and domestic abuse:
  - Suicide Prevention in the context of domestic abuse training for 600 professionals working with survivors, being delivered by Grassroots.
  - Development of resources to support survivors bereaved by perpetrator suicide, delivered by The Dots.
- The **Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS)** has been in place since April 2017 and runs until March 2027. It is jointly funded by KCC, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Kent Fire and Rescue, and District and Boroughs and managed by KCC Integrated Commissioning on behalf of these partner agencies. The contract includes accommodation-based services, such as refuges and community-based support for those aged 16+. Through collaboration with the PCC a single point of access was added to their wider Victim Support contract. Headline data for the KIDAS contract in 2025-26 includes:
  - 4,035 total referrals, of those 237 were for Refuge and 11 for Male refuge.
  - 3,122 individuals were supported through the KIDAS contract, of those 252 were in Refuge and 8 in our Male refuge. There were 169 accompanying children in refuges across Kent.

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- **Hospital IDVAs** - Topline HIDVA 2025-26 data: A total of 423 referrals across Darent Valley Hospital, Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital and William Harvey Hospital. Of which 176 had not had any previous contact with community domestic abuse services. Of those supported: 173 were 56 years + (95 were 66 years +). They disclosed having a total of 611 children (who may have experienced domestic abuse themselves).
- The **Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents Scheme (SAFER)** which enables those experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their own homes safely through the provision of a property security assessment, advice and installation of equipment.
  - In 2025/26 there were 945 referrals received and security was applied to 757 households.
  - Through the application of SAFER there were 933 adults and 1231 children living in safe accommodation.
- The **Safe Accommodation Support Service (SASS)** this service offers support to children and young people residing in all forms of safe accommodation and began accepting referrals from August 2023. In 2025/26 there were 327 children and young people supported by this service via a range of therapeutic and non-therapeutic, activity-based support. These children resided in both refuges and within their own homes in the community with the SAFER Scheme applied.
- **Male refuge pilot** – This refuge offers three bedspaces for male survivors and their accompanying children who are fleeing domestic abuse. In 2025/26 there were 8 male survivors supported by this service.

Further new services have been mobilised throughout 2025-26 including:

- **Coastal HIDVA** – this is a new service (commenced mobilisation October 2025) – first official datasets are due at the end of Q1 (July). Specialist DA workers are working with Primary health in Thanet to increase awareness of and improve the response to domestic abuse.
- **CYBER Sanctuary** – this is a new service that launched in March 2026 and provides support to survivors who are experiencing cyber abuse including cyber stalking. In the first month of delivery there were 23 referrals to this service and 16 supported.
- **Children's Navigator service** to deliver DASH training (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour'-based abuse), advice and support to the children's integrated children's team.

### Direction of Travel / Trends

- Domestic abuse prevalence remains broadly stable at a national level, with no statistically significant change reported by ONS. Locally, variation across districts continues, with higher prevalence rates in areas such as Swale and higher overall numbers in more populous districts including Maidstone.
- Demand for services remains consistently high, with strong referral volumes across community-based support and safe accommodation. The introduction of new services, including cyber abuse and health-based interventions, alongside sustained referral levels, indicates improved identification and access to support, rather than a reduction in need.
- Emerging data also highlights increasing complexity in cases, including links to mental health, suicide risk, coercive control, and technology-enabled abuse.

### Key Focus Areas

Services and partnerships continue to develop in line with needs assessment findings, service data, and emerging evidence. Key areas of focus include:

- Strengthening **early intervention and prevention** through community and system-wide approaches;
- Responding to **complex needs**, including mental health and suicide risk;
- Addressing **emerging forms of abuse**, including cyber abuse and stalking;

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- Improving **multi-agency processes and consistency of response**, including MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference);
- Ensuring services are **accessible and inclusive**, including for children, young people, and underrepresented groups.

**Assuring public confidence in data** - In Kent, assurance in the use of data, is supported through robust governance, transparent reporting, and the use of both the **Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment** and a partnership **Power BI dashboard**. The needs assessment provides a comprehensive, evidence-based understanding of demand and need, while the dashboard brings together validated data from police, health, and commissioned services into a single, consistent view. This enables partners to monitor trends and performance, supported by multi-agency validation and regular oversight. Qualitative learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews and frontline insight further strengthens the overall evidence base.

### Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery

#### National Frameworks

- Under the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**<sup>23</sup>, local authorities in England have several statutory duties aimed at improving support for victims of domestic abuse, particularly in relation to accommodation-based services. These duties include assessing the need for accommodation-based support for victims and their children, publishing a domestic abuse support strategy, and evaluating the effectiveness of this strategy.
- The Government published a new cross-government **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, Freedom from Violence and Abuse, in December 2025**. This strategy sets out a ten-year ambition to halve violence against women and girls and adopts a whole-system approach, focused on prevention and early intervention, supporting victims and survivors, pursuing perpetrators, and strengthening system-wide accountability. An accompanying **Action Plan** (updated May 2026) outlines delivery across the Spending Review period to 2029. The strategy reinforces the expectation on local partnerships to align activity with national priorities, particularly around prevention, early intervention, and improved multi-agency working.
- The government also published **Supporting Male Victims (2022)** – which is a position statement on male victims of crimes.
- The **Women’s Health Strategy for England 2022**, set out actions to improve the health and care systems’ response to domestic abuse and prioritise the prevention and reduction of violence against women and girls.
- Section 9 of the **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004** places a statutory requirement on Community Safety Partnerships to undertake a review (Domestic Homicide Review) when a person aged 16 or over dies as a result of violence, abuse, or neglect by a partner, ex-partner, family member, or member of the same household.

#### Local Frameworks

- The **Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024–2029**<sup>24</sup> is a partnership document embodying the approach of its 20 partners to *‘reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly’*. The strategy includes both statutory requirements for tier one local authorities to support people accessing safe accommodation services and commitments across the partnership to support people impacted by domestic abuse across Kent and Medway. The strategy is structured around three core pillars: Early intervention and Prevention; Immediate Need and Recovery. A report on the progress achieved in year two of the strategy is available<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy - Year 2](#)

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### Communication, Delivery and Outreach

Communications and engagement across Kent and Medway has continued to strengthen through a coordinated, partnership-led approach, with a focus on consistent messaging, wider reach, and embedding learning into practice.

- The [Know, See, Speak Out](#) **partnership campaign** has provided a clear and accessible framework for both the public and professionals to understand domestic abuse and take appropriate action. This supports individuals and organisations to know the signs of abuse, see opportunities to raise awareness, and speak out by confidently signposting to support. This approach has extended beyond traditional partnership boundaries through collaboration with strategic partners, including Kent FA, Southeastern Trains, Southern Water, and Kent Cricket, embedding consistent messaging across workplaces, public settings, and community networks.
- Communications have been further strengthened through the **launch of a new [domestic abuse website](#)**, providing a single, accessible platform for information, resources, and clear pathways to support for both the public and professionals.
- In addition, the [Domestic Abuse Champions programme](#) has strengthened knowledge and understanding across the system, with over **300 trained Champions** across statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and smaller community-based services. Champions support awareness raising, embed consistent messaging, and improve confidence in responding to domestic abuse across a wide range of settings.
- There has been a continued emphasis on community-based outreach to improve awareness and access to support. This includes visible messaging in community settings, targeted engagement with local organisations and employers, and **two countywide mailouts to faith groups**, alongside a **health communications toolkit shared across the health system** to support consistent messaging. There has also been strong engagement with **schools**, supporting awareness and prevention activity with young people and education settings.
- Physical materials, including posters, have been **translated into multiple languages**, and the use of **QR codes** has increased to improve accessibility to information and support.
- This approach supports earlier recognition of domestic abuse and ensures that information about support is accessible to a broader range of people, including those less likely to engage with statutory services.
- Best practice continues to be embedded across Kent and Medway through a structured partnership approach. This includes consistent use of *Know, See, Speak Out* messaging, multi-agency training, and shared resources.
- Training, guidance, and service development are informed by **learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)** and the contributions of **Survivor Ambassadors**. This ensures that practice is shaped by local learning and lived experience, supporting continuous improvement and greater consistency in responses across the county.
- Alongside this, **ongoing refinements to MARAC processes** have supported more consistent identification and management of high-risk cases, including improved information sharing and consideration of wider vulnerabilities.

Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
<p>Commission and support delivery of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) on behalf of CSPs across Kent and Medway and ensure changes are implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At year-end, 23 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) are ongoing, alongside engagement with four out-of-area cases. Four new cases commissioned and an additional case being undertaken out of area; and three reviews <a href="#">published</a> (Rita, Safta and Lesley) during 2025/26.</li> <li>• Governance is maintained through a quarterly Steering Group which oversees progress, monitors recommendations and ensures learning is implemented. A funding review was also undertaken during the year, resulting in increased partner contributions to support delivery and meet future demand.</li> </ul>

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<p>Sharing learning with partners from DHR / DARDR cases to raise awareness and improve practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five multi-agency learning events were delivered during 2025/26, covering key themes including counter-allegations, caring dynamics and dementia, coercive control, and suicide. Over 1,000 frontline professionals attended from a wide range of agencies, including participants from outside Kent and Medway and received extremely positive feedback.</li> <li>• Learning has been embedded through structured briefing documents published alongside each review, outlining key themes and reflective questions to support application in practice. These are disseminated via partnership meetings, briefings and the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) bulletin to ensure consistent messaging across agencies.</li> </ul>
<p>Implementation of new DARDR statutory guidance.</p>	<p>The Partnership contributed to the Home Office consultation and is awaiting publication of updated guidance. Funding proposals have been agreed with partners for 206/27 to ensure readiness and delivery of future statutory requirements.</p>
<p>Promotion of the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse website.</p>	<p>The website was launched in summer 2025, providing a single, accessible source of guidance and support for residents and practitioners. Development included engagement across multiple partnership forums, ensuring the content reflects operational needs and incorporates feedback from partners across Kent and Medway.</p>
<p>Development of resources to support the Domestic Abuse Community Champions scheme</p>	<p>The Kent Domestic Abuse Champions Programme delivered 12 multi-agency cohorts during 2025/26, supported by additional targeted sessions for specific sectors including health and sport. Successfully delivering, training to over 300 individuals. Champions report increased confidence in recognising and responding to domestic abuse, including non-physical forms such as coercive control and financial abuse.</p> <p>Funding supported the design and distribution of branded resources to increase visibility of Champions and promote domestic abuse awareness. Champions reported increased confidence in recognising abuse, including non-physical forms, and in safely signposting individuals to support, with a high satisfaction rate (97.5%).</p>
<p>Support the review of MARAC case management and hub implementation.</p>	<p>A three-month review of the MARAC case management system and hub model has been completed and shared across governance groups. An action plan is now being implemented to address identified improvements, including consistency of processes and system use. The evaluative approach has received national recognition as good practice.</p>
<p>Support Domestic Abuse campaigns.</p>	<p>Coordinated campaigns, including the 16 Days of Activism, were delivered through multi-agency partnerships, incorporating social media, webinars and targeted communications. Activity achieved significant reach, including engagement with schools and practitioners, and the delivery of a webinar series with over 1,000 registrations. This has strengthened awareness of domestic abuse and supported consistent messaging across agencies and communities.</p>

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### Priority: Serious Violence and Organised Crime

#### Context

#### Serious Violence

#### Overview and Prevalence

##### National Context

Statistics for police recorded crime in England and Wales, produced by the Office for National Statistics<sup>26</sup>, showed for year ending December 2025:

- Violence without injury offences – 825,726 offences were recorded by police forces. This was a 1% increase when compared to the previous year (816,248)
- Violence with injury offences – 507,161 offences were recorded. This was a 4% decrease in police recorded offences and follows large increases in these offences since 2015, noted as mainly due to improvements to recording practices over this time period.
- There were 49,151 knife-enabled crime offences, with a decrease of 10% when compared to the previous year (54,548).

##### Kent Context

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Kent police recorded (excluding Medway):

- 58,625 Violent Crime offences<sup>27</sup> - this was a decrease of 4.7% when compared to the previous year (2,911 less offences).
- 52,004 Violence against the person offences<sup>28</sup> - this was a decrease of 6.1%. Within this category, violence with injury offences saw a decrease of 4.6% (602 less offences), and violence without injury offences saw a decrease of 7.4% (1,895 less offences)
- 12,617 Serious Violence offences - this was a reduction of 4.5% when compared to the previous year (601 less offences). Serious Violence offences are defined as Homicide and Violence with injury offences. Homicide offences saw an increase of 1 offence, from 11 to 12 offences.
- Including Medway, and for the same time period, there were 883 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument. This was an increase of 1.8% (16 more offences) when compared to the previous year (867)<sup>29</sup>. This contrasts with national reductions and reflects local demand and recording context.

#### Serious Youth Violence

#### Overview and Prevalence

Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) were formed in March 2019 in 18 policing areas across England and Wales to tackle Serious Youth Violence. In 2025/26 Kent's VRU was awarded £1.6 million and this financial year has been awarded £1.9 million. This fund includes the Young Futures pilot which is operating in the police force's highest area of need – Medway.

The Kent and Medway VRU are a small team led by its Director, Chief Inspector Lizzie Jones. It comprises data analysts, coordinators, and a program manager. The VRU prides itself on its interconnectivity within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), policing colleagues and all statutory partners.

<sup>26</sup> [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

<sup>27</sup> Aggregated offences of violence against the person, sexual offences, and robbery.

<sup>28</sup> Aggregated offences of Homicide, Death or Serious Injury – Unlawful driving, Violence with injury, Violence without injury, Stalking and Harassment.

<sup>29</sup> [Performance and Delivery Board](#) – 'Police and Crime Plan – Performance & Delivery paper', 4 June 2026

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The VRU continues to prevent Serious Youth Violence by working in collaboration with statutory partners. This includes support for criminally and sexually exploited children and young people via Catch 22, the prevention and identification of Young Street Groups via Focused Deterrence, and sport provision for at-risk children in schools and communities with Sports Connect. The VRU works closely with schools, including the funding of Pol-Ed, Social Skills, and new for 2026, the Virtual Decisions program. The Young Futures program identifies children who are at risk of school exclusion or entering the criminal justice system. Interventions are bespoke to the whole child's needs, and all interventions have a trauma-informed approach.

### **Kent and Medway VRU**

#### **Critical success measures**

There was a reduction in knife-enabled serious violence, especially among victims under 25:

- With an all ages (overall) decrease of -3.3% (-31 offences) in the last 12 months;
- For under 18s, there was a -22.9% decrease (-36 offences), and;
- A -4.5% decrease (-7 offences) for 18-24 year olds.

For over 25s, there was a slight increase of 0.2% (1 offence).

There was also a reduction in all non-domestic homicides, especially among under 25s involving knives:

- Non-domestic homicides (all ages) decreased by 1 in the last 12 months;
- There were four under 25 homicides involving knives since April 2022, with the last in October 2024.

All Serious Violent Crime (ASVC) decreased by -6.0% and Most Serious Violent Crime MSVC (MSVC) by -10.3% in 24/25, when compared to 23/24.

#### **Suspect / Victim Demographics**

- For ASVC, the most affected age is 15 years old for both victims and suspects.
- Males account a higher proportion of victims (63.9%) than females (35.9%), although the volume of female victims increased this year. For suspects, males account for the highest proportion, with 72.6%.

#### **District / Borough**

- For all ages, Medway is consistently most affected for harm<sup>30</sup> and volume, followed by Thanet, and Maidstone 3rd for volume (5th Harm) and Swale 3rd for harm (5th volume). Three districts (Thanet, Folkestone & Hythe, Tonbridge and Malling) saw increases in ASVC in the last year. Medway, Canterbury, Dartford, Ashford, Tunbridge Wells saw decreases.
- Most districts have seen continuous decreases throughout the three year period (Medway, Thanet, Canterbury, Swale, Dartford, Folkestone & Hythe, Ashford and Tunbridge Wells).

#### **Strategies and Guiding Frameworks**

**The Serious Violence Duty (SVD)** is a legal requirement introduced by the UK government through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, which came into effect on January 31, 2023. It mandates a collaborative, multi-agency approach to prevent and reduce serious violence in local communities. The SVD guidance has been updated this year to support widening the scope of violence to include emerging trends, clearer roles for partners, enhanced use of real-time data, increased emphasis on community engagement, stronger focus on prevention, and increased accountability via continued monitoring.

<sup>30</sup> Using the Cambridge Harm index – used to measure the harm caused by different crime types

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The **Serious Violence Board** in Kent is chaired by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The VRU facilitates the meetings and drives the SVD guidance to ensure increased accountability, collaboration, and the elimination of duplication.

The **VRU's Strategic Needs Assessment**<sup>31</sup> sets out key recommendations for delivery in 2026 and 2027, including:

- Continue to work in partnership: increase collaborations and reduce duplication of provisions.
- Continue to focus on under 18s: the average age of the cohort is 15 years of age.
- Increase provision for those aged 17 to 24: with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as care leavers.
- Sustain reductions: utilising the public health approach.
- Increase accountability for cost-effective approaches.

### Serious and Organised Crime

#### Exploitation

A variety of organisations, including the Police and Local Authorities, have a statutory responsibility as a 'first responder organisation' to identify potential victims of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) and to refer them to the Home Office via the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), in line with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Data from the UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM)<sup>32</sup> shows that:

- 23,411 potential victims of modern slavery were referred in 2025, representing a 22% increase on 2024 (the highest number since the system began).
- Children continue to comprise a significant proportion of referrals (30%) with criminal exploitation remaining a predominant form among children. 2,083 referrals (9%) for adults and children were flagged as county lines cases, with 76% of these involving male children.
- The largest category of referrals overall relate to labour exploitation, accounting for 36%. The number of potential victims who reported labour exploitation exclusively increased by 37% from 2024.

Demand is increasing with modern slavery referrals at record levels nationally, placing sustained pressure on local systems. Kent's geography drives its role as a gateway, transit and exploitation interface, not just a destination. The key threats for Kent are:

- Child criminal exploitation (county lines)
- Labour exploitation in key sectors
- Migration-linked vulnerability

There is strong alignment with local high-risk sectors, such as agriculture and food production, construction, and hospitality and services (e.g. car washes, nail bars). Kent reflects the national trend of increasing labour exploitation linked to migration, driven by exploitation of migrant workers on skilled worker visas<sup>33</sup>

Nationally, there remain ongoing concerns regarding county lines and child criminal exploitation among care leavers, individuals in supported accommodation, and those experiencing mental ill-health or substance misuse.

Kent partners are taking positive action through a strong multi-agency safeguarding approach. This includes joint working with Kent Police and partners through contextual safeguarding and Serious Organised Crime Panels. The coordinated approach supports earlier identification of exploitation

<sup>31</sup> [VRU Reports - Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit \(VRU\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Modern slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Unseen-Helpline-Annual-Assessment\\_2025.pdf](#)

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risks, improves safeguarding visibility, and aligns with multi-agency arrangements such as the Child Exploitation Oversight Group (CEOG) and Missing and Exploitation Tactical Delivery Board.

### **Hidden economy**

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) report (April 2026) highlights concerns about the potential exploitation of high street businesses by organised crime groups:

- 97% of Trading Standards officers reported awareness of suspected criminal activity within retail premises
- 99% reported an increase in cash-intensive businesses since 2020
- Up to 50% of mini-marts and vape retailers are estimated to have links to organised crime

The findings suggest that in some areas, a proportion of retail premises including vape shops, convenience stores and takeaways may be associated with criminal activity. These premises can be used to facilitate offences such as money laundering, illicit trade and, in some cases, wider exploitation. While this does not apply to the majority of businesses, it highlights a developing risk within certain sectors.

At a national level, there is increasing recognition of the need to address criminality that operates through legitimate-appearing business settings. In response, the government (May 2026) has established a national high street organised crime unit, bringing together policing, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Trading Standards.

Kent has been identified as an area of focus for this work. KCC's Serious Organised Crime (SOC) team will work alongside the national unit to support multi-agency enforcement, intelligence sharing and the disruption of businesses linked to criminal activity. Established partnership arrangements including CSPs, SOC Boards and SOC Panels provide a framework for coordinated local action.

Actions 2025/26	Progress
Work with the Violence Reduction Unit and SVPP Board.	Governance arrangements have been strengthened through the refreshed Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board, improving accountability across statutory partners. Activity is focused on reducing duplication, improving coordination, and ensuring resources are used effectively to support delivery of the Serious Violence Strategy, resulting in a more streamlined and accountable partnership approach.
Improve sharing of data.	Progress is being made to improve multi-agency data sharing through adoption of the Thames Valley model, following national review and partner agreement. Implementation is being led by Kent Police Analytics, with further development and training planned to support a more consistent and informed understanding of serious violence across the partnership.
Share information on exploitation.	Partnership arrangements have been restructured to strengthen oversight of exploitation, including the establishment of a Child Exploitation Oversight Group. Further development is under consideration to enhance multi-agency coordination in relation to adult exploitation, building on existing safeguarding frameworks.

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Improve intelligence reporting.	A Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Local Profile Working Group has been established, providing a structured approach to intelligence development and analysis. Governance is supported through the SOC Board, with ongoing activity focused on promoting awareness, improving reporting mechanisms and strengthening the use of partnership intelligence tools.
Improve understanding of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC), Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT).	Awareness and understanding of Serious and Organised Crime, including modern slavery and human trafficking, has been strengthened through training delivery, regular updates and dedicated partnership activity. Additional capacity has been introduced, alongside preparation for new legislative requirements, including work relating to cuckooing and exploitation.

### Strategic Aim: Protecting vulnerable people: reducing exploitation, susceptibility, and repeat harm

#### Priority: Safeguarding Vulnerable People

##### Context

Safeguarding vulnerable people is a broad and cross-cutting priority that underpinned many elements of the 2025/26 Community Safety Agreement. It requires a strategic, multi-agency approach to protect individuals and communities from harm, exploitation, and neglect. A range of statutory boards and partnerships hold accountability for addressing these complex issues, ensuring that safeguarding efforts are coordinated and effective.

##### Suicide Prevention

##### Overview and Prevalence

The following data is taken from the “ONS Suicides in England and Wales by local authority”<sup>34</sup> dataset released on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025. The recommended way to report suicide statistics is using 3-year rolling rates per 100,000, taking into account population size as well as being less susceptible to random annual fluctuation.

The latest statistics (based on the person’s usual residence) show rates have again fallen in both Kent and Medway for 2022-2024. Whilst Kent’s rates are still above the England average, rates in Medway have fallen below, as of 2022-2024.

**Table 1 Kent trend and comparison data, 3 year suicide rates per 100,000**

	2019 to 2021 rate per 100,000	2020 to 2022 rate per 100,000	2021 to 2023 rate per 100,000	2022 to 2024 rate per 100,000
England	10.4	10.3	10.7	10.9
South East	10.5	10.4	10.4	10.6
Kent	11.7	12.1	11.7	11.3
Medway	10.5	10.6	12	10.3

<sup>34</sup> [Suicides in England and Wales by local authority - Office for National Statistics](#)

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When Office for National Statistics (ONS) data are examined at district level, overall rates across Kent and Medway are decreasing; however, this trend is not consistent across all areas. Around half of Kent districts have rates below the national average, although several have experienced increases since the 2021–2023 period.

Rates in districts such as Dover, Swale, Thanet and Tonbridge & Malling remain above the national average. In addition, some districts have shown little change or sustained higher rates over the past five years. These patterns indicate a clear association with coastal communities and areas of deprivation.

### **Real Time Suicide Surveillance Data**

Since ONS figures are released only on an annual basis (with the next publication expected in Autumn 2026), the Suicide Prevention Programme relies on the use of Real Time Suicide Surveillance (RTSS) data<sup>35</sup> from Kent Police to inform its activity throughout the rest of the year. Shared with the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Programme every fortnight, the data provides the team with an overview of the number of incidents that Kent Police have attended where they believe there has been a suspected suicide.

RTSS data includes information around a range of demographics and risk factors, and enables the Suicide Prevention Programme to identify patterns and trends as they emerge. It is this contextual information not otherwise available within ONS data that has enabled the Programme to raise – at a national level – the impact of domestic abuse on suicide.

Analysis of the records of people who have died in Kent and Medway between 2020 and 2024 shows that of those who have died by suspected suicide in Kent and Medway, 75% were male, 69% were not known to secondary mental health services, 33% had been impacted by domestic abuse (either as victim or perpetrator), 21% were known to misuse alcohol or drugs, and 14% were 25 or under.

### **Access to suicide prevention services**

The Suicide Prevention Programme continues to commission free to access Suicide Prevention Awareness training through Mid Kent Mind. These courses are well-subscribed and are opportunities for anyone living or working in Kent and Medway to develop their understanding of suicide prevention and know how best to support somebody who may be in distress.

The Suicide Prevention Programme also commissions specialist support for those bereaved by suicide through Amparo. This free emotional and practical support is available to anybody impacted by suicide in Kent and Medway, given the heightened risk of those bereaved by suicide to make a suicide attempt.

The Programme is seeking to recommission both services from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027, following expiration of the existing contracts.

### **Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery**

#### **National Framework**

The **Suicide Prevention Strategy for England: 2023–2028**<sup>36</sup> was published in September 2023 under the previous government with aims to prevent self-harm and suicide.

<sup>35</sup> Real Time Suicide Surveillance (RTSS) data should not be considered definitive or wholly accurate, as it is recorded by the police at the point of death, pre coroners' inquest. This means that some deaths may be ruled as something alternative to suicide, or that other deaths may not be included in the data if only later ruled as suicide.

<sup>36</sup> [Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028 - GOV.UK](#)

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### Local Framework

Building on the successes of the previous strategy, in 2025 the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Programme developed the new **Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy for 2026-2030**<sup>37</sup>. It was open to public consultation between July – September 2025. At the time of writing (June 2026) this has not yet been published due to undergoing the final stages of formal governance. However, the eight priorities of the new strategy – which is aimed at both adults and children and young people – are set out below:

- Make suicide everybody's business so that we can maximise our collective impact and support to prevent suicides.
- Address common risk factors linked to suicide at a population level to provide early intervention and tailored support.
- Provide tailored and targeted support to priority groups, including those at higher risk, to ensure there is bespoke action and that interventions are effective and accessible for everyone.
- Provide effective crisis support across sectors for those who reach crisis point.
- Improve data and evidence to ensure that effective, evidence-informed and timely interventions continue to be developed and adapted.
- Reduce access to means and methods of suicide where this is appropriate and necessary as an intervention to prevent suicides.
- Promote online safety and responsible media content to reduce harms, improve and signposting, and provide helpful messages about suicide and self-harm.
- Provide effective bereavement support to those affected by suicide.

### **Communication, Delivery and Outreach**

- The Suicide Prevention Programme has strengthened engagement with both communities and partner organisations through a range of collaborative initiatives.
- In September 2025, the team worked with the **Baton of Hope** charity to coordinate a large-scale public campaign across Kent and Medway. Over 130 Baton Bearers carried the baton through local communities, supported by public events and guest speakers to raise awareness and reduce stigma around suicide. The campaign generated significant local media coverage, helping to promote available support services and encouraging more people to seek help. As a legacy of this work, Kent and Medway has been selected as one of only four national 'Baton of Hope Hubs', with ongoing support from the Programme.
- The Programme has also supported community-led fundraising efforts, including work with the East Kent Spurs Supporters Club and the '**Legend on the Bench**' charity. This has contributed to the installation of around a dozen suicide prevention benches in high-risk locations, providing visible signposting to support services, including illuminated QR codes for access to help at all times.
- Alongside this, the Programme continues to work closely with KCC Communications to promote the '**Release the Pressure**' helpline through targeted campaigns. This has included expanding visibility of support information in everyday settings, such as petrol stations and pharmacy bags, helping to reach a wider audience and improve awareness of available services.

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### Fraud

#### Overview and Prevalence

##### National Context

In its National Strategic Assessment (March 2026) the National Crime Agency (NCA) reported that, although there is no evidence of substantial change in the overall threat to the UK from fraud between 2024 and 2025, the associated harm increased in 2025<sup>38</sup>. Fraud offences are estimated to be 45% of all crime and continues to have a significant impact on communities, with harms including emotional and financial loss, lost economic output and reduced levels of investment.

A recent bulletin for Crime in England and Wales for year ending December 2025, released April 2026 by the Office for National Statistics<sup>39</sup> (ONS), shows there was an estimated 4.4 million fraud incidents, with no statistically significant change compared with the previous years survey (an increase of 8%).

A statistical bulletin released in March 2026 by ONS<sup>40</sup>, using data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, estimated a 31% increase in fraud offences in year ending March 2025 compared with year ending March 2024. This increase was mainly driven by a 30% increase in bank and credit account fraud<sup>41</sup> and a 23% increase in consumer and retail fraud<sup>42</sup>. It also reported that the likelihood of being a victim of fraud was higher for disabled people than for non-disabled people, and higher for women than for men.

##### Local Context

#### **Doorstep Crime (DSC)**

During the period April 2025 to March 2026, a total of 202 Doorstep Crime (DSC) incidents were recorded across Kent (excluding Medway) by Kent County Council. Incident levels remained broadly consistent throughout the year, with noticeable peaks in September 2025 (25 incidents recorded), and March 2026, which saw the highest monthly total (26 incidents). This pattern reflects a sustained level of DSC activity rather than isolated spikes, indicating an ongoing and persistent threat.

DSC activity is heavily concentrated within a small number of trade sectors:

- Roofing remains the most prevalent category, accounting for 75 incidents (37.1%), followed by;
- Property maintenance and general building work, with 50 incidents (24.8%), and;
- Insulation and foam spray activity, with 19 incidents (9.4%).

Together, roofing and general building work represent over 60% of all DSC incidents, confirming these trades as the primary risk areas which should remain the principal focus of enforcement activity, intelligence development and public prevention messaging

Geographically, DSC incidents were recorded across all districts in Kent, although offending is unevenly distributed. The highest volume of incidents occurred in Maidstone (19 incidents), followed by Dover (18 incidents) and Tonbridge & Malling (17 incidents). In contrast, Swale (8 incidents) recorded the lowest number of incidents, with Dartford and Thanet recording nine incidents each.

<sup>38</sup> [NSA 2026 - Home - National Crime Agency](#) 'Harm' is described as the actual impact or harm when a threat becomes real.

<sup>39</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 23 April 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2025](#)

<sup>40</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 26 March 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2025](#)

<sup>41</sup> "Bank and credit account fraud" – usually involved falsely obtaining or using personal bank or payment card details to carry out fraudulent transactions; this can involve using a false identity, deceitful credit application, credit or debit cards, cloned cards, cheque books, or online accounts.

<sup>42</sup> "Consumer and retail fraud" – occurs when good or services were paid for but failed to materialise, were misrepresented at point of sale, or were faulty or stolen; this includes bogus callers, ticketing fraud, phone scams and computer software service fraud

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A significant proportion of incidents were recorded as either 'Out of Area' (21 incidents) or 'Unknown' (17 incidents), which is indicative of mobile, transient offender groups and highlights ongoing challenges around intelligence completeness and location attribution. DSC offending is often conducted by organised and mobile groups, operating across district and county boundaries.

Spatial analysis demonstrates clear clustering of DSC around urban and semi urban population centres, particularly in Maidstone, areas surrounding Tunbridge Wells, parts of East Kent and to the south west of Ashford. Rural and sparsely populated areas show limited offending, reinforcing the assessment that offenders deliberately target denser residential communities.

### **Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery**

The current response to DSC in Kent is intelligence-led, with a strong emphasis on safeguarding, prevention, and partnership working. Continued focus on high-harm offenders, improved intelligence development, and coordinated multi-agency activity will remain critical to reducing the impact of fraud and scams across the county.

#### **Scams and Doorstep Crime**

Kent Trading Standards manages a dedicated safeguarding team assisting victims of financial abuse while also delivering a range of consumer education initiatives. In 2025/26:

- 159 safeguarding engagements were delivered
- £380,500 in losses were prevented
- 65 educational events were delivered
- 5,624 residents were engaged

This activity reflects a strong emphasis on early intervention and prevention, alongside targeted support for vulnerable individuals and repeat victims. Working alongside the Kent Community Warden Service, the safeguarding approach includes direct interventions, financial disruption work (including bank liaison), community education, and partnership-based responses to protect those most at risk.

#### **Complex Investigations and Enforcement**

The Complex Investigations Team within Trading Standards continues to pursue criminals who prey on vulnerable residents. These investigations routinely identify and evidence significant financial detriment, often running into millions of pounds each year. Offending typically involves organised groups using fraudulent business models, pressure selling techniques and repeat victim targeting. Enforcement activity remains focused on high-harm offenders, with prosecutions and financial investigation powers used to disrupt and deter criminality.

#### **Multi-Agency Approach to Fraud (MAAF)**

In Kent, a Multi-Agency Approach to Fraud (MAAF) panel has been established, bringing together a range of organisations to coordinate activity and address the prevalence of fraud. This work is centred on:

- Joined-up community warning messages
- Coordinated education and awareness initiatives
- Liaison with financial institutions
- Targeted actions to tackle high-harm crime types, including doorstep crime
- Allocation of safeguarding measures such as call blockers to vulnerable residents

Organisations involved in MAAF include Kent County Council, Kent Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Crimestoppers, Victim Support, the National Trading Standards Scams Team, and Age UK.

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Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
Support the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Programme.	<p>Suicide prevention activity has continued across Kent and Medway, including delivery of targeted campaigns such as Release the Pressure and ongoing promotion of support services including Amparo.</p> <p>The suicide prevention training programme has been extended to 2027, and a new multi-agency Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Strategy (2026–2030) has progressed through consultation and governance.</p> <p>High-profile awareness activity, including participation in the Baton of Hope Tour, has supported increased engagement and referrals to support services.</p>
Work with Safeguarding Boards to raise awareness.	<p>Safeguarding awareness has been promoted through coordinated partnership activity, including Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week and targeted communications.</p> <p>Community Safety Information Sessions, e-bulletins and reciprocal promotion with safeguarding boards have supported consistent messaging, improved awareness of emerging issues, and strengthened links between safeguarding and community safety priorities.</p>
Teacher in your Pocket (TEPO) - Scams Training	<p>The Teacher in your Pocket (TEPO) scams module was developed and delivered through a combination of short advice videos, printed materials and targeted communications, supporting scams prevention among older and vulnerable residents, particularly those who are digitally excluded.</p> <p>The initiative supports carers, volunteers and frontline professionals to have informed conversations about scams, improving awareness, confidence and early identification of risk. Delivery included face-to-face engagement reaching around 3,000 residents, alongside strong digital reach, including over 500,000 video views and high levels of online engagement. Content remains live and reusable, supporting ongoing prevention activity and providing strong value for money.</p>
BSL Interpretation for TEPO Videos	<p>This project improved access to scams and doorstep crime prevention advice for deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users through accessible TEPO video content designed to be shared by carers and support networks. Through procurement efficiencies, 12 BSL videos were produced within the original funding envelope, increasing the scale of delivery. The project achieved strong reach and engagement, including 2,750 people reached through in-person activity, alongside high levels of online interaction. Feedback indicates improved understanding of risks among BSL users and increased confidence among carers and professionals in delivering safety messages. Content remains live, supporting ongoing accessibility and inclusive prevention.</p>

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### Priority: Substance misuse

#### Context

##### Overview and Prevalence

Substance misuse continues to place a substantial burden on individuals, communities, and services across England and within Kent. National data indicate that around 8.7% of people aged 16–59, approximately 2.9 million people reported using an illicit drug in the past year, including around 1.1 million (3.3%) using Class A substances.<sup>43, 44</sup> In Kent, an estimated 81,000 people use illegal drugs, including around 32,000 using Class A substances such as heroin and crack cocaine. The number of opiate and/or crack users is estimated at 5,647, with around 63% not currently engaged in treatment, indicating unmet need that is higher than the national picture.<sup>45</sup>

Drug-related harm continues to be reflected in mortality trends. In England and Wales, 5,565 deaths related to drug poisoning were registered in 2024, with rates continuing a long-term upward trend. Within Kent, between January 2022 and December 2024, there were 224 recorded deaths from drug misuse, giving a directly age-standardised rate (DSR) of 4.8 per 100,000 population. This is above the South East average (4.5 per 100,000) but below the overall England rate (5.8 per 100,000). Alcohol-related harm also remains significant: in England, there were 7,673 alcohol-specific deaths in 2024, equating to a rate of 13.8 per 100,000. Locally, Kent reported 166 alcohol-specific deaths in 2024, the lowest number since 2021.

Emerging synthetic drug threats remain a concern. In England, deaths linked to synthetic opioids fell from 307 in 2024 to 115 in 2025, mostly involving nitazenes, and 560 deaths have been recorded since June 2023. Recent deaths have also been linked to medetomidine, counted in "xylazine-like substances", often detected alongside nitazenes. Ambulance call-outs involving naloxone fell by 6% in 2025 compared with 2024 and appear to show a seasonal pattern, with higher volumes in summer. This reduction may reflect improved public health and enforcement responses, alongside expanded harm reduction measures, particularly wider naloxone availability and use. KCC Public Health continues to respond through close partnership working, with intelligence-sharing and alerts coordinated through the Local Drug Information System (LDIS) and wider national collaboration on emerging threats.

The wider impact of drug and alcohol misuse is substantial. Substance dependency is closely linked to homelessness, safeguarding concerns, and increasing demand on children's social care services.<sup>43</sup> Nationally, the illicit drugs market is associated with around half of all homicides and acquisitive crimes.<sup>46</sup> Among people entering treatment, around 66% report co-occurring mental health needs, and housing instability remains a key issue, particularly among people using opiates or crack cocaine.<sup>47</sup> Locally, KCC Public Health is working with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Board on the Alcohol Thematic Review, which has identified growing concerns about alcohol dependence alongside mental health challenges and alcohol-related cognitive impairment. These insights are informing improvements in early intervention, integrated pathways and safeguarding responses.

<sup>43</sup> Home Office. Independent Report (Dame Carol Black) – Review of drugs: Summary (updated 17 September 2020); [Review of drugs: summary \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>44</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2024*. [ONS Drug Misuse Report](#)

<sup>45</sup> National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS). Adults – drug commissioning support pack 2023-24: key data

<sup>46</sup> Dept. of Health & Social Care. Independent Report - Review of Drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery (updated 2 August 2021)

<sup>47</sup> Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. Adult substance misuse treatment statistics 2023 to 2024: report. (Published 28 November 2024) - [Adult substance misuse treatment statistics 2023 to 2024: report - GOV.UK](#)

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Investment in treatment continues to deliver clear benefits. Evidence suggests that every £1 invested in alcohol treatment generates around £3 in wider social value,<sup>48</sup> including reduced crime, improved health outcomes and stronger communities. Social Return on Investment approaches are increasingly used to demonstrate these broader benefits.<sup>49</sup>

Public confidence in the report's data is supported by transparency, quality and robust governance. Data are drawn from reliable systems, including health, police and treatment services, with key datasets such as NDTMS quality-assured nationally by OHID. Strong governance and information-sharing agreements ensure data are handled securely and appropriately, while engagement with practitioners and lived experience organisations supports credible interpretation

### **Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery**

Recent national evaluation evidence highlights that **Combating Drugs Partnerships** (CDPs) play a central role in delivering the national drug strategy through a whole-system approach, bringing together partners across enforcement, treatment, recovery and prevention. The evaluation found that effective partnerships are underpinned by strong leadership, pre-existing collaborative relationships, and robust governance and data-sharing arrangements, while also noting challenges such as variation in local priorities and barriers to multi-agency working.<sup>50</sup>

In response to the Professor Dame Carol Black review mentioned above, the government published its 10 year drugs plan to combat illegal drugs titled '**From Harm to Hope**' sets out how national and local partners will focus on delivering three strategic priorities: Break drug supply chains; Deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system; Achieve a generational shift in demand for drugs".<sup>51</sup>

In line with the 2021 national drug strategy, the **Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023--2028**<sup>52</sup> was developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, including law enforcement, healthcare providers and community support services, with the aim of reducing drug- and alcohol-related harm. The strategy is delivered through a strong partnership structure. The Substance Misuse Alliance, the stakeholder engine room for delivery, is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Public Health and meets quarterly. The Strategic Executive Group acts as the Kent Combating Drugs Partnership, also meeting quarterly, and drives delivery of the strategy's 13 priorities through oversight of sub-groups. The Senior Responsible Officer is Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health, supported by representatives from public health, commissioning, police, probation, providers and the voluntary sector. The group is co-chaired by police, who are also highly involved in the Local Drug Information System and the drug death group, and lead wider county arrangements on county lines, prevention and organised crime. This governance supports alignment with national and local priorities and is delivering positive outcomes.

The 13 Priorities for the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy are:

- Improve Prevention, early intervention and behaviour change
- Early Help: Create better Prevention to Treatment Pathways
- Improve hospital and acute pathways to treatment
- Better support for children and young people living with alcohol misusing parents / Preventing inter-generational alcohol misuse

<sup>48</sup> Kent Public Health Observatory Alcohol Needs Assessment (December 2021)

<sup>49</sup> Public Health England (2016). Social return on investment of alcohol and drug treatment: A guide for commissioners. [Social return on investment of alcohol and drug treatment - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>50</sup> Home Office. Process evaluation of Combating Drug Partnerships. [Process evaluation of Combating Drugs Partnerships - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>51</sup> UK Gov. Policy Paper. From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives (updated 29 April 2022)

<sup>52</sup> Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028. [Substance-misuse-strategy-2023-to-2028.pdf](#)

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- Tackling High Rates of Suicide and Self Harm associated with substance misuse
- Continue Improvements to Treatment and Recovery Services
- Improve Criminal Justice Routes to Substance Misuse Treatment
- Improve Treatment and Recovery for Targeted Groups/ Vulnerable People
- Improve Pathways to Treatment and Recovery to Rough Sleepers
- Improve treatment and recovery for people with co-occurring conditions
- Work in partnership to share data and intelligence in order to identify those at risk of drug / alcohol related harm & exploitation and to provide safeguarding and intensive support
- Disrupt Supply of Illegal Drugs

Progress across the priority areas demonstrates both delivery and emerging system challenges:

- **Hospital-to-community pathways:** A pathway template is being used to map routes from hospital into community drug and alcohol support. Early findings suggest significant variation and a lack of consistently defined pathways, particularly where discharge, substance misuse, mental health and possible alcohol-related brain injury intersect
- **Drug and alcohol-related deaths:** In 2025/26, 282 cases were reviewed. Physical health issues were recorded in 191 cases, mental health in 113 and there were 37 confirmed suicides, but data gaps remain around social care contact, criminal justice involvement and recent prison release, which are often recorded as “not known”.
- **Co-occurring mental health and substance misuse:** Work is progressing on a Joint Working Protocol, a champions network and evaluation of a multi-agency panel. This programme is closely linked to the Alcohol Thematic Review, which has highlighted increasing numbers of people presenting with alcohol-related brain damage.

There are strong links with local Community Safety Partnerships and health alliances, particularly in hotspot areas such as Dover and Maidstone. Substance misuse is also closely connected to other Community Safety Agreement priorities, including serious violence and organised crime (for example county lines), so a number of actions cut across more than one priority.

### Communication, Delivery and Outreach:

- Communication and engagement have strengthened over the year. Public and partner-facing communications are now more structured and coordinated, with clearer, more consistent messaging supported by targeted campaigns on prevention, stigma reduction and access to support. Community engagement has expanded, helping to reach more diverse and vulnerable groups.
- The **lived experience recovery organisation** (Reach Out and Recovery) is now firmly embedded in communications and outreach. Lived Experience Recovery Organisations play an important role in shaping and delivering engagement that is credible, inclusive and culturally appropriate, reducing stigma and improving trust – particularly among groups less likely to engage with statutory services.
- Partnership working with services outside the core alliance has also deepened. The **Strategic Executive Group / Combatting Drug Partnership** and **Substance Misuse Alliance** support regular information-sharing and alignment across sectors, with improved data-sharing and clearer referral pathways supporting earlier identification of need, better continuity of care and a more integrated system response. Sub-groups help embed evidence-based practice and shared learning across the county.
- Outreach into communities increasingly uses proactive, targeted and partnership-led in-reach and outreach teams. Activity focuses on engaging underserved and higher-risk groups in settings such as local hubs, housing, probation, domestic abuse services, the voluntary sector and A&E departments. Outreach teams also work alongside trusted organisations, while in-reach embeds support within hospitals, criminal justice settings and housing services to improve accessibility and engagement.

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
Deliver the national 'From Harm to Hope' drugs strategy and Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership governance has been maintained through regular Senior Executive and Alliance meetings, supporting delivery of both the national 'From Harm to Hope' drugs strategy and the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy.</li> <li>A programme of targeted campaigns has been delivered across the year, aligned to key periods such as Alcohol Awareness Week. Emerging risks, including the presence of high-potency synthetic opioids, have been identified and responded to through coordinated multi-agency activity.</li> <li>In addition, new analytical tools, including an alcohol licensing dashboard, are being developed to support improved insight, monitoring and partnership decision-making.</li> </ul>
Licensing Act 2003 Training	A two-day multi-agency training course was delivered in February 2026 on the Licensing Act 2003, bringing together a range of partner organisations from across the county. Strengthening understanding of roles, responsibilities and enforcement powers, supporting more consistent and effective licensing activity. It has also reinforced joint working and shared accountability across responsible authorities.
Local Vape Action Retailer Packs	The Local Vape Action project was launched in Maidstone in February 2026 to reduce underage access to vaping products through early engagement and education. Trading Standards officers visited 34 retailers to undertake test purchase activity and provide tailored advice, with all premises receiving guidance packs funded through this project. The initiative has improved retailer awareness of legal responsibilities, supported targeted follow-up activity with higher-risk premises, and strengthened partnership working across enforcement, public health and community safety partners. It also contributes to wider community safety objectives by addressing links between underage access and anti-social behaviour.

### Priority: Preventing Extremism and Hate

Context
<p><a href="#">Preventing Extremism</a></p> <p><b><u>Overview and Prevalence</u></b></p> <p><b>National Context</b></p> <p>The current UK threat level is <b>SEVERE</b>, meaning an attack is highly likely. The increase announced on 30 April 2026 followed a period of sustained rising threat, including the stabbing in Golders Green on 29 April, but reflects a broader escalation rather than a single incident.</p> <p>In the year ending March 2025, nationally there were 8,778 Prevent referrals, a 27% increase on the previous year and the highest recorded to date. Of these, 20% were discussed at Channel and 17% adopted as Channel cases, with most referrals involving young people (particularly aged 11–15). The data continues to show a mixed and evolving threat picture, with Extreme Right-Wing</p>

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

concerns (21%) exceeding Islamist extremism (10%), and over half of referrals relating to individuals with no clear ideology but wider vulnerability factors.<sup>53</sup>

Nationally, the threat landscape has continued to evolve in response to a range of significant geopolitical, societal and domestic events. The Southport attack in July 2024 and subsequent widespread disorder and riots across the UK marked a significant escalation in community tensions, with events fuelled in part by misinformation and disinformation, and amplified by online platforms, contributing to racially and religiously motivated violence and anti-immigrant sentiment.

There have been a series of national reviews, inquiries and system-wide reflections, aimed at strengthening the UK's approach to counter-terrorism, safeguarding, and early intervention, including:

- The Southport Inquiry (Phase 1)<sup>54</sup>
- The Prevent Learning Review: Southport attack (2025)<sup>55</sup>
- The Prevent Learning Review: Sir David Amess attack<sup>56</sup>
- Full government review of Prevent – to conclude by December 2026
- National Audit Office review of Channel Panel – Kent and Medway being one of the chosen six Channel Panels across the country.

### Local Context

In the Southeast, Prevent activity reflects the national increase, with approximately 1,397 referrals recorded in 2024/25<sup>49</sup>, representing one of the highest regional volumes. This aligns with the national trend of increased referrals following the Southport attack, driven by heightened professional awareness and reporting. The regional picture mirrors national patterns, with a predominance of young people, a high proportion of cases involving no clear ideology, and continued concerns relating to Extreme Right-Wing activity alongside Islamist extremism.

The 2025 **Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP)** (released April 2026) provides the key threats, risks and vulnerabilities within Kent & Medway between January and December 2025. It is used to determine priorities and inform local Prevent delivery plans in Kent and Medway and to complete the required duty of the Kent and Medway Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment (CTSRA). The CTSRA is due to be briefed to statutory partners 01 July 2026.

The five priorities of the CTLP are Extreme-Right Wing terrorism, Self-Initiated attacks, Terrorist exploitation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Islamist extremism, and Extremism within the Prison estate and prison releases.

Overall, the Kent and Medway risk profile reflects national trends, with increasing complexity driven by vulnerability and susceptibilities, online radicalisation, and mixed or unclear ideologies, rather than a single dominant ideological threat

### Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery

Many of the strategies and guiding frameworks remain the same as last year, including:

- **CONTEST**
- **PREVENT**
- **Prevent Duty Guidance**
- **Channel Programme**
- **The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA)**

<sup>53</sup> [Individuals referred to Prevent: to March 2025 \(released November 2025\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>54</sup> [Southport Inquiry \(published April 2026\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Prevent learning review: Southport attack \(updated June 2025\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>56</sup> [Prevent learning review: Sir David Amess attack - GOV.UK \(updated June 2025\)](#)

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Together, these arrangements provide strong assurance that Kent and Medway continue to meet and exceed statutory Prevent duties, with governance, delivery and partnership working aligned to current threat and risk.

The **Kent and Medway Prevent Team** continue to deliver Prevent activity across the county, including managing the Channel process, providing training and awareness, engaging with all statutory partners, other educational establishments, community groups and many other settings. The team also monitor online sentiment, support agencies locally in understanding and responding to the risk of terrorism and radicalisation as well as delivering and leading on work for teams within KCC and Medway Unitary Authority and commissioned services under the Prevent Duty.

**Prevent Priority Area** (*designated by the Home Office*) - Since April 2019 Kent and Medway have remained a designated Prevent priority area which brings with it additional Home Office funding to increase local resources, namely a Prevent Coordinator, Prevent Education Officers and a Prevent Community Engagement Officer. For the year ahead (2026/27) Kent and Medway continue to receive priority status, one of a number across the country and the only priority area in the Southeast. However following the national 25% reduction in Home Office funding for Prevent the Grant funding for the Prevent team has significantly reduced seeing the loss of both Prevent Education Officers.

**Annual Prevent Threat and Performance Exercise** - The Prevent Duty benchmarks outlined in the Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities form the basis of the Home Office annual assurance process and are designed to ensure delivery of Prevent locally in proportion to local threat and risks. The purpose of the assurance process is to illustrate what successful Prevent delivery looks like; identify good practice; proactively identify areas for improvement; improve the quality of feedback to local authorities; and enable the Home Office to tailor their support throughout the year to all local authorities in England and Wales. The 2025/2026 self-assessment completed by the Kent and Medway Prevent and Channel Manager has been graded by The Home Office who has assessed Kent and Medway as “Exceeding” in all benchmarked areas. This represents an uplift in the previous year and provides strong assurance regarding statutory compliance, governance and delivery. The Chief Executives have been formally notified of the outcomes and the next steps in this process, with requirement to share with Community Safety Partnership Executive boards and the Prevent Duty Delivery Board.

**Kent and Medway Prevent Premises Hire and Due Diligence Guidance** - To comply with the Prevent Duty regarding Reducing Permissive Environments, the Kent and Medway Prevent Team have created a ‘Kent and Medway Prevent Premises Hire and Due Diligence Guidance’ document to provide a structured framework to support organisations in undertaking due diligence when hiring out premises, ensuring compliance with the Prevent Duty and wider safeguarding responsibilities.

**PROTECT (Martyn’s Law)** - The Home Office has published statutory guidance under the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn’s Law). The guidance outlines requirements for premises and events in scope and reinforces the expectation that organisations can comply without the need for specialist services. Further national guidance from the Security Industry Authority (SIA) is expected later in 2026.

Within the CONTEST framework, this work is being progressed locally through strengthened coordination of Protect and Prepare activity. Kent County Council is convening a dedicated Protect and Prepare group to oversee implementation readiness, provide strategic oversight of Martyn’s Law requirements, and support partners in understanding and meeting their duties. This includes promoting proportionate preparedness across settings, aligning activity with existing community safety and resilience arrangements, and ensuring a consistent, partnership-led approach to

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

protective security and incident response planning.

### **Communication, Delivery and Outreach**

Communication with the public and wider services outside the core partnership has continued to strengthen, with a greater emphasis on clear, accessible messaging and proactive engagement:

- Targeted briefings and updates shared with education settings, faith groups, and community organisations to support understanding of local threat contexts and safeguarding responsibilities
- Use of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) networks and education safeguarding forums to disseminate timely updates following national and international incidents, alongside tailored briefings for faith and community groups to provide reassurance and contextualised advice.
- Increased use of newsletters and established partnership channels to ensure consistent Prevent messaging, alongside opportunities for two-way dialogue to address concerns and build confidence.

This approach supports transparency, promotes early engagement, and helps ensure that Prevent is understood as a safeguarding duty embedded within wider community safety and public health work.

Some of the approaches used to engage with partners and reach out to communities include:

- Prevent Advisory Group (PAG)
- Communications and Community Engagement
- Education Engagement

**PAG** was developed jointly by Kent County Council and Medway Council, bringing together partners and community representatives to strengthen Prevent delivery across the County. A key strength of PAG is its role in providing a two-way forum for sharing intelligence and community insight, improving messaging and ensuring activity is responsive to local concerns. It has enhanced engagement by creating a trusted space to discuss sensitive issues and has been recognised as emerging best practice which has been shared beyond the county. Overall, PAG demonstrates how embedding community voice within governance structures can improve communication, strengthen outreach and support the effective and consistent delivery of Prevent across Kent.

**Communications and Community Engagement** - coordinated communications approach has improved clarity and consistency of Prevent messaging across partners and communities. This is supported by regular engagement activity, including community events, partner sessions and targeted responses to local concerns. Feedback from communities directly informs communications, helping to build trust and address misconceptions.

**Education Engagement** - Prevent Education Officers (PEOs) provide regular updates and support to schools through newsletters, briefings, DSL networks and direct engagement. This ensures education settings are informed of key developments, risks and training opportunities, supporting a consistent approach to Prevent responsibilities.

### [Hate crime](#)

#### **Overview and Prevalence**

Hate crimes are a subset of notifiable offences recorded by the police. Hate crime is defined as 'any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic'. The five centrally monitored strands of hate crime are: race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> [Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

Hate crime statistics for England and Wales, year ending March 2025<sup>58</sup> show:

- 115,990 hate crimes were recorded (excluding those recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service<sup>59</sup>), equating to a 2% increase when compared to the previous year (113,166).
- A 6% increase in race hate crimes (from 77,901 to 82,490). As in previous years, race hate crimes accounted for the majority of police recorded hate crime (71%, 92,490 offences)
- A 3% increase in religious hate crimes (from 6,973 to 7,164). There was a 19% increase in religious hate crimes targeted at Muslims. The spike in these offences was seen at the time of the Southport murders and disorder in some English towns and cities.
- There were reductions in other hate crime strands; sexual orientation crimes fell by 2% (from 19,127 crimes to 18,702), disability hate crimes by 8% (from 11,131 crimes to 10,224) and transgender hate crimes by 11% (from 4,258 crimes to 3,809)

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Kent Police recorded (including Medway):

- 3,671 notifiable hate crimes. This was a 3.7% reduction, with 142 fewer offences when compared to the previous year.
- 41% of hate crime offences were public order offences (1,507). There was a reduction in these offences when compared to the previous year of 3.9% (61 less offences). 50.5% of hate crime offences were classed as 'Violence against the person' (1,854 offences), with a decrease when compared to the previous year of 5.6% (110 offences).
- Race prejudice accounted for the majority of hate crime incidents, equating to 71.5% (2,628 offences). This was an increase of 0.4% when compared to the previous year (10 more offences).
- The second highest category for hate crime offences was sexual orientation, accounting for 15.6% (574 offences). This was followed by disability prejudice, accounting for 7.6% (280 offences). These two categories also saw reductions when compared to the previous year. Disability prejudice accounted for the lowest proportion of hate crime, accounting for 2.4% (89 offences). Religion / faith / belief prejudice was the fourth category, and accounted for 4.2% (156 offences) between April 2025 and March 2026.

The Kent Police Hate Crime Team continue to work towards enhancing investigative standards across the force, using evidence led rationale to support activity and proposals. **The key areas over the last 12 months remain focused on:**

- Understanding local data
- Internal engagement with front line officers/staff
- External engagement with public services/education/charities

The team also makes use of available internal data to understand 4 key areas of data to support performance. This includes Hate Crime (offence type), Protected Characteristics, Outcomes and Victim Satisfaction.

Overall, hate crime data in Kent indicates a relative stability of reporting, even during periods of unrest/tension as have been seen in other parts of the UK.

<sup>58</sup> [Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>59</sup> Due to a change in the MPS recording system, MPS data for the year ending March 2025 are not comparable with data supplied in previous years and have been excluded from the trend analysis. **If MPS recorded data is included in the overall recorded hate crimes, there were 137,550 incidents hate crimes recorded for year ending March 2025.**

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

### Strategies, Guiding Frameworks and Delivery

**CPS Hate Crime Local Strategic Involvement Panel (LSIP)** - The Panel is made up of Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) and regional police forces, and Hate Crime leads to share and learn from case studies. It is also an opportunity to provide local updates and share good practise.

**National Hate Crime Awareness Week** - The Hate Crime Team supports this annually. Last year not only focused on raising awareness of hate crime and carrying out quality investigations internally, but also supported Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) in the delivery of a hate crime conference open to students, lecturers, local hate crime forum members, the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), and Kent Police. This year's focus will be to increase external engagement with communities to raise awareness and reporting of hate crime, and to deliver input supported by SAFE: Security Advice For Everyone.

**Op Hampshire / Police Race Action Plan (PRAP)** - Op Hampshire provides national processes and guidance for responding to assaults on police officers and staff. The framework recognises both the physical and psychological impact on victims and is now also supported by the PRAP. The Hate Crime Team in collaboration with Tactical Operations have identified key areas of responsibility linked to the support and welfare of officers, and quality investigations where officers/staff are victims of hate crime. The team are developing an Investigative Guidance on Hate Crime Against Kent Police Officers & Staff for 2026, and carry out a monthly review to identify Hate Crime across all 5 protected characteristics committed, including repeat victims.

**Health Partners/Operation Cavell** - The Hate Crime Team hold positive relationships with local health partners and innovated with emergency service partners to address hate crime against emergency workers. A notable achievement has been the development of an engaging and accessible podcast content for frontline South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMB) staff in Kent, with the potential to be shared more widely within SECAMB. This platform is used to share awareness, lived experiences, and practical guidance, ensuring that key messages are delivered. The impact of this initiative is already extending beyond SECAMB in Kent to other geographical areas, with services actively seeking access to the podcast.

The Hate Crime Team are also developing a presentation collaboratively with Prevent and is aimed to support mental health staff across Kent to bring greater awareness on what hate crime is, some of the limitations which exist in law, understand potential risk/importance of information sharing/referrals, and how health partners can contribute to raising positive outcomes through their internal systems and processes.

**Local Hate Crime Forum** - The Local Hate Crime Forum continues to work with external partners from public agencies, charities and community leads. The forum seeks to share case studies for either good practise or learning, from barriers to reporting, through to conviction or sentencing taking place. This is to ensure the forum is not completely police led but develops engagement and input from all stakeholders. The forum also is opportunity for wider partners to provide updates and raise any concerns they have identified within their relevant pipelines linked to hate crime.

## Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions

Actions 2025/26	Summary of Partnership Activity – Year End 2025/26
Strengthen partner understanding and capability in relation to Prevent, including learning from national reviews, training and awareness activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing training delivery, communications and dissemination of national learning have ensured partners remain informed of emerging risks and changes to Prevent guidance.</li> <li>• A comprehensive training offer has been delivered across the year, supported by regular briefings, newsletters and targeted engagement activity. Demand for training has continued to increase, with consistently positive feedback from partners.</li> <li>• This activity has strengthened both strategic understanding and frontline capability, improving confidence among professionals to identify, respond to and appropriately refer concerns relating to extremism and radicalisation.</li> </ul>
Raise awareness of Martyn's Law.	Preparatory activity is underway to support implementation of Martyn's Law, focusing on awareness raising, horizon scanning and proportionate planning. Activity is being coordinated through existing governance structures, ensuring readiness pending publication of full statutory guidance.
Promote Prevent and SOC Awareness Week.	The Prevent and Serious Organised Crime Awareness Week delivered strong multi-agency engagement, involving over 1,500 professionals from a wide range of agencies. The programme increased awareness and strengthened frontline confidence in identifying and responding to risks, particularly in relation to emerging and complex threats. Complementing ongoing training and partnership activity.
Work with partners to understand the key issues from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) and Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment (CTRSA).	Key intelligence and risk information from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) and Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment (CTRSA) has been regularly shared with partners through established governance arrangements, including Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Prevent delivery forums. Formal briefings have been delivered to support a consistent understanding of local threats and risks. Increased reporting from partners, including intelligence relating to community tensions, extremist material and local concerns, indicates strengthened awareness and engagement across the partnership and improved partner understanding of local threats and vulnerabilities.
Promote National Referral Form (NRF).	The National Referral Form (NRF) continues to be embedded as the standard referral mechanism across partners, supported through training, communications and updated guidance. Ongoing promotion ensures consistent understanding and use of referral processes.
Promote Prevent training and communications.	Updated Prevent training and communications plans have been widely disseminated, providing a clear and structured offer for partners. Continued development of e-learning and training resources is supporting increased accessibility and engagement across agencies.

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<p>Raise awareness and educate partners to report extremism concerns and those susceptible to radicalisation.</p>	<p>Ongoing training, communications and partnership engagement have supported improved awareness of extremism and radicalisation risks. Prevent information is regularly disseminated through newsletters, briefings and the KCST bulletin, alongside a tiered training offer for partners. Demand for training has increased year-on-year, with consistently positive feedback, demonstrating improved confidence among frontline professionals in identifying and responding to concerns.</p>
<p>Hateful Extremism Learning Event</p>	<p>The Hateful Extremism Learning Event 2026 was delivered as a hybrid multi-agency event, with 140 in-person attendees and 260 joining online. The event included expert inputs, case studies and interactive exercises to support applied learning. Feedback was highly positive, with strong satisfaction ratings across both formats. Participants reported increased awareness of extremist risks and improved confidence in applying learning within their professional roles, demonstrating both strategic and practical value.</p>
<p>Countering the Extreme Right-Wing Training</p>	<p>Eleven training sessions were delivered across Kent and Medway, with 377 professionals attending. Evaluation shows a significant increase in knowledge and confidence, including improved understanding of radicalisation pathways and greater confidence in identifying and responding to concerns. Participants reported feeling better equipped to recognise risks, have informed conversations and support appropriate safeguarding responses, demonstrating a clear impact on frontline capability.</p>
<p>Racism Awareness &amp; Response Training for Professionals</p>	<p>The project supported delivery of a high-quality educational resource for use by professionals across 30 primary and secondary schools in Kent. Demand significantly exceeded available capacity, demonstrating strong sector-wide need. The project has improved staff confidence in recognising and responding to racism and supported a whole-school approach to inclusion and prevention embedded within school safeguarding and wider practice. Participating schools reported positive feedback, with the resource contributing to longer-term cultural change and strengthening preventive safeguarding activity.</p>

By: Anna Taylor, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny)

To: Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Work Programme

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Summary: This report gives details of the proposed work programme for the Scrutiny Committee and gives members some.

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## 1. Introduction

- a) Any Member of the Council is entitled to give notice that they wish an item relevant to the functions of the Committee (which is not an excluded matter) to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting. On receipt of such a request the item will be included for discussion at the next available agenda setting meeting.
  - b) The definition of an excluded matter referenced above is:
    - a. Any matter relating to a planning or licensing decision,
    - b. Any matter relating to a person in respect of which that person has a right of recourse to a review of right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment,
    - c. Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included in the agenda or discussion at a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
  - c) The Scrutiny Committee has the ability to 'call-in' decisions made by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members. Any two Members from more than one Political Group may give notice within five clear working days from the publication of a decision taken of their intent to call-in the decision along with their reasons.
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## 2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and note the report.

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<b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>			
<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Work Type</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
TBC - Late July	Leader Report One Year On	Placed on agenda for discussion	Leader
TBC - Late July	Budget Monitoring Year End	Annual item	Deputy Leader
TBC - Late July	Executive Report back on SFI - Water Supply Recommendations	Report	Relevant Cabinet Members
23 September 2026	Family Hubs	Placed on agenda for discussion	Cabinet Member for CYPE
23 September 2026	Rape/Grooming Gangs	Placed on agenda for discussion	TBC
21 October 2026	SEND Reform Plan and High Needs Sustainability Grant	Placed on agenda for discussion	TBC
21 October 2026	Kent Flood Risk Management Committee Annual Report	Annual item	Chairman of Flood Risk Committee
09 December 2026	Kent Education Provision Plan - impact of VAT and Business Rates on KCC....	Placed on agenda for discussion	TBC
09 December 2026	Selective Education - Cost of Kent Test selection process to KCC	Placed on agenda for discussion	TBC
27 January 2027	Final Draft Budget and MTFP	Annual item	Deputy Leader
*June 2027	Budget Monitoring Year End	Annual item	Deputy Leader
*July 2027	Scrutiny Committee meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee	Annual item	KCSP
*November 2027	Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee Annual Report	Annual item	Chairman of Flood Risk Committee
*January 2028	Final Draft Budget and MTFP	Annual item	TBC
TBC	VAT & Business Rates on private school fees	Suggested for Future meeting	TBC
TBC	Following OPRN discussion – Relative cost of market-provided versus KCC-owned care homes under the new contract.	Suggested for Future meeting	TBC

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