

# DRAFT

## Kent Community Safety Agreement (April 2026)

### Foreword

To be confirmed

## 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.

## 2. 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.

### 3. 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 three strategic aims have been 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 Bill 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>.
- **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>.

<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, ensuring that learning is captured and used to drive system-wide improvement.

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

### 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.

## 4. 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:

#### Strategic Aim 1

- Kent & Medway Safer Roads Partnership
- Kent & Medway Prevent Duty Delivery Board (PDDDB)
- District / Borough Community Safety Partnerships (local level)
- Kent Police Hate Crime Forum

#### Strategic Aim 2

- Kent & Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group
- Kent & Medway DHR / DARDR Steering Group
- Kent & Medway Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board

#### Strategic Aim 3

- Kent & Medway Channel Panel
- Kent & Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB)
- Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP)
- Kent Substance Misuse Alliance
- Kent & Medway Reducing Reoffending Board

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.

## 5. 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>.

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

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.

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



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