

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MEETING AS THE
CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 5th June, 2024

10.00 am

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





AGENDA

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5th June, 2024, at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

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

Membership

Conservative (10): Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr T Bond, Mr D L Brazier, Mrs L Game, Mrs S Prendergast, Mr O Richardson, Mr S Webb and Vacancy

Labour (1): Dr L Sullivan

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook

Green and Independent (1): Rich Lehmann

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 Introduction/Webcast Announcement
- A2 Apologies and Substitutes
- A3 Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this Meeting
- A4 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2024 (Pages 1 - 6)

B - Scrutiny Committee meeting as the Crime and Disorder Committee

C - To Note

- C1 Work Programme (Pages 87 - 90)

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
General Counsel
03000 416814

Tuesday, 28 May 2024

Timing of items as shown above is approximate and subject to change.

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 24 April 2024.

PRESENT: Mr A Booth (Chairman), Mrs R Binks, Mr T Bond, Mr D L Brazier, Mrs L Game, Ms J Hawkins (Substitute for Rich Lehmann), Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Prendergast, Mr O Richardson, Dr L Sullivan and Mr S Webb

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs B Bruneau, Mr P Cole, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr P J Oakford, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE and Mr D Watkins

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Albiston (Director of Adult Social Care (Operations) Kent), Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Mrs S Hammond (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education), Mrs C McInnes (Director of Education and SEN), Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny), Mr R Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr B Watts (General Counsel)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Mr P Barrington-King (Vice Chairman) and Mr J Betts (Acting Corporate Director, Finance)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

51. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of Mrs Prendergast as being 'present virtually', the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

52. Safety Valve Implications for the Cost of Adult Social Care

(Item C1)

1. Mr Watkins introduced the report which had been requested by Mr Streatfeild, supported by the Chairman, Vice-Chair and Spokespeople. The paper quantified and costed the short, medium and long-term impact of the Safety Valve agreement with regards to costs incurred by adult social care, and the council's overall financial stability.
2. Members asked questions in relation to the report, key issues raised by the Committee and responded to by the Cabinet Member and Officers included the following:
 - a. A Member asked whether savings in one directorate drove costs in another? Mr Watkins explained that any changes would have some impact, whether this be to reduce costs or increase costs later on. This was very difficult to quantify but the most important factor was 'how'

- services were provided rather than purely considering the money spent in particular areas.
- b. Mr Love explained that Safety Valve was not intended to remove services but to get spending back in line with the available funding and reiterated the point that it was not only important to look at how much was being spent but where and how it was spent. The Council was identifying those individuals who needed support and targeting services towards them.
 - c. Mrs Hammond explained that the funding of early years services (0-5 years) was not linked to the Safety Valve agreement. The funding of early years provision had increased and it was important to determine why Kent still had the greatest number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) per head in the country, way above the national average.
 - d. A Member asked a question about the wider education offer available and asked for reassurance that the future implications on other directorates had been considered and addressed. The Cabinet Members agreed with this comment, that a lack of or poor education would have a significant impact on a child's life and work was ongoing to improve the education offer available. Mr Albiston, as the author of the report, commented that the report had focused on the financial answer to the question originally posed by Mr Streatfeild. A further report could be brought to the committee which included information on research and social impacts to provide additional assurance.
 - e. Mr Streatfeild as the Member who originally requested that this item be brought to Scrutiny commented that he had seen joined up working between the Adults Directorate and Children, Young People and Education (CYPE). The boards he sat on meant he had a good overview of the situation, there was not a correlation between having an EHCP and a need for future adult social care. An EHCP was provided in cases of severe and complex need and it was the need that should be focused on rather than the EHCP.
 - f. Members considered that further investigation should be done into the numbers of EHCPs given, what forms of support were and were not being offered and the problems this would create in adulthood.
 - g. It was confirmed that Safety Valve had no implications on the process for annual reviews of EHCPs or the support given to children. There was support available for children whether they had an EHCP or not. A report would be going to the CYPE Cabinet Committee on a new locality model to better target support for SEN with great empowerment within the education system and schools being more involved with making decisions around targeting of resources. Members had concerns around some of the comments made and considered that the active intention was that KCC would issue fewer EHCPs, it was agreed that this was not the only route of support but for some parents it was a vital source of support.
 - h. Members commented that it shouldn't be asserted that neurodiverse issues were not genetic when this hadn't been properly investigated as it was considered that this was frequently the case. This was also the case with other potential triggers including pollution levels, diet and selective school systems. It was important to determine why Kent was an outlier in relation to numbers of EHCPs.
 - i. Members discussed the previous offer of a report back to the committee and following a proposal from Mrs Prendergast, seconded by Mr Hook, the

committee voted on the motion set out below which was supported by majority.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee requires further review of the issues raised at the meeting regarding the social impact and the impact on ASC of Safety Valve. The approach to this will be considered via the agenda setting process with opposition group leaders and discussion with the relevant Portfolio holders.

53. Finance Update

(Item D1)

1. Mr Oakford referred to the most recent Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report – December 2023-24 which was reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 21 March 2024. The overspend was at £30million which was a reduction of £6million since quarter 2. There were significant overspends in the Adults Directorate and Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate and there was evidence of spending controls and management action having a positive impact. However, it was realistic to say that it would be necessary to use reserves at the end of this financial year as after management action there still remained a £18million overspend.
2. Members asked questions in relation to KCC's financial position, key issues raised by the Committee and responded to by the Cabinet Member and Officers included the following:
 - a. In response to a question about avoiding repeating overspends of previous years Mr Oakford confirmed that this would be the second year of being overspent. Controls had been put in place and KCC would continue to look for efficiencies. There was no contingency, the council had to balance its budget and further cuts would have to be made.
 - b. In relation to CYPE it was important to note that this directorate remained in the bottom quartile for costs across the country. The problems were national, without proper funding of Adult Social Care and CYPE local authorities could cease to exist.
 - c. Members raised concerns about the timing of financial information available to the committee. How was it possible to take action when the information being considered for Q1 wasn't received until Q3? The portfolio holder concurred with this view and confirmed that an indication of future numbers would be available within 15 working days of the end of the quarter which would be 90% accurate.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Committee note the finance update provided.

54. SEND Sub-Committee - One Year On Review

(Item D2)

1. Mr Cook introduced this report which was the one year on review of the SEND Sub-Committee. This dedicated sub-committee of Scrutiny had been set up to exercise the functions of the Scrutiny Committee in relation to KCC's SEND provision.

2. Mr Watts explained that the committee, in reviewing the report, had an opportunity to consider what they would like the SEND Sub-Committee to do next, officers would answer technical questions and support the decision made by the committee.
3. The Sub-Committee Chair, Mr Cole presented the report and thanked the guests and colleagues for their time spent with the committee. Children and young people had always been at the heart of the committee's thoughts and aims to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
4. Members asked questions in relation to the work of the SEND Sub-Committee and its review report, key issues raised by the Committee and responded to by the Chair and Cabinet Member included the following:
 - a. In relation to the guests invited to attend the sub-committee, external meetings had been held to gather additional information from visits, virtual meetings and schools.
 - b. Members raised concerns about the numbers of meetings held, the Chair explained the timing of the Accelerated Progress Plan which the sub-committee had reviewed. There were concerns that the information being provided to the committee was outdated and that little progress had been made on improving the situation for SEND families.
 - c. Members considered the proposal for a SEND sub-committee to be a good one, and some believed it should continue but that the format should be reviewed following further discussion.
 - d. Following a comment from Mr Watts the Chairman agreed to hold an informal meeting to further discuss the administrative detail of the proposal, before a further report was presented to the next Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.
 - e. The Chairman proposed that the SEND Sub-Committee be disbanded and the Scrutiny Committee undertake scrutiny and review in relation to KCC's SEND provision.
 - f. This was seconded by Mr Webb.
 - g. The Committee voted on this motion and this was carried.

RESOLVED that the SEND Sub-Committee be disbanded and the Scrutiny Committee undertake scrutiny and review in relation to KCC's SEND provision.

Dr Sullivan, Ms Hawkins and Mr Hook asked that it be noted that they voted against this recommendation.

55. Work Programme *(Item E1)*

1. In response to a comment from Dr Sullivan about the further report back on the social and financial impact of the decision to end funding to Homeless Connect - the Chairman would request this for the Scrutiny meeting on 10 July 2024.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

56. Future Meeting Dates
(Item E2)

RESOLVED that the future meeting dates be noted.

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By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
To: Crime and Disorder Committee – 5 June 2024
Subject: Kent Community Safety Agreement

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

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.
- 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
 - Integrated Care Boards (ICB)
 - Fire and Rescue Service
 - Probation Service
- 1.4 The CSA draws together the key strategic aims of all the relevant services in the crime, disorder and public safety sectors, promoting a joint approach that enables more effective and co-ordinated inter-agency planning that will result in improved outcomes.

1.5 Each CSA reflects its own areas 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 a rolling document which is reviewed annually and refreshed as appropriate, along with the associated CSA Action Plan.

2.2 The Kent CSP has delegated monitoring of delivery 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 latest refresh of the Kent CSA took place in April 2024 (see Appendix A). Full details of the review are included in the attached CSA document, however shown below are the current list of priorities for 2024/25 which remain unchanged from the previous year:

- Domestic Abuse
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable People
- Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Preventing Extremism and Hate
- Substance Misuse
- Road Safety

2.4 Details of the relevant Leads for each priority are contained within the main CSA document along with a summary of the key issues identified by the local CSP strategic assessments.

2.5 In addition to the newly refreshed CSA for April 2024, a report is also attached (see Appendix B) which provides details on the related actions undertaken during 2023/24 by partners to deliver the priority outcomes from the Kent CSA published last year (April 2023).

2.6 In line with the Committee's previous requests the report (Appendix B) includes a summary of related data and contextual information

2.7 The Kent Community Safety Agreement also works to deliver against the countywide ambitions of the statutory responsible authorities. The core focus on effective partnership working embedded within the Kent Community Safety Partnership and the Agreement reflects the need for continued joint working with relevant agencies to meet the needs of Kent's communities.

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 on crime and disorder and should not seek to challenge operation 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 the strategic activity in the arena of crime and disorder. The focus of the Committee's scrutiny should be on the collective work of the partnership rather than the activities of the individual agencies.

3.4 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 2024) and make no comment.
- Make comment on the refreshed Community Safety Agreement (April 2024) and the year-end report on the priorities and actions for 2023/24 .
- Offer recommendations to one or more of the responsible authorities.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Kent Community Safety Agreement April 2024
- Appendix B - Kent CSA Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Contact details:

Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer

anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk

03000 416478

Kent Community Safety Agreement



April 2024

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Version Control

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	April 2017	New Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) – effective from April 2017
2.0	April 2018	Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) - Updated document date to April 2018 - Ch.1 - reference added to 1.1 about version control - Ch.5 - achievements for 2017/18 added - Ch.6 - priorities/cross-cutting themes updated effective from April 2018, including refreshed diagram - Ch.7 - priority leads updated - Appendix A - strategic assessment outcomes updated - Appendix B - MoRiLE outcomes refreshed - Appendix C - refreshed horizon scanning - Appendix D - Police & Crime Plan details updated
3.0	April 2019	Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) - Effective date changed to April 2019 - Ch.3 - updated legislation and addition of partnership changes and challenges - Ch.5 - achievements for 2018/19 added - Ch.6 - minor changes to the chapter acknowledging the 2019 review - Ch.8 - minor changes to the list of plans - Appendix A - strategic assessment outcomes updated - Appendix B - MoRiLE outcomes refreshed - Appendix C - refreshed horizon scanning - Appendix D - minor change acknowledging the latest review of the Police & Crime Plan
4.0	April 2020	Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) - Effective date changed to April 2020 - Foreword – updated to reflect new version - Ch.3 - updated legislation partnership changes - Ch.5 - achievements for 2019/20 added - Ch.6 - minor change to one priority - Ch.7 - minor changes to the list of leads - Ch.8 - minor changes to the list of plans - Appendix A - strategic assessment outcomes updated - Appendix B - MoRiLE outcomes refreshed - Appendix C - refreshed horizon scanning - Appendix D - minor change acknowledging the 2020 review - Appendix E – Kent CSA Priorities and Cross Cutting Themes

5.0	April 2021	<p>Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective date changed to April 2021 - Foreword - updated to reflect latest version - Ch.3 - updated legislation and partnership changes - Ch.4 - change to the named responsible authorities - Ch.5 - achievements for 2020/21 added - Ch.6 - addition of a new cross-cutting theme - Ch.9 - change to the named responsible authorities - Appendix A - strategic assessment outcomes updated - Appendix B - MoRiLE outcomes refreshed - Appendix C - refreshed horizon scanning - Appendix E - addition of a new cross-cutting theme - Logos - updated logos to reflect the changes to the responsible authorities
6.0	April 2022	<p>Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective date changed to April 2022 - Foreword – updated to reflect latest version - Ch.3 - changes made to the landscape, legislation and partnership challenges - Ch.5 - achievements for 2021/22 added - Ch.6 - changes made to priorities and cross-cutting themes, and diagram updated - Appendix A – strategic assessment outcomes updated - Appendix B – MoRiLE outcomes refreshed - Appendix C - refreshed horizon scanning - Appendix D - new Police and Crime Plan added - Appendix E - amendments to reflect Ch.6 - Logos - updated agency logos added
7.0	April 2023	<p>Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective date changed to April 2023 - Foreword – updated to reflect latest version - Ch.3 – changes made to the landscape, legislation and partnership challenges - Ch.4 - change to the named responsible authorities - Ch.5 – achievements for 2022/23 added - Ch.6 – minor update around latest review - Ch.9 - change to the named responsible authorities - Appendix A – strategic assessment outcomes updated - Appendix B – MoRiLE outcomes refreshed - Appendix C – refreshed horizon scanning - Logos - updated agency logos added

- 8.0 April 2024 Refreshed Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA)
- Effective date changed to April 2024
 - Foreword – updated to reflect latest version
 - Ch.3 – changes made to the landscape, legislation and partnership challenges
 - Ch.5 – achievements for 2023/24 added
 - Ch.6 – minor update around latest review
 - Ch.7 – minor change to the list of leads
 - Ch.8 – minor changes to the list of plans
 - Appendix A – strategic assessment outcomes updated
 - Appendix containing MoRiLE removed
 - Appendix B – MoRiLE outcomes to be replaced with Executive Summary Overview (under development)
 - Appendix C – refreshed horizon scanning
-

Contents

Foreword	7
1. Introduction	9
2. Legislation	10
3. Key Changes to the Community Safety Landscape	11
4. Governance	19
5. Key Achievements	20
6. County Priorities	22
7. Leads	26
8. Links to Plans	27
9. Responsible Authorities	28
Appendix A: Strategic Assessments (2023-24)	29
Appendix B: Executive Summary Overview (under development)	30
Appendix C: Horizon Scanning	30
Appendix D: Police & Crime Plan (2022-2025)	32
Appendix E: Kent CSA Priorities and Cross-Cutting Themes	33

Foreword

As the new Chair of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) I am pleased to present the latest refresh of the Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) which takes effect from 1st April 2024 and sets out the strategic ambitions of the KCSP.

Community safety partners have a wide variety of roles to play in protecting residents and communities, from providing reassurance, education, raising awareness, and to support interventions, as well as enforcement when necessary. The Community Safety Agreement sets out how partners in Kent will work together to address the key community safety priorities for the County, identifying the shared objectives and outcomes required to improve the lives of the people of Kent.

I am pleased to say much progress has been made by partners over the last few years, working together to address the issues identified within the CSA and this latest update along with the refresh of the action plan will help support the ongoing focus of the KCSP. The Community Safety landscape is ever changing and the problems we face are increasingly more complex. The KCSP recognises the challenges in addressing these issues and operates alongside a number of cooperating bodies and other multi-agency partnerships.

In recent years the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the cost of living crisis and other significant events, such as international conflicts, have impacted the way we live and work, with the long-term impacts on crime and community cohesion still to be fully understood. Changes to legislation and new duties have also been introduced in recent years, or are being developed, which directly impact the work of partner agencies as detailed in the Kent Community Safety Agreement and need to be taken into account. These include the Serious Violence Duty, Violence Against Women and Girls, the outcomes of recent consultations relating to Community Safety Partnerships and Anti-Social Behaviour, the Criminal Justice Bill which is progressing through Parliament, and the Retail Crime Action Plan. Inevitably these global and local issues will impact on the lives of residents and in turn the work of the partnership, but we will keep working together throughout the year ahead and continue to adapt plans as needed.

All of the above takes place within a context of reduced funding for services across the public and voluntary sectors, making collaborative working more important than ever to maximise the impact of available resources. The challenge ahead of us all is significant and there are many unknowns and uncertainties that we will have to deal with, but by further strengthening our current working relationships and building new relationships where necessary, Kent is up to meeting this challenge

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Chair of the KCSP, Mr Mike Hill, who led the partnership for over 15 years and to recognise all the agencies and individuals that have contributed to the work of the KCSP during that time.

I look forward to working with everyone over the coming years and acknowledge that the success of this agreement can only be achieved through the ongoing delivery of the associated action plans, which would not be possible without the considerable support of the Kent Community Safety Team and partner agencies at both district/borough and county level, as well as non-statutory organisations and the voluntary sector.

I would therefore like to thank everyone involved for their efforts and continued support.

Clair Bell

Chair Kent Community Safety Partnership

Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Community Safety Agreement (CSA) outlines the key community safety priorities for Kent. The CSA is reviewed and refreshed annually, so for details of the current version, effective date and changes to previous documents see version control.
- 1.2. The CSA is mandatory for two tier authorities such as Kent and helps us to meet our statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006) in which responsible authorities are required to consider crime and disorder in the delivery of all their duties.
- 1.3. This agreement aims to develop a more joined-up approach to public service delivery, to enable more effective and co-ordinated strategic planning across partner agencies and to ensure sustainable and lasting improvements in delivering outcomes. It recognises that community safety issues do not always respect district boundaries, and that coordination of effort can lead to economies of scale, joined up working, and more effective outcomes.
- 1.4. Whilst Medway Unitary Authority does not form part of this agreement, it does undertake a similar process, suitable for unitary authorities, which will include an annual strategic assessment of their community safety issues and production of a Community Safety Plan. Where appropriate, partners in Kent and Medway will work collaboratively to tackle common priorities.

2. Legislation

The following Chapter outlines the key pieces of legislation and statutory duties that direct the work of the Kent Community Safety Partnership

- 2.1. The 'Crime and Disorder Act 1998' gave statutory responsibility to local authorities, the police, and key partners to reduce crime and disorder in their communities. Under this legislation the responsible authorities commonly referred to now as Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), were required to carry out three yearly audits and to implement crime reduction strategies. In addition there were a number of other sections contained within the Act that gave CSPs various powers, including the power to share information where necessary to fulfil the duties contained in the Act.
- 2.2. The 'Police and Justice Act 2006' introduced scrutiny arrangements in the form of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, as well as introducing a number of amendments to the 1998 Act including the addition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and substance misuse within the remit of the CSP strategies. Reducing reoffending was subsequently added by the 'Policing and Crime Act 2009', and most recently serious violence was added to the remit of CSPs by the 'Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022'.
- 2.3. The 'Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007' set out further revisions to the 1998 Act, the most notable of which at district/borough level was the replacement of three yearly audits with an annual strategic assessment, triennial partnership plan and public consultations. For two tier authorities such as Kent, a statutory Community Safety Agreement was introduced.
- 2.4. The 'Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011' introduced directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). This brought a requirement for the PCC to have regard to the priorities of the responsible authorities making up the CSPs and for those authorities to have regard to the police and crime objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan. The legislation also brought with it a mutual duty for the PCC and the responsible authorities to act in co-operation with each other in exercising their respective functions.
- 2.5. The requirement for Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) came into effect on 13th April 2011 as a result of the 'Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)'. In Kent and Medway it was agreed that these would be commissioned by the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) utilising pooled funding on behalf of the local CSPs including Medway. The process is managed, coordinated and administered by the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) with input from a wide variety of partners.

3. Key Changes to the Community Safety Landscape

In recent years there have been many changes both nationally and locally that impact upon the work of partners involved in community safety.

National and International

- 3.1. International Conflicts: On 24th February 2024, the UK marked the two-year anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since the war began, thousands have been killed in the fighting, millions more have been forced from their homes, with thousands of Ukrainians finding refuge in the UK. Whilst undeniably the most significant impact of the war is on Ukraine and its residents, there are knock on effects across Europe and the rest of the world in terms of supporting the migration of refugees, provision of humanitarian and military aid, cost of living increases as international trade and global commodity prices were impacted, in particular food and energy costs. On 7th October 2023 the Israel-Hamas conflict began, with thousands reported killed or injured across Gaza and Israel in the following months and an estimated 1.7million of Gaza's population displaced. The recent conflict has seen political protests in the UK and increases nationally in hate crimes, antisemitism, and the impact surrounding the risk to increased radicalisation concerns. It is important for partners to be aware of any changes in community tensions or a rise in anti-Russian sentiment, antisemitism, islamophobia, and extreme right wing narratives, affecting community relations.

- 3.2. Cost of Living: The cost of living has been increasing across the UK since early 2021 (*House of Commons Research Briefing "The Rising Cost of Living in the UK", January 2024*). The annual rate of inflation reached a 41-year high in October 2022, before subsequently easing. Inflation rates affect the affordability of goods and services for households and whilst inflation rates are slowing or falling currently, the price levels are still higher than the year before. High inflation has been impacted by the global demand for consumer goods following the COVID-19 pandemic, related supply chain disruption, high energy and fuel prices linked in part to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and price rises in many areas of the domestic economy. The impact of the cost of living increases have been significant over the last few years but have had the greatest impact on low-income households who spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food, so are more affected by price increases. Food bank charities have reported an increase in demand. The Bank of England has been raising interest rates to try and lower the inflation rate, however this has led to higher borrowing costs for households, notably on mortgage interest rates. It would not be unexpected if

financial pressures led to increases in certain crime types including scams and fraud, retail crime/shoplifting, exploitation, as well as mental health issues, impacts on physical health, homelessness, etc.

- 3.3. Migration and Resettlement: Kent continues to see small boat crossings arriving in the county, although the numbers crossing in 2023 were lower than the previous year, there is the possibility of increased numbers in 2024. Kent County Council (KCC) has raised concerns about the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) that arrive in the county requiring the care of the local authority and the Home Office response to it, in particular the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) which aims to share the burden of care with other local authorities across the country. In July, the High Court ruled KCC must take “every possible step” to increase its capacity to accommodate and look after all unaccompanied asylum-seeking (UAS) children arriving in the county. As a result, KCC is required to identify accommodation which can be utilised to support UAS children at pace. There are currently a number of sites across Kent with more to be established over the coming year. It should be noted the High Court also found that the NTS and the management of the scheme is inadequate and for large periods unlawful; and the Home Office must resolve the issues and ensure that it works fairly and sustainably in the future. Community sentiments and tensions are being monitored, with some high-profile incidents relating to immigration seen in Kent in recent years. In October 2022 Kent saw a self-initiated terror attack at an immigration processing centre in Dover, the only terrorist attack in the UK for 2022. In addition there have been protests at a number of sites including a protest in Dover in March 2023. Going forward there continues to be the high possibility of both pro and anti-migrant related tensions occurring in Kent, which is consistent with the ongoing media coverage around ‘small boat’ migration.
- 3.4. Violence Against Women and Girls: Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an umbrella term used to cover a wide range of forms of abuse against women and girls such as domestic homicide, domestic abuse, sexual assault, abuse experienced as a child, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, misogynistic behaviours by Incels (involuntary celibates) and harassment in work and public life. While men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women. It is a topic of public interest following several high-profile cases in recent years, including the murders of Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa, and the Kent Police Community Support Officer, Julia James. In 2021/22 the Home Office published a Strategy on [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls](#); the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner’s (PCC) Police and Crime Plan entitled ‘[Making Kent Safer 2022-2025](#)’ includes this issue as a priority; alongside this the PCC also set up a Violence Against Women (VAWG) inquiry to develop a series of tangible recommendations to improve practices in Kent. In addition, VAWG was added as a new priority in 2022/23 for the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) as detailed in Chapter 6 of this document.

3.5. UK Strategies to Tackle Drugs and Crime:

In July 2021 the Home Office published the [Beating Crime Plan](#) '*Fewer victims, peaceful neighbourhoods, safe country*'. The plan sets out the strategic approach to: cutting homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime; exposing and ending hidden harms; and building capability and capacity to deal with fraud and online crime. It complements other existing strategies, and work on hidden harms, as well as work that the Government has been doing on domestic abuse and national cyber security strategies. Nationally the Government has invested in a number of programmes and funding schemes to help strengthen the ability to tackle these issues, including: Safer Streets Fund, Violence Reduction Units, Supporting Families Fund, and tackling drugs supply and county lines. Some of these funding streams and programmes are being utilised in Kent.

In December 2021 the Government published '[From Harm to Hope](#)' a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives by reducing the supply and demand for drugs and delivering a high-quality treatment and recovery system. The plan is the first Drugs Strategy which committed the whole Government along with public services to work together and share responsibility for creating a safer, healthier and more productive society. The main aims are to break drug supply chains; deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system; and reduce the demand for drugs through changing attitudes in society. Since the publication of the national plan, a significant amount of work has been undertaken in Kent to implement the requirements including the development of the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy which takes a whole system approach, improving the range of partners signed up to the Kent Alliance for Substance Misuse and making better links to NHS. The strategy aims to prioritise the causes and consequences of drug and alcohol harm, implement a range of harm reduction strategies and ensure there are quality services for very high-risk families, vulnerable people and communities.

3.6. Anti-Social Behaviour: In March 2023 the Government launched a consultation looking at the relationship between Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), the role of CSPs and PCCs in tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the expansion of ASB powers. Simultaneously the Home Office published a research report on the Impact of ASB on individuals and communities, an update to the Statutory Guidance for frontline professionals, an update to the ASB principles, and an update on ASB Case Reviews (formerly referred to as Community Trigger). In November 2023, the findings and recommendations from the consultation were published, and as recently as February 2024 an update to the Government's ASB Action Plan was released. New legislation is currently going through Parliament in the form of the Criminal Justice Bill which aims to strengthen the ASB powers currently available to agencies, along with other measures such as tougher action on knife crime and drugs. In addition the Government has confirmed additional funding for Police to tackle ASB, working with partners to take a problem solving approach and engage with communities. Local partners will be working together to assess the

impact of the changes and to consider implementation going forwards into 2024/25.

- 3.7. Retail Crime: In October 2023 a retail crime action plan was launched, commissioned by the Policing Minister, which sets out policing's commitment to tackling shoplifting and includes advice to retailers on how to provide the best possible evidence for police to pursue in any case. The issue of shoplifting has seen much coverage in the media in the last year and whilst the focus of the action plan relates mainly to police and business retailers there may be elements that the wider partnership is able to support or signpost to.

Changes to Legislation

- 3.8. Domestic Abuse: The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021. The Act introduced a Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales with an amendment to the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), requiring CSPs to send completed DHR reports to the DA Commissioner. In addition, the DA Commissioner's office has developed plans in line with their powers regarding greater oversight of DHRs (particularly the learning and recommendations), as well as other reviews which incorporate DA (such as Safeguarding Adult Reviews). The DA Commissioner has powers to compel public bodies to cooperate with their office and make recommendations for public bodies to respond to within 56 days. The Act gives Tier 1 authorities with support from Tier 2 authorities, statutory requirements linked to support within safe accommodation services, sanctuary, and move-on accommodation. The Act also requires Tier 1 authorities to; create a Local Partnership Board with responsibility for conducting a needs assessment (available [here](#)); b) complete a Domestic Abuse Strategy on safe accommodation (available [here](#)); c) undertake commissioning activity in relation to accommodation-based services for both adult survivors and their children; and d) monitor delivery against the strategy. In March 2022 the Home Office published the [Tackling Domestic Abuse Action Plan](#) which sets out how various aspects of the Domestic Abuse Act will be delivered and will complement the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. In July 2022 the Home Office published [statutory guidance on Domestic Abuse](#) to assist with the implementation of the Act including guidance and support to frontline professionals and sharing of best practice. In March 2024 a Kent and Medway cross Partnership Domestic Abuse strategy was launched, developed by working with those with lived experience, and those who support them. This strategy includes clear commitments which will be monitored through the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Executive Board.
- 3.9. Serious Violence: On 28th April 2022 the 'Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022' introduced a new duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence. In December 2022 the Government published its statutory guidance for responsible authorities on the [Serious Violence Duty](#). The guidance provided information about the new duty including

changes to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ensuring preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for community safety partnerships (CSPs). The guidance also outlined the requirement for strategic needs assessments and Serious Violence Strategies. The KCSP worked in partnership with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the 20 specified authorities named in the duty, along with the relevant authorities (Education and Prisons) and other key partners across Kent and Medway to meet the requirements set out in the guidance. Since the introduction of the guidance a Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board has been established, a Needs Assessment for Kent and Medway has been produced, and a Kent and Medway Serious Violence Strategy developed, with a focus on three key strands including 'Sexual violence and domestic abuse', 'Serious youth violence', and 'Violence linked to drugs and alcohol'.

- 3.10. Fire Safety: The Fire Safety Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021 and commenced on 16 May 2022, followed by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 which came into force on 23 January 2023. The Act was introduced to clarify who is responsible for managing and reducing fire risks in different parts of multi-occupational residential buildings to prevent future tragedies, such as the Grenfell Tower fire where 72 people lost their lives. The regulations are an important step towards implementing the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Whilst these pieces of legislation do not directly affect the work of the multi-agency partnership, the requirements of the Act will make it easier for responsible authorities within the KCSP such as the Fire and Rescue Service to enforce the new duties and ultimately make the lives of residents in Kent safer.
- 3.11. Online Safety: The Online Safety Act 2023 received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 and contains a range of measures intended to improve online safety in the UK, including duties on platforms about having systems and processes in place to manage harmful and illegal content on their sites. The aim is to keep internet users safe from fraudulent and other potentially harmful content and prevent children from accessing damaging material. The Act is intended to keep pace with emerging technologies and will regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content in much the same way that it does content created by humans
- 3.12. Future Considerations: National consultations on a variety of community safety related topics may lead to future changes in legislation or statutory guidance. The Government consulted on a Victims Bill which aimed to build on the foundations provided by the Victims Code to improve victims' experiences within the criminal justice system, this is currently progressing through parliament as the Victims and Prisoners Bill. Some of the areas being looked at include community based support services and advocacy support. The Government also announced it will be introducing new legislation as a result of terror attacks in public spaces, such as happened at the Manchester Arena and other smaller scale attacks; with the

aim to consider security measures at publicly accessible locations. The new Protect Duty, known as [Martyn's Law](#) will place a requirement on those responsible for certain locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. The [Criminal Justice Bill](#) (as mentioned in section 3.6) will strengthen the powers available to the police and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour as well as strengthening the accountability of community safety partnerships in relation to ASB. In addition the bill will include a range of measures relating to tougher action on knife crime and drugs, new offences to help tackle violence against women and girls, new powers to tackle serious and organised crime, etc. In December 2023, the Government released '[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)' – a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children, replacing the 2018 edition. The statutory guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children, and sets out key roles for organisations and agencies to deliver effective arrangements for help, support, safeguarding and protection. [Advances in technology](#) such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) are also worthy of note for future consideration as an emerging and developing issue which has the potential to impact many areas of our lives both positively and negatively.

Partnership Changes and Challenges

- 3.13. [Violence Reduction](#): In 2019, the OPCC was successful in being awarded Home Office funding to set up a multi-agency VRU to remain in place until March 2025. In 2022 the Government introduced the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Kent to deliver a range of violence reduction projects. A further three-year funding settlement was received in 2022 enabling the Serious Violence Duty which required specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including implementing a strategy for the delivery of this duty. Some of the challenges for partners going forward will be to fully embed the Serious Violence Duty, deliver against the aims of the recently completed strategy and tackle the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). In addition, as the Government funding for the VRU in Kent is currently due to end in March 2025, the Serious Violence Board is working on a financial and cultural sustainability plan.
- 3.14. [Increases in Service Demand / Resource Pressures](#): due to the legacy of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis the demand and needs for services remain high while costs increase, and budgets are constrained. The pandemic and associated lockdowns created an increased demand for some support services, one example of which was an increased demand for domestic abuse and sexual violence services. The PCC was successful in bidding for additional funding from the Ministry of Justice to support local domestic abuse and sexual violence support service providers which includes increasing the number of Independent Domestic Violence Advisers and Sexual Violence Advisers in Kent as well as gaining Home Office funding for domestic abuse and stalking perpetrator

programmes. Whilst this was welcome news, in general public sector organisations continue to deal with financial challenges and many are having to closely consider the services that are being delivered.

- 3.15. Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) is a new operational triage model that provides guidance on how Police respond to health related calls to ensure that vulnerable people get the right type of support from the correct services to assist with their needs. Under the National Partnership Agreement (NPA), the police will work with other services (such as the ambulance service, NHS, social services, mental health services and the fire service) to help give vulnerable people the care and support they need from the right agency. RCRP is being adopted by all forces in England and Wales and Kent Police are working closely with partners to deliver the new initiative to ensure vulnerable people receive the specialist health support they need from the appropriate agency
- 3.16. NHS Kent and Medway: In April 2021, NHS England formally accredited Kent and Medway as an Integrated Care System (ICS) as a successor to the STP. On 28 April 2022 the Health and Care Act 2022 received Royal Assent moving the ICS to a statutory footing with the establishment of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs). As of 1 July 2022, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in the NHS in England. The Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (referred to as NHS Kent and Medway) is a statutory organisation that plans and buys healthcare services to meet the needs of the Kent and Medway population and brings the NHS together locally to improve population health and establish shared strategic priorities within the NHS. When NHS Kent and Medway ICB replaced the CCG it became a statutory partner within the Kent Community Safety Partnership.
- 3.17. Kent and Medway Prevent: Kent and Medway remains a Prevent priority area, the only one in the Southeast. The Prevent team continue to be funded by the Home Office with the responsibility for the Prevent duty, partnership work, implementing training and leading the Kent and Medway Channel Panel. The strategic Prevent Duty Delivery Board and internal KCC and Medway Cross Directorate Groups continue to meet regularly. Following the [Independent Review of Prevent](#) (IRP) the Government published updated documentation including the CONTEST strategy (July '23), the Prevent Guidance (September '23) and Channel Guidance (October '23). Whilst the guidance has been updated at a national level the Kent and Medway Prevent Team continue to work with partners locally to implement any relevant changes and to update the latest Counter-Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) which sets the priorities for Kent and Medway 2024/2025 along with the Counter-Terrorism Strategic Risk Assessment (CTSRA) which will be shared with partners (as appropriate) to help raise the profile and understanding of the issues. February 2024 saw the [year on review](#) by the Home Office of the IRP showing the significant progress in implementing the review's recommendations, with 30 of the 34 recommendations now

completed. This has in turn delivered a renewed Prevent capability, which holds the mission of tackling terrorist ideologies at its core and responds confidently to emerging threats facing the UK. Prevent will continue to deliver the high standards we have committed to, and remains agile in responding to the ever-changing threat picture in the UK.

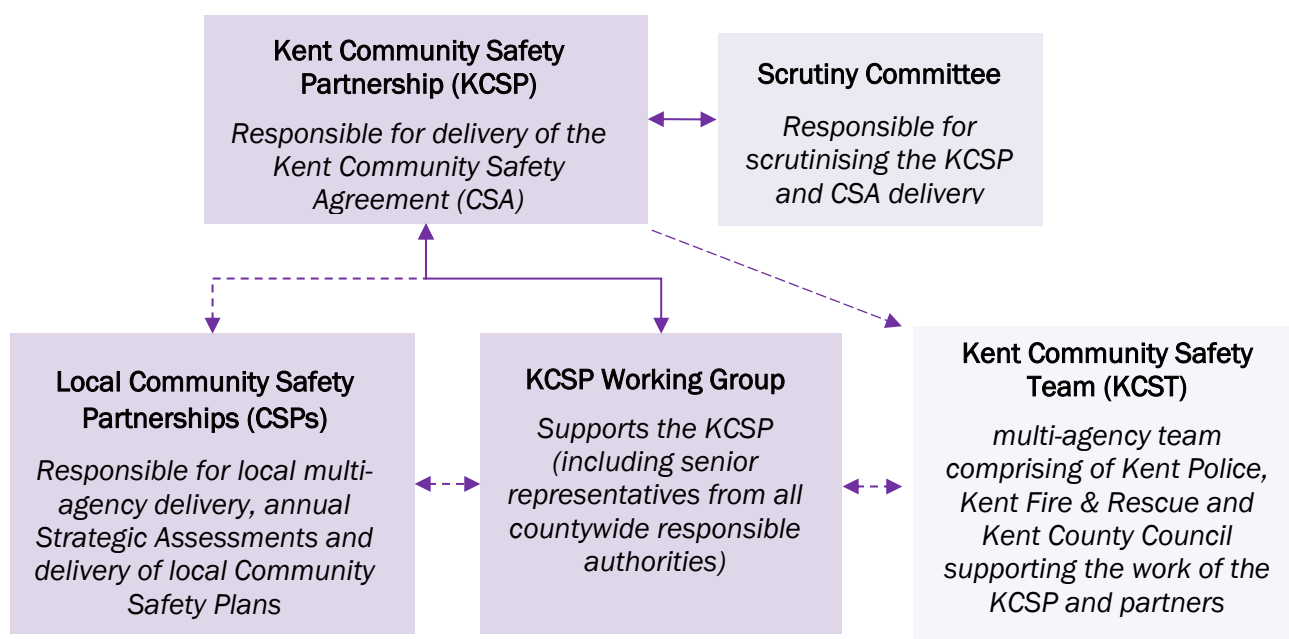
- 3.18. Vision Zero (Road Safety Strategy): In July 2021 'Vision Zero – The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2021 – 2026' was formally adopted by Kent County Council, taking into account new approaches in the road safety industry and with an emphasis on shared responsibility. The strategy uses a Safe System methodology, which 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 is rooted in the belief that every traffic death reflects a failure in the system, and that none are acceptable. It is a methodology that sees all aspects of the system interacting with each other and looks at network risks to prioritise interventions. The Safe System Approach is a proactive methodology to achieve zero deaths. Vision Zero has been included as a priority within the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's current plan and many partners are working towards its delivery through the Kent & Medway Safer Roads Partnership Strategic Board, now chaired by the Kent PCC.
- 3.19. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs): In March 2022, the Home Secretary published the recommendations from Part 2 of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Review. The findings included a recommendation to "undertake a full review of CSPs to initially improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness before assessing their position within the wider landscape of local partnerships across England and Wales". As a result the Government launched a Community Safety partnerships review in March 2023 to consider information sharing between CSPs and PCCs with a phase two of the survey launched in November 2023 to better understand how CSPs currently work. The findings from the first survey have been published including recommendations for closer working between CSPs and the PCC, although detailed guidance on the implementation required has not been received as yet. In addition, the findings from the second phase of the survey have also not been published as yet. Partner agencies should be aware that the functions and demands on CSPs are likely to be affected in the future as a result of the recent consultations but the full impact of the changes remain unclear at this time.

4. Governance

- 4.1. The Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) is responsible for the delivery of the Kent Community Safety Agreement priorities, with membership taken from senior officers across the responsible authorities (see below), local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Chairs and the County Council portfolio holder.

The Responsible Authorities are: Kent Police, District & Borough Councils, Kent County Council, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board and the Probation Service.

- 4.2. The KCSP is supported by a Working Group consisting of senior representatives from all the countywide statutory partners. In addition, the multi-agency Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) which is formed of staff from Police, Fire & Rescue and KCC helps support the work of both county and district partners.
- 4.3. The statutory partners aim to effectively and efficiently deliver the priorities outlined in this agreement and to comply with statutory responsibilities.
- 4.4. The KCC Scrutiny Committee will also serve as the Crime and Disorder Committee as required and therefore will have a statutory responsibility to review and scrutinise delivery of the Community Safety Agreement.



5. Key Achievements

In 2023/24 the key priorities identified as those with the potential to benefit from being supported at a county level included Domestic Abuse, Substance Misuse, Safeguarding Vulnerable People, Serious Violence & Organised Crime, Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour, Road Safety, Preventing Extremism & Hate and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The priorities are addressed through a rolling partnership action plan linking into existing multi-agency partnership arrangements where possible. Progress is monitored and reported to the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) on a regular basis by the Working Group.

Some of the progress and key achievements include:

- Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs): During 2023/24 the KCSP published three completed reviews following quality assurance from the Home Office and ensured that over 152 actions from across a number of DHRs have been implemented resulting in two further DHRs being signed off with all actions completed. The Partnership is committed to ensuring that the learning from these tragic cases is shared with partners to not only help to improve services for all victims of domestic abuse but also to help prevent such homicides in the future. The Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) continues to manage the current caseload on behalf of Community Safety Partnerships across Kent and Medway, these are at various stages of the DHR process. During 2023/2024 the KCST organised and delivered three online seminars to share the learning from the reviews. The seminars were themed on a range of topics which arose from recently published reviews Jean 2018, Kitty 2020 and Leanne 2019 (joint event with Kent & Medway Safeguarding Adults Board), including domestic abuse and trauma, the victims voice, engagement with family, perpetrator management, non-fatal strangulation and carers. Over 350 professionals and frontline staff attended the seminars with 96% rating the event as excellent, very good or good.
- Project Funding: In 2023/24 the KCSP used the Crime Reduction Grant funding provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to fund a total of eight projects delivered by a range of partners, these included:
 - Reducing abusive behaviour policy training
 - Domestic abuse bitesize training videos
 - Tackling victim blaming language training,
 - Hateful Extremism CPD event
 - Multi-agency Approach to Anti-Social Behaviour event
 - Online gaming (gaming bus) interactive awareness sessions in schools
 - Community Safety Information Sessions
 - Pilot project extending an existing Business Crime Reduction Partnership into more rural locations

The achievements and outcomes of these projects are monitored by the KCSP Working Group and reported back to the PCC.

- **Tackling Victim Blaming Language Training:** Following on from the Violence Against Women and Girls Conference delivered by the KCSP in March 2023, the KCST utilised funding from the PCC to commission six online training sessions for partners on the topic of Victim Blaming Language. Over 480 partners attended across the six sessions and were rated an average 4.9 out of 5 with extremely positive feedback received.
- **Multi-Agency Partnership Approach to Anti-Social Behaviour:** Following the release of the Government's action plan on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), the Home Office consultation on ASB, and the planned Criminal Justice Bill, the KCSP delivered a multi-agency event for partners on the topic of ASB. The hybrid event took place in March 2024 with approximately 200 partners attending both in person and online. Partners were able to hear from a range of speakers covering the government action plan, new opportunities, case studies, as well as providing an opportunity to discuss good practice and develop future working arrangements.
- **Workshops / Events:** In addition to the above events, during 2023/24 the KCST organised and delivered a number of additional workshops to support partnership delivery including: a Strategic Assessment Data workshop for district/borough colleagues; two OSARA problem solving training sessions; and new for this year a series of Community Safety Information Sessions (CSIS) delivered as one-hour lunchtime drop-in sessions. Some of the topics covered in the CSIS included the Neighbourhood Policing model for Kent, Scams, Dangerous Dogs, Hate Crime, E-scooters, Co-occurring conditions, Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programmes, etc. The sessions have been well attended and received positive feedback.
- **Information Sharing:** As part of the KCST's role in sharing good practice and facilitating joint working, the team produces regular e-bulletins on Community Safety in Kent, highlighting and promoting partnership working. The bulletins provide brief updates on emerging issues, changes to services, new documentation, data releases, media articles, funding opportunities, etc. Each e-bulletin reaches up to 200 partners involved in community safety across the county.

The KCSP partners have also worked alongside other multi-agency partnership groups to support the development and delivery of key pieces of work referenced in the Community Safety Agreement action plan, such as the new Domestic Abuse Strategy, the Serious Violence Strategy, the Kent Drug & Alcohol Strategy, Vision Zero, Hate Crime Awareness Week, Adult Safeguarding Awareness Week, Domestic Abuse Awareness campaigns and communications, etc.

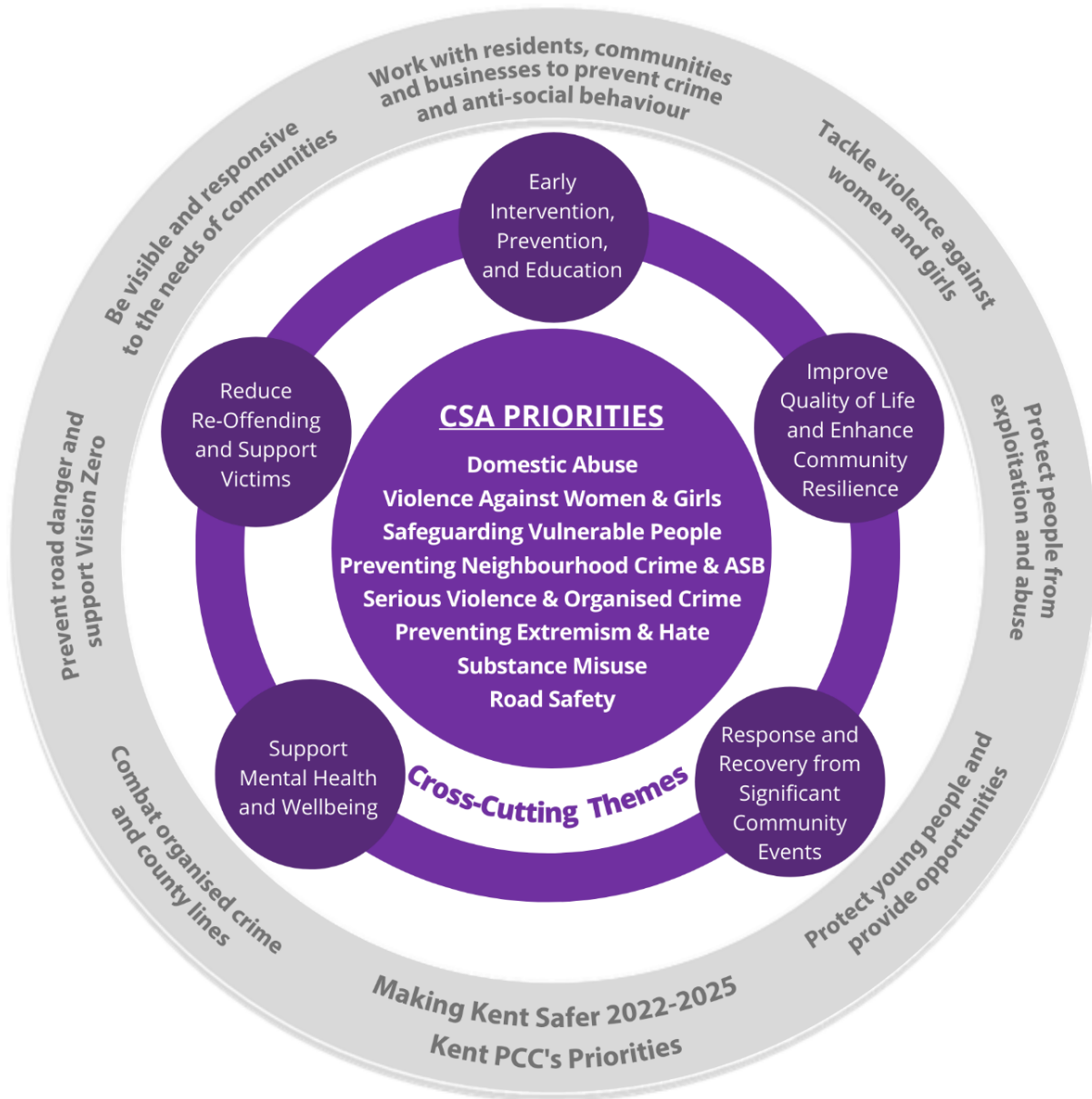
Whilst the CSA action plan sets out how partners aim to address the overarching priorities across the county, each local CSP in Kent has their own community safety plan and associated initiatives aimed at tackling the most relevant issues for their residents.

6. County Priorities

- 6.1. This section sets out the key priorities for the Kent Community Safety Partnership for the forthcoming year along with a number of cross-cutting themes to be addressed within each priority as appropriate.
- 6.2. To help identify the community safety priorities for Kent as well as the local district/borough partnerships a wide variety of datasets are sourced from partner agencies and analysed to ascertain the key issues. The review of data is complemented by other sources of information such as horizon scanning (including legislative changes) and partnership plans etc. which all help to identify and formulate the priorities for the forthcoming year.
- 6.3. At a local level, the twelve Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across Kent undertake an annual strategic assessment process to identify the priorities for their own district/borough community safety plans. The outcomes of these assessments for the new financial year are shown in the appendix and have been incorporated into the review of the priorities for the CSA.
- 6.4. Over the years the priorities and themes within the Community Safety Agreement (CSA) have developed from more crime and disorder based priorities to incorporate a wider range of issues. These include a number of safeguarding issues and new duties such as preventing violent extremism, hate crime, gangs, organised crime groups, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, online safety, cybercrime, mental health, vulnerable people, victims etc.
- 6.5. Since the first version of this document was published in April 2017, there have been a number of changes made to the priorities and cross-cutting themes as new issues emerged, with the refreshed CSA being published annually in April:
- 2018 – A new priority of ‘Preventing Extremism and Hate’ was introduced, which was previously included as part of the ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable People’ priority; In addition a new cross-cutting theme was added to ‘Support Mental Health and Wellbeing’.
 - 2019 – No major changes were made but it was agreed that Violence Reduction and the impact of Brexit would be incorporated into existing priorities i.e. Serious and Organised Crime, Safeguarding Vulnerable People and Preventing Extremism and Hate.
 - 2020 – The priority of Serious and Organised Crime was expanded to become ‘Serious Violence and Organised Crime’ to reflect new proposed duties around Serious Violence and the introduction of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

- 2021 – A new cross-cutting theme was added entitled ‘Response and Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic’ to reflect the impact of the pandemic across all the priorities.
 - 2022 – The above cross-cutting theme was retitled as ‘Response and Recovery from Significant Community Events’ to include more than just the pandemic; the Anti-Social Behaviour priority was expanded to become ‘Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & ASB’; and a new priority of ‘Violence Against Women and Girls’ (VAWG) was added to reflect the increased focus on this topic both locally and nationally.
 - 2023 – No changes were made to the priorities or cross-cutting themes although the ‘cost of living crisis’ and the associated impacts were noted.
- 6.6. In the latest review for April 2024 no changes have been identified for the overarching priorities or the cross-cutting themes although some areas which may require a greater focus as a result of new legislation, government action plans or local concerns, include serious violence, acquisitive crime, and anti-social behaviour. In addition, the ‘cost of living crisis’ remains worthy of note as an issue that continues to affect all sectors of society including public sector services. However any partnership activity relating to these issues can be incorporated into existing priorities such as ‘Serious Violence & Organised Crime’, ‘Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & ASB’, ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable People’ or could be considered as part of the cross-cutting theme ‘Improve Quality of Life and Enhance Community Resilience’.
- 6.7. The only other item to note in relation to the priorities relates to ‘Road Safety’ as this remains an issue for county partners and the public in general, due to the impact that road safety has on the wider determinants of public health and community safety. The lead for this area of work is the multi-agency ‘Kent & Medway Safer Roads Partnership’, reporting back to the KCSP as necessary. Whilst Road Safety is less likely to be referenced as a standalone priority in district / borough Community Safety Plans, it is included in the Police and Crime Plan 2022-2025 along with the Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy.
- 6.8. Whilst the priorities and cross-cutting themes remain unchanged it is acknowledged that work will take place over the year ahead to implement a number of new strategies and legislative changes outlined in documents such as the Kent and Medway Serious Violence Strategy; and to assess the impact of planned developments such as the strengthening of anti-social behaviour powers and potential changes to Community Safety Partnerships. In the meantime the action plan which supports the work of the CSA will ensure these key workstreams are included and actioned as appropriate.

6.9. The diagram below not only includes the priorities and cross-cutting themes for the CSA as detailed above but also shows those identified in the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner’s current Police and Crime Plan entitled ‘Making Kent Safer’ 2022-25. This reflects the statutory requirement to have due regard for each other’s priorities.



ASB = anti-social behaviour

Key:
 Kent CSA priorities & cross-cutting themes (purple).
 Kent PCC’s priorities from Making Kent Safer 2022-2025 (grey).
 See Appendix E for a table display of above diagram.

- Safeguarding Vulnerable People includes: *Child Sexual Exploitation, Fraud, Cybercrime, Victims, Vulnerable People at Risk of Exploitation*
- Serious Violence & Organised Crime includes: *Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), Gangs, Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking, Violence Reduction, Serious Violence Duty, County Lines and Drug Dealing (which also links to the Substance Misuse priority)*
- Neighbourhood Crime & ASB includes: *Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbour Disputes, Environmental Crime, Deliberate Fires, Criminal Damage*
- Preventing Extremism & Hate includes: *Preventing Violent Extremism, Hate Crimes, Radicalisation, Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, Incels (involuntary celibates), Immigration tensions*
- Substance Misuse – *this is a specific duty placed upon Community Safety Partnerships*
- *Response & Recovery from Significant Community Events includes: COVID-19 pandemic*

- 6.10. Several of the identified priorities already have existing multi-agency partnership arrangements in place that are ensuring a coordinated approach across organisations at a strategic level. Including groups such as the *Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group; Domestic Homicide Review Steering Group; Kent & Medway Safer Roads Partnership; Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP); Kent & Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB); Kent & Medway Joint Exploitation Group (JEG); Prevent Duty Delivery Board; Channel Panel; Hate Crime Forum; Kent & Medway Reducing Offending Board; etc.*
- 6.11. These multi-agency partnerships can be further enhanced with links to the Kent CSA and where necessary suitable co-operative arrangements and joint interventions can be established to deliver shared priorities or issues.

7. Leads

Lead officers for each of the priorities have been identified below and have the responsibility for developing, with partners, the action plans to address the countywide priorities. The leads will also act as a champion for the designated priority and provide regular progress updates for the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) and Scrutiny Committee as required.

Priority	Lead
Domestic Abuse	Temporary Superintendent (Domestic Abuse), Kent Police / Chair of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group
Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)	Chief Superintendent (Violence Against Women & Girls), Kent Police
Safeguarding Vulnerable People	TBC
Serious Violence and Organised Crime	Director of Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) / Head of Crime Command, Kent Police
Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & ASB (<i>Anti-Social Behaviour</i>)	Superintendent of Strategic Prevention, Kent Police
Preventing Extremism and Hate	Assistant Director CONTEST and Serious Organised Crime (SOC)
Substance Misuse	Consultant in Public Health, Kent County Council
Road Safety	Chair of Safer Roads Partnership Tactical Coordination Group

8. Links to Plans

The priorities set out in this Community Safety Agreement link to, and assist in the achievement of a number of national and local partnership plans and strategies including:

- Making Kent Safer 2022-2025 (Kent Police and Crime Plan)
- Local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Community Safety Plans
- Kent and Medway Serious Violence Strategy
- Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029
- Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy
- Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy
- Kent County Council's Strategy: Framing Kent's Future 2022-2026
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service Customer Safety Plan 2021-2031
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Assessment 2024
- Kent Criminal Justice Board Strategic Plan
- Kent and Medway Strategic Plan for Reducing Reoffending
- Medway Community Safety Plan
- Vision Zero – Road Safety Strategy for Kent
- Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan
- Counter-terrorism Strategy (CONTEST)
- Prevent and Channel Duty Guidance
- Prevent Duty Delivery Board Action Plan
- Counter Terrorism Local Profile
- Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment
- Prevent Community Engagement Plan
- Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy
- National Retail Crime Action Plan
- National Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan

9. Responsible Authorities

This agreement has been drawn up on behalf of the Partners of the Kent Community Safety Partnership and in association with the Office of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner:-

- Kent Police
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS)
- Kent County Council
- Local District/Borough Authorities
- NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board
- Probation Service
- Local District/Borough Community Safety Partnerships

Appendix A: Strategic Assessments (2023-24)

Local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) strategic assessments: All statutory partners including Police, Fire and Rescue, Health, Probation, County Council services, Local Authority services provided community safety information for use by the twelve Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Kent during the strategic assessment process to help determine their key priorities. The table below shows the outcome of the assessments with the key issues identified locally, either as a main priority, cross-cutting theme, or part of a broader theme.

Priority	No. of CSPs
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) / Environmental	12
Serious Violence (including the serious violence duty and violence reduction)	12
Domestic Abuse	11
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) (inc. stalking & harassment)	11
Safeguarding and Vulnerability (including child sexual exploitation, vulnerable people, support for victims)	9
Substance Misuse (including drug supply, alcohol abuse, night-time economy)	9
Crime (including acquisitive crime, business crime, property, doorstep crime & scams)	8
Extremism & Hate (including preventing extremism, counter-terrorism & hate crimes)	8
Serious and Organised Crime (including gangs, organised crime groups, county lines, modern slavery/human trafficking)	7
Reducing Offending and Reoffending	6
Mental Health and Wellbeing	6
Strengthening Communities (cohesion, resilience, reassurance)	5
Young People (youth engagement, diversionary activities)	5
Road Safety	2

Other focus areas identified include: food and fuel / cost of living crisis, unemployment, safe town centres, improving public confidence, hot spot locations, communication, information sharing, health, etc.

Appendix B: Executive Summary Overview

Please note this section is under development, awaiting guidance from the Home Office.

Appendix C: Horizon Scanning

Using PESTELO analysis members of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) Working Group helped to identify existing and future issues that could impact on communities and may need to be considered as part of community safety plans.

Political:

- Local Council elections in May 2024
- PCC election in May 2024
- General election before end 2024/25
- War in Ukraine
- Middle East Conflict
- Impact on trade and travel rules following EU exit

Economic:

- Cost of living increases
- Fuel Poverty
- Funding pressure on public services
- Financial pressures on businesses and individuals
- Increased need for financial and other types of support, i.e. food banks
- Recession
- Strike action
- Predicted increases in unemployment

Social / Demographic:

- Safeguarding and supporting vulnerable members of society
- violence against women and girls
- domestic abuse
- preventing violent extremism
- child sexual exploitation
- human trafficking/modern slavery
- looked after children
- organised crime groups
- serious violence
- drugs and alcohol
- hate crime
- mental health (including dementia)
- social isolation / loneliness
- retail crime / shoplifting
- anti-social behaviour
- deliberate fire setting
- changing population demographics

Technological:

- Cyber-crime and cyber-enabled crime
- Online safety
- Increased demand
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Environmental (and Geographical):

- New developments
- Extreme weather events, i.e. flooding
- Impact of Brexit on transport routes.

Legislation:

Recent legislation and statutory duties:

- Online Safety Act 2023
- Public Order Act 2023
- Protection from Sex-based Harassment in Public Act 2023
- Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act 2022; *inc. statutory guidance on the Serious Violence Duty*
- Nationality and Borders Act 2022
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021; *inc. statutory guidance on Domestic Abuse duties*
- Counter-Terrorism & Sentencing Act 2021
- Stalking Protection Act 2019

Upcoming legislation and duties:

- Criminal Justice Bill
- Data Protection and Digital Information Bill
- Victims and Prisoners Bill
- Protect Duty (Martyn's Law)

Organisational:

- Public sector restructures
- Impact of new ways of working
- Implementation of new duties / strategies
- Changes to Community Safety Partnerships

Appendix D: Police & Crime Plan (2022-2025)

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). Under this legislation, the PCC is required to produce a Police and Crime Plan that sets out the vision and priorities for policing and community safety, as well as the objectives and ambitions that the Police will be held to account on. The legislation also includes a requirement for the responsible authorities making up the CSPs to have regard to the objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan as well as a mutual duty to act in co-operation with each other in exercising their respective functions.

The following is an extract from the new Police and Crime Plan entitled '[Making Kent Safer](#)' April 2022 to March 2025.

The guiding principles of the plan are:

- Crime is important no matter where it takes place - urban, rural or coastal communities
- Victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do
- Ensure that vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health get support from the right agency

Kent Police's priorities are to:

- Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- Tackle violence against women and girls
- Protect people from exploitation and abuse
- Combat organised crime and county lines
- Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities
- Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero
- Protect young people and provide opportunities

The Police and Crime Commissioner will:

- Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system
- Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation
- Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and funding formula review
- Support volunteering
- Commission services for victims that are needs-led

The Police and Crime Plan priorities included in the diagram on p.20 of the Community Safety Agreement reflect the Kent PCC's priorities detailed above.

Appendix E: Kent CSA Priorities and Cross-Cutting Themes

As highlighted on page 22, Appendix E has been included in the document for digital accessibility purposes. The below tables show the Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) priorities and cross-cutting themes as well as the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's priorities from the Police and Crime Plan 'Making Kent Safer'.

Kent CSA Priorities:
Domestic Abuse
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
Safeguarding Vulnerable People
Serious Violence and Organised Crime
Preventing Neighbourhood Crime & ASB (<i>Anti-Social Behaviour</i>)
Preventing Extremism and Hate
Substance Misuse
Road Safety

Kent CSA Cross-Cutting Themes:
Early Intervention, Prevention and Education
Improve Quality of Life and Enhance Community Resilience
Support Mental Health and Wellbeing
Reduce Re-Offending and Support Victims
Response and Recovery from Significant Community Events

Making Kent Safer (2022 – 2025) – Kent PCC's Priorities:
Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour
Tackle violence against women and girls
Protect people from exploitation and abuse
Combat organised crime and county lines
Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities
Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero
Protect young people and provide opportunities



In partnership with



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



Email: kentcommunitysafetyteam@kent.gov.uk

Tel: 03000 410234

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

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Introduction

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, along with relevant priority leads from the partner agencies.

The following report includes a summary of contextual information and related data outlining the reason each priority has been identified, along with the actions undertaken by partners to tackle the CSA priorities. These are updated by partners and reviewed on a regular basis by the Working Group, any significant changes or areas of concern are reported to the governing group (the KCSP) for consideration as part of the reporting cycle. The priorities identified in the Kent Community Safety Agreement (April 2023) and covered within this report are:

- Domestic Abuse
- Road Safety
- Preventing Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Substance Misuse
- Serious Violence and Organised Crime
- Safeguarding Vulnerable People
- Preventing Extremism and Hate
- Violence Against Women and Girls

The following document includes data taken from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), alongside local partnership datasets up to the end of September 2023 (unless otherwise stated), as well as Government reports and strategic needs assessments. The data is provided as a snapshot to help evidence why priorities have been included with the Community Safety Agreement.

Priority: Domestic Abuse

Context

Domestic Abuse (DA) continues to be identified as a priority for eleven of the local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) either as a stand-alone priority or as part of a broader theme and is detailed within the county agreement.

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence, it is rooted in power and control and includes multiple tactics. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as happening between people over 16 and includes: physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; psychological, emotional or other abuse. It can include a single incident or repeated patterns of abusive behaviour. Children are now defined as victims of abuse in their own right if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either the victim or perpetrator.

Legislation and Statutory Duties

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced measures at both a national and local level. Tier one authorities now have a duty to:

- Appoint a multiagency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. This has been operating since May 2021 and is now Chaired the Head of Housing & Regulatory Services at Maidstone Borough Council, reflecting the partnership nature of this work. This is supported by subject

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

specific subgroups and reports up to the multi-agency Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group.

- Assess the need for safe accommodation-based support. In Kent there have been a number of successive needs assessments (2020, 2021, 2022 & 2023) each with their own focus. Data from the latest assessment is presented below.
- Provide support to survivors and their children residing in safe accommodation, as defined by the Act (refuge, sanctuary, secondary or move on accommodation and specialist accommodation).
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of support within safe accommodation. The Kent and Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029 was published in March, reflecting the aims and ambitions of 20 partners in tackling and responding to abuse, incorporating our safe accommodation duties.
- Monitor and evaluate the strategy. Progress is tracked via a delivery plan as well as a number of quantitative Activity Indicators and monitored by the Kent and Medway Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group. Progress will be reported annually to Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee and the Kent Community Safety Partnership.

National prevalence

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) report, Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2023¹ The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 2.1 million people aged 16 years and over (1.4 million women and 751,000 men) experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023. There was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year compared with the previous year.

The police recorded 889,918 domestic abuse-related crimes (excluding Devon and Cornwall) in the year ending March 2023, a similar number to the previous year. There were 51,288 domestic abuse-related prosecutions in England and Wales for the year ending March 2023, compared with 53,207 in the year ending March 2022.

The 2023 Kent Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment reported² that in 2022/23, there were 26,621 domestic abuse related crimes in Kent a reduction of 10.8% compared to the previous year (-3,235 crimes). Domestic abuse related crimes made up 19% of total crimes (almost one in five crimes), compared to 17.1% nationally.

In 2022/23, there were 2,083 controlling and coercive behaviour crimes recorded by Kent Police, which equates to 1.6 crimes per 1,000 16+ population. There was a reduction of 42% (1,510 crimes) compared to the previous year. However, this reduction was likely the result of a review in November 2021 into the over-recording of this offence in previous years following the transition from the use of Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour-Based Violence (DASH) to Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (DARA) as a risk assessment approach and also changes to the Home Office Counting Rules for recording crimes.

Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment

The 2023 Needs Assessment for Kent has been completed and published. This provides a detailed analysis of need and service use relating to domestic abuse in Kent and is used to determine the level of need for support within the area and inform commissioning decisions.

Key findings from the 2023 Needs Assessment showed:

- The prevalence of domestic abuse remains high, with an estimated 43,800 females and 17,700 males who may have been affected by domestic abuse in Kent in the past year. In contrast to this, the volume of domestic abuse related crimes reported to Kent Police in 2022/23 decreased.
- In line with the reduction in domestic abuse related crimes, referrals to the single point of access for the countywide commissioned Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS)

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Referral, Assessment and Triage service decreased in 2022/23 and fewer survivors were accessing KIDAS refuges and community-based support.

- Although data shows there was some reduction in support service use, comparing take-up with estimated prevalence and reported domestic abuse related crimes shows a gap between the potential need for support and those accessing available services.
- The majority of survivors are supported in community-based support services (through KIDAS and other community-based organisations) and there is a need for an equitable offer of support across the county for both adults and children/young people, with sustainable funding.

Kent & Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Kent & Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy was published in March 2024³, bringing together 20 partners to achieve the joint collective aim to: *'reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse, and ensure that where domestic abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, quickly'*.

The development of priorities, themes and commitments within the strategy was collaborative, seeking feedback and input from a wide range of partners and stakeholders. This included interviews, surveys and workshops with adults, children and young people who were affected by abuse as experts by experience. Their voices are represented throughout the final strategy.

There was significant informal consultation including community events, multiagency workshops, professional forums and an 11-week formal consultation. Responses supported several changes, recorded via a 'You Said, We Did' report.

The strategy commitments are made across three key themes:

1. **Early Intervention & Prevention** - The focus on early intervention and prevention aims to challenge negative societal attitudes and stigma linked to discussing abuse, increasing awareness, reducing the escalation of abusive behaviours and encouraging conversation and education.
2. **Immediate Need**- The support and systems needed when a person is in crisis or in immediate need, exploring the provision and support that adults, children and families need, their experiences of justice and access to housing.
3. **Recovery** - The strategy explores how services can be shaped and developed to respond to a longer term journey and progression to healing, recognising that this involves broader structures which aid the re-establishment of stability

Progress against the Strategy is measured against activity indicators and recorded in a partnership delivery plan, overseen by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group.

Service Provision

The Council has multiple commissioned services that deliver support to survivors of domestic abuse.

The Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) has been in place since April 2017 and runs until March 2026. It is jointly funded by KCC, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Kent Fire and Rescue and District and Boroughs and managed by KCC Adults 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.

In 2023/24 the single point of access, delivered by Victim Support, received 18,458 referrals for adults aged 16 year and over. Of these, 18,070 (98%) were Kent residents, 1,039 (5.6%) were

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

assessed to be at high risk of harm or homicide, 5,840 (31.6%) medium risk and 11,579 (62.7%) standard risk. The Single Point of Access makes safe contact with the individual, offers initial safety planning advice and onward referral, with consent, to the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service.

Throughout 2023/24 KIDAS received 3602 referrals for support both in refuge and the community, with 3154 individuals being supported in total (229 of those were supported in refuge).

The KIDAS contract has enabled KCC and its public sector partners, to further develop partnership working by supporting the delivery of services including the Hospital Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (HIDVA) Service. This is funded by the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board and a pilot has expanded this service to Acute sites within the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust since June 2023.

Further services remain in place to support the council to meet its new statutory responsibilities around providing support to those residing in safe accommodation. This includes the Specialist IDVA Service, Tenancy Support Worker, and Enhanced Therapeutic Support.

Throughout 2023 new services were procured to extend the councils safe accommodation support offer. This includes;

- 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. Up until the end of March 2024 the service has had 88 children and young people referred to receive a range of therapeutic and non-therapeutic, activity-based support.
- The Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents Scheme (SAFER) which enables those experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their own homes safely if they choose to do so, where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This service commenced in December 2023. Up until 31 March 2024 there have been 112 households referred to be made safer by this service, a total of 139 adults and 174 children were residing in these properties. Of those referred, 86 properties have now been made safer with a total of 119 adults and 146 children who are now living in safe accommodation.
- Male refuge pilot – three bedspaces offering support for male survivors and their accompanying children who are fleeing domestic abuse. This service opened in December 2023 and was full within 3 weeks.

One Stop Shops

In the community, partners also work together to deliver Domestic Abuse (DA) One Stop Shops (OSS) which are a multiagency endeavour to help victims of domestic abuse in the local communities across Kent. KIDAS providers have an active role in the delivery of OSS. They offer access to impartial advice, information, and support from a range of agencies, under one roof, free of charge and accessible without pre-arrangement. Between July 2022 and June 2023, there were 1,265 visitors to One Stop Shops, of which 176 accessed the support virtually. During this period, approximately 4.4% of One Stop shop visitors were male and records show that there were 1,820 children living in the households of One Stop Shop visitors. Of those that were asked if they found their visit useful, 78% responded positively.

Communications Campaign

The Know, See, Speak Out; End Domestic Abuse Communications Campaign was in its third year in 2023-24. The campaign has created an annual calendar of social media content that is freely available for organisations across Kent & Medway to utilise. This content is updated monthly and shared via the Media and Communications Subgroup and with a wider mailing list. The 2023 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse used several methods to engage new audiences. There was a 5.6 million reach for total seen content on social media over the course of the campaign. 99

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

organisations shared content, it generated over 700 bookings on the 16 Days webinar series, was featured in a community magazine distributed to 56,000 homes, had posters displayed across the Stagecoach South East bus network and successfully increased press coverage. Press coverage including a BBC South East TV programme feature with a survivor interview, Heart FM breakfast news, KentLive and BBC South East news article was generated.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference

A MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a meeting where information is shared on victims at the highest risk of serious harm or murder as a result of domestic abuse. It is attended by representatives of local agencies such as police and health. Across Kent & Medway there are 13 MARACs, one in each district. Between January and December 2023 there were 2,873 adults discussed at MARAC in Kent and Medway, which included 3,866 children, who are classed as victims in their own right, living in the households where high-risk domestic abuse was taking place.

After review and agreement to change how MARAC functions, the MARAC Hub Change Programme is now underway. The MARAC Hub Manager, and two of the MARAC Co-ordinators are in post, with the third MARAC Co-ordinator going through HR recruitment processes currently, all joining the already in post MARAC Supervisor. Following the formal 'be the best' review and consultation towards the end of 2023, the pilot MARAC post has not been taken forward by NHS Kent and Medway; there is however a commitment from the Chief Nursing Officer that the funding will be made available 2024-25 to support this work and further internal discussions are underway within NHS Kent and Medway to identify the relevant funding required. The Case Management System (CMS) is slowly progressing, with a timeline for delivery and 'go-live' being confirmed shortly. The MARAC Hub Steering Group has met twice this year and it was agreed to create three Working Groups to support and feed into the MARAC Hub Steering Group: Operating Protocols Working Group, Training Working Group, and Case Management System Working Group, these are underway too.

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) fund services in response to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) which includes the following:

- Collaborate Digital, a specialist educational media company has been commissioned to deliver universal, open to all, age-appropriate messages to children and young people with the aim of building social skills, aiding decision-making, supporting resilience, and changing behaviours. The service is focused on examining healthy relationships, attitudes, behaviours, online harms as well as cyber safety and cyber bullying and is aimed at those aged 9-14 years. Delivery commenced in the east of the county, moving to the North during 23-24. The service will be focusing on West Kent during 24-25 and engagement will shortly be commencing with schools. 33 inputs can be delivered during 24-25 and responses for schools on deliveries to date has been overwhelmingly positive. able to receive the programme during 2023. Feedback from one school stated "For [our students], having the time to think about those important issues, but to do it in a way that allowed them to use their creativity, was really beneficial. The assembly was really, really good - it was very well pitched at the age range of pupils that we had in there. And I also found that it covered a big range of topics without rushing through each one, and definitely things that I felt were appropriate to the pupils in our school."

Additional funding was awarded by the PCC for 2024/25 to increase capacity within domestic abuse and sexual violence support services. This included:

- Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) and Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA). Totalling £1,172,672.92. This funding has increased the number of ISVAs and IDVAs available in Kent by 25 FTE, including specialist Child and Young Person (CYP) IDVAs, ISVAs focusing on mental health and teenagers and IDVAs dedicated to supporting elderly victims of domestic abuse.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

- Domestic Abuse (DA) and Sexual Violence (SV) Funding of £664,540.39 has also been allocated to increase the availability of community-based DA and SV services. Services provided include additional Outreach Workers, a free legal advice service, stalking advocates, therapy, and counselling.

The additional ISVA/IDVA and DA/SV funding is only in place until March 2025. This additional funding totals £1.8m and without further funding confirmation from the Ministry of Justice exit planning from these services will need to commence in the autumn. This will present a significant risk to the availability of services to victims but also to the organisations delivering these services.

The PCC has also funded an Adolescent to Parent Violence and Conflict Service through the Restorative Justice contract, which is receiving a number of referrals, particularly through Early Help.

In addition, approximately £1.6 million of additional funding from the Home Office was secured to extend and enhance the delivery of domestic abuse and stalking perpetrator interventions in Kent. This funding commenced on 1 April 2023 and runs to 31 March 2025. Delivery will provide intensive multi-agency case management through a team consisting of Kent Police, the perpetrator interventions provider (Interventions Alliance), and victim services (Lookahead and Victim Support) alongside the delivery of 1:1 perpetrator behavioural change programmes.

The following actions and progress updates highlight just some of the key areas that partners have been working together on to help tackle the issues of domestic abuse and to support victims.

References:

- 1) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2023>
- 2) [Analytics report \(kpho.org.uk\)](https://www.kpho.org.uk/analytics-report)
- 3) [Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029](#)

Actions 2023/24	Progress
<p>Commission and support the Domestic Homicide (DHR) process on behalf of CSPs across Kent and Medway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2023/24 the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) received eleven notifications and has commissioned seven new DHRs. During the same period three DHRs were published; <i>Kitty</i>, <i>Leanne</i> and <i>Diana</i> following quality assurance from the Home Office. • The multi-agency DHR Steering Group meets quarterly to monitor the DHR process and oversee delivery of the action plans associated with each published review. Between April 2023 and March 2024, 152 actions across a number of DHRs have been implemented resulting in two further DHRs being signed off with all actions completed.. • The Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) continues to manage a number of cases which are at various stages of the process. • Learning from reviews is shared with partners via presentations at CSP meetings and short written briefings on each published review is shared across a variety of partners and frontline staff via email and the Safer Communities Portal (access available via MS Teams for professional colleagues). • In 2023 three DHR Lessons Identified seminars were delivered aimed at professionals and frontline practitioners covering the learning and recommendations of recently published cases. Over 350 people attended these events with 96% rating it as excellent, very good or good.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

<p>Review the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Services Website and raise awareness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is being undertaken to fully redevelop the Domestic Abuse Services website in line with requirements. A holding page and new Referral Pathway have been developed to provide information about how to obtain immediate support in Kent and Medway. • The #KnowSeeSpeakOut campaign has created an annual calendar of social media content that is freely available for organisations across Kent & Medway to utilise. This has been commissioned by the KIDAS partners and managed through the Projects & Partnerships team to increase coordinated and consistent messaging around abuse and maximise the impact of campaigns. • The 2023 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse achieved; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highlighting the voices of people who experienced abuse, utilising stories shared by 16 Days of Action Ambassadors to increase understanding and recognition of abuse - 5.6 million reach for total seen content - 99 organisations shared content, - generated over 700 bookings on the 16 Days webinar series, - featured in a community magazine, distributed to 56,000 homes, - posters displayed across the Stagecoach South East bus network - press coverage including a BBC South East TV programme feature with a survivor interview, Heart FM breakfast news, KentLive and BBC South East news article was generated.
<p>Support the review and refresh of the Domestic Abuse Strategy for Kent and Medway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent and Medway 2024-29 Domestic Abuse Strategy has been developed, consulted upon, and published (March 2024). Priorities and themes in the strategy were developed following feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including lived experience narratives.
<p>Raise awareness of the implementation of new burdens introduced by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review of the KIDAS contract has been completed and been through internal governance processes to implement the second contract extension until March 2026. Contract performance and review findings were shared at the KCSP in November 2022. • New services have been developed and procured to support the council in implementing its new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe Accommodation Support Service, delivering support to children residing in safe accommodation, started accepting referrals from August 2023. - Sanctuary Access for Eligible Residents service, expanding the council's safe accommodation support offer, began accepting referrals from December 2023. - Male refuge pilot developed and began accepting referrals from December 2023.
<p>Support the work of Domestic Abuse partners to deliver bitesize open access learning resource videos</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KCSP used some of the Crime Reduction Grant (CRG) project funding provided by the PCC to support domestic abuse partners to develop a range of videos. • Five domestic abuse bitesize learning videos were launched on the 15th of February 2024. These training videos are a free resource that are able to be accessed by partners and aimed at professionals working in public-facing roles

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Support the delivery of Reducing Abusive Behaviour Training (policy deployment) to multi-agency partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project to increase uptake of template policies set out by the Reducing Abusive Behaviour Subgroup (of the DA Executive Group), which aims to coordinate the approaches to tackling abusive behaviour and enable greater focus on changing the behaviour of the individual causing harm.• Template policies helping organisations respond appropriately to clients and staff who may be causing harm through their behaviour have been produced. Free training opportunities to promote the use of these materials have been delivered by Respect on the 26th and 28th of March 2024.• The KCSP used some of the Crime Reduction Grant (CRG) project funding provided by the PCC to support the development of Reducing Abusive Behaviour policies and delivery of related training.
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Priority: Road Safety

Context

Road Safety is often raised by communities as a key concern, especially the perception of road danger and speeding vehicles. In April 2022 the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner published the Police and Crime Plan entitled 'Making Kent Safer' 2022-2025 which outlines the key priorities for the Force and included a new priority on Road Safety and the Vision Zero Strategy. At a county level Road Safety remains a priority within the CSA.

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 Partnership is in the process of restructure and reorganisation which is detailed further below. It is governed by a Strategic Board that is now chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent and includes a Cabinet Member and Representatives from KCC, Chairman of Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, Assistant Director for Customer & Building Safety, Customer Engagement & Safety from Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), as well as a number of cooperating agencies.

Data from personal injury crashes is collected by Kent Police and 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 2023, however the [Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain, provisional estimates](#): year ending June 2023 was published on 29 November 2023¹.

Provisional data on Kent and National Highways Roads (excluding Medway) for 2023 shows 3,324 total Collisions (38 Fatal, 666 Serious and 2,620 Slight) resulting in 4,501 Casualties (41 Fatal, 736 Serious and 3,724 Slight). Compared to 2022 data there was an overall decrease in collisions across all severities of 70 and decrease in casualties by 31. Since the introduction of Kent County Council's Vision Zero strategy in September 2021, Killed or Very Seriously Injured Casualties (KVSIs) are being looked at more closely rather than the traditional KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured). On this basis there was a decrease in Fatal casualties of 3 and an increase of 14 KVSIs compared to 2022. Although the data shows an approximate 0.6% decrease in total casualties in 2023, there is however a 7.8% increase in the number of KVSIs casualties when compared to 2022 figures.

The increase in KVSIs casualties for 2023 (KCC's 12 months compared to DFT's 9 months) is partly

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

reflective of information in the DFT [Provisional road traffic estimates, Great Britain: October 2022 to September 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-road-traffic-estimates-great-britain-october-2022-to-september-2023), published on 13 December 2023 which shows Traffic levels nationally in 2023 was 2.3% higher when compared to 2022 but overall 2.7% lower when compared to 2019 pre-pandemic levels². At the time of writing, traffic flow data for 2023 was not available from the DFT, however an increase of all severity casualties against a potential drop in traffic nationally would be unusual.

2023 casualty data in Kent has seen a slight decrease and remained fairly consistent across all road user types (pedestrian, motorcycle, cars, goods vehicles and micro mobility (electric scooters and electric cycles)) casualties compared to 2022. Pedestrian, Pedal Cyclist and Electric scooters casualty percentages have remained the same when compared to 2022, however there has been a 1% increase in Motorcycle casualties and a 1% decrease in Vehicle casualties when compared with 2022.

Overall casualties have been declining in Kent, they have decreased by 449 which equates to 9% in the 5 year period since 2019. The adoption of Vision Zero and the principles of a Safe Systems approach seeks to continue this decrease in the number of KVSIs.

In September 2021 KCC adopted a five year Road Safety Strategy for Kent and a 30 year vision³. 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 is rooted in the belief that every traffic death reflects a failure in the system, and that none are acceptable. It is a methodology that sees all aspects of the system interacting with each other and looks at network risks to prioritise interventions. The Safe System Approach is a proactive methodology to achieve zero deaths. 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 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.

As part of exploring options for a more proactive approach to road safety engineering, enforcement and behavioural change interventions, trials of new and emerging technology and tools have been undertaken to consider if and how they can be incorporated in our safe system approach. These have included trials in the use of average speed camera technology and AI seatbelt and mobile phone enforcement cameras. Data sources are actively being identified to supplement the use of collision and casualty data, examples include connected vehicle data to identify risks and a trial using British Horse Society data on highway related incident, and near miss location collected by their members.

The restructure and reorganisation of the KMSRP, mentioned above, now reflects the safe system structure and methodology, with working groups for each of the five system themes as well as overarching working groups focusing on the following:

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

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

- Killed or Seriously Injured incidents.
- Weekly partnership activity.

The KMSRP have commissioned an external consultancy company to conduct an external review of the partnership, one of the outputs of this review will be a strategy for the KMSRP.

The KCSP will continue to work with partners to support the road safety agenda including raising awareness with partners around the Vision Zero strategy. The following actions and progress updates highlight just some of the key areas that partners have already worked on together on to help address road safety.

References:

1) *Reported road casualties in Great Britain, provisional estimates: year ending June 2023 (published 29 November 2023)*

2) *Provisional road traffic estimates, Great Britain: October 2022 to September 2023 (published 13 December 2023)*

3) *Vision Zero The Road Safety Strategy for Kent (Adopted July 2021)*

Actions 2023/24	Progress
<p>Raise awareness of road safety campaigns across partnerships to facilitate joint working.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2023, the KMSRP delivered a Winter Drink and Drug Campaign across the county, encouraging drivers to 'make the right choice'. Digital display vans were present in some highstreets featuring the campaign messages and Crimestoppers information. Pub packs were delivered by Kent Police's Licensing team across the county from December 2023 – March 2024. The posters included information on the Drink & Drug Drive campaign, Spiking, VAWG, Crimestoppers and the Victim Support service. Alongside this activity, a campaign was launched by Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner 'PCC's new roads initiative targets persistent offenders' - Roads Policing Initiative Yields Results (kent-pcc.gov.uk) • The KMSRP has created two new working groups 'communications and engagement' and 'safe behaviours' the two groups will work together to raise awareness of road safety messages across social media platforms with a collaborative approach. • In 2024, the KMRSP will be looking at working more closely with the local CSP's to establish where Road Safety is a priority and identify opportunities to work together.
<p>Support delivery of Vision Zero</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC Safer Road Users Team has continued to promote and deliver the Young Driver and Passenger (YDP) course across educational establishments in Kent. Over the next year the YDP course will be further developed and become a partnership resource. The portfolio lead at KCC for Young Driver focused interventions has been selected onto the working group to contribute to the Best Practice national guidance for interventions and campaigns within Road Safety. • Partners of the Safer Roads Partnership are supporting Vision Zero and the Safe System approach through shared collaborative process for education and campaign work across all road user groups. • The KMSRP has looked at 2023 casualty data and created a 'motorcycle' subgroup, this group will identify opportunities to engage with motorcyclists working in partnership with key stakeholders. • Regular meetings take place between reps. from the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) and Safer Roads Partnership to share

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

information.

- The KCST e-bulletin is used to promote campaigns locally to district partners and there are plans to include Vision Zero and Safe System in one of the regular Community Safety Information Sessions during 2024/25

Priority: Preventing Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Context

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has been identified as a priority for all twelve local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) either as a stand-alone priority or as part of a broader theme and following the latest annual review it remains a priority within the county agreement along with preventing neighbourhood crime¹.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported 1.0 million incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) recorded by Police in England and Wales in the year ending December 2023 (including British Transport Police)¹. This was a 4% decrease compared with the year ending December 2022 (1.1 million incidents)¹. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending December 2023 showed that 35% of people had experience or witnessed some type of ASB. In addition 24% perceived ASB to be a fairly or very big problem in their local areas, whilst 8% perceived their local area had a high level of ASB¹. Since the year ending March 2013 survey, the trends across both measures have remained constant, with little change year on year¹.

In Kent and Medway between November 2022 and October 2023 there has been an overall decrease in ASB of -0.8% compared to the previous 12 months, equating to 227 less incidents. At a district level, five of the twelve districts within Kent recorded increases. The most prevalent types of ASB are attributable to 'Rowdy or nuisance gathering in public' with over a third of all incidents in this category (35%) followed by 'Drunken or Rowdy Behaviour' at 19%. The next highest proportion is 'Motor Vehicle Nuisance' with 18%. Together these types of incident account for just over 70% of overall ASB in Kent and Medway.

The Home Office statutory guidance for frontline professionals was originally published in July 2014 following the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the guidance has been updated several times since in 2017, 2021, 2022 and most recently in March 2023 to coincide with the launch of the Government's ASB Action Plan. Since the publication of the 2014 Act partners across the county have worked together to ensure consistency of practice in relation to the ASB Case Review process (formerly referred to as the 'Community Trigger') and to share good practice and deliver training.

In March 2023 the Government launched their Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan² which had three main aims:

- to ensure ASB is treated with the urgency it deserves – including dedicated funding for PCCs working with others to target hotspot enforcement from 2024
- changing laws and systems to take a zero-tolerance approach – including banning of nitrous oxide, new laws to replace the Vagrancy Act, etc.
- giving the police and other agencies the tools to discourage the blight of ASB – including higher fines, and stronger means for councils to revitalize communities

The action plan sets out the range of responsibilities for partners in relation to ASB including PCCs, Police Forces, Local Authorities, Probation, Youth Services, Youth Offending, Housing, and Health Services.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Alongside the publication of the ASB Action Plan in March 2023 the Home Office also published a research and analysis paper entitled: '*Anti-social behaviour: impacts on individuals and local communities*'³ which states that despite often being described as 'low-level crime', existing evidence suggests ASB can result in a range of negative emotional, behavioural, social, health and financial impacts. The key findings from the report noted that demographics and personal circumstances were associated with different types of ASB that were likely to be experienced or witnessed³. ASB impacted nearly all participants' quality of life to some degree and emotional impacts were found among nearly all participants, with annoyance (for 56% of participants) and anger (for 42%) being the most widespread impacts across ASB types³. Fear, loss of confidence, difficulty sleeping and anxiety were also common emotional impacts. While they were less commonly experienced (each by around a quarter of participants), they were described as being more severe and longer lasting³.

In conjunction with the publication of the ASB Action Plan, Research report and updated Statutory Guidance, the government also launched a consultation⁴ in March 2023 around the relationship between CSPs and PCCs with the aim of enhancing the accountability model of CSPs and considering how CSPs and PCCs work together to tackle ASB with the aim of strengthening the co-operative working. The consultation also considered the expansion of ASB powers and whether amendments were required to ensure they are being used effectively. The findings and recommendations from the consultation were published in November 2023⁵ and subsequently the national ASB action plan was updated and new legislation in the form of the Criminal Justice Bill is going through parliament (*at the time of writing*) to strengthen the ASB powers available to agencies.

The KCSP discussed the findings and recommendations at their November 2023 meeting, and in response to the Government's renewed focus, the KCSP hosted a multi-agency hybrid event on ASB in March 2024 with a focus around the Government's ASB Action plan. The Police and Crime Commissioner spoke at the event along with the National Police lead on Anti-Social Behaviour. The event included several key topics which were explored within the overarching theme, including Complex needs, Homelessness, Begging, Vehicle Nuisance, Youth ASB, Deliberate Fires and Community Payback. Those attending in person had access to marketplace stall holders and networking opportunities, and all attendees were able to interact during the event through the Question-and-Answer panels and survey feedback. Following the event a resource pack was shared with attendees including the latest information on ASB, reporting routes, resources, services, etc. and has since been shared with community safety partners more widely.

The Retail Crime Action Plan was published by the National Police Chiefs' Council in October 2023 to set out measures to tackle the rise in shoplifting, catch more offenders and keep retail workers safe⁶. According to the ONS Crime in England and Wales, shoplifting has increased nationally by 37% (to over 430,000 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 and is the highest figure since current police recording practices began for the year ending March 2003¹. Implementation of the action plan is due in 2024/25, and includes a police commitment to prioritise urgently attending the scene of shoplifting instances involving violence against a shop worker, where security guards have detained an offender, or where attendance is needed to secure evidence. Kent police ascertained the top 20 retail crime offenders in Kent and tasked management of each person was taken on by the ASB team. In conjunction with the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) and local authorities the ASB team have ensured a problem solving approach to each person and their offending.

ASB continues to be identified as an issue across the county and remains a priority within the Kent Community Safety Agreement. The KCSP remains committed to supporting local partners where possible but acknowledges that the operational activity is undertaken at a district/borough level by

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

community safety partners. Funding by the Home Office to tackle serious violence on hotspot areas is to be merged with ASB funding for 2024/25. This has meant the identification of 27 hotspot areas by Kent police that will be subject to additional patrols and problem solving. In 2024/25 the KCSP is exploring the potential to deliver further multi-agency training in relation to ASB tools and powers including Community Protection Notices and Case Reviews

The following actions and progress updates highlight just some of the key areas that partners have worked together on to help tackle the issues of ASB.

References:

- 1) Office for National Statistics. *Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2023* (published 25 April 2024)
- 2) Policy Paper - *Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan* (published 27 March 2023)
- 3) Home Office Research & Analysis – *Anti-social behaviour: impacts on individuals and local communities* (published 27 March 2023)
- 4) Home Office Consultation – *Community Safety Partnerships Review and Anti-Social Behaviour Powers* (published 27 March 2023)
- 5) Home Office Consultation outcome - *Community Safety Partnerships review and Anti-Social Behaviour Powers: Government Response* (published 14 November 2023)
- 6) National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) – *Retail Crime Action Plan* (October 2023)

Actions 2023/24	Progress
Use of ASB tools and powers across partner agencies and sharing of good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Police continue to record details of the use of all their ASB powers within each district. The records are accessible to Police via a central repository on SharePoint. Work is continuing with IT to develop a tool to count each power as it is being used. Local Authorities also keep their own records on the use of ASB powers locally. • Sharing of good practice around ASB continues to take place through the Community Safety Information Sessions, the KCST e-bulletins and regular Community Safety Managers (CSMs) meetings held by the district/boroughs. • The KCSP delivered an ASB event in March 2024 (see below) focusing on multi-agency partnership working in relation to ASB which included sharing a range of case studies. • The Government's new ASB action plan (published in March 2023 and subsequently updated) aims to introduce recording of incidents, case reviews, etc. and quarterly reporting to the PCC. Further details and guidance will hopefully be provided in 2024/25
Deliver OSARA Problem Solving training to partners and ensure the learning is being implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSARA training was delivered to Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) in May '23 and one additional multi-agency sessions was delivered to partners in March '24. Further training for partners can be provided on request.
Work with partners to identify and share best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six Community Safety Information Sessions (CSIS) online events were delivered virtually in 2023/24 with approx. 40-50 people attending per session. The new format of one-hour lunchtime briefing sessions has been well received, with the majority of survey responders rating the sessions as four or five, out of five. • CSIS topics have included dangerous dogs, scams, Domestic Abuse Strategy, homelessness, Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) model, co-occurring conditions, healthy relationships, building safety, etc. • KCST e-bulletins achieved the target of nine or more editions produced

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

	<p>and circulated in 2023/24. The bulletins are directly emailed to approx. 200 partners and professionals, however it is expected that the number of recipients is likely to be higher as partners share the bulletins with colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bulletins included a range of information sharing good practice, partnership data, events, training, publications, media reports, legislation, etc.
<p>Deliver an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) event for multi-agency partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ASB event took place on the 19th March 2024 at the Kent County Showground in Maidstone. The hybrid event included delegates attending in person and virtually online with several marketplace stalls in attendance. • Attendees were from a diverse range of agencies from the NHS to Parish Councils and Local Authorities to Adult Safeguarding. • Approximately 200 people attended on the day, with around 125 attending in-person and 75 attending virtually with 89% of those who responded to the post-event survey rating it as 'excellent' 'very good' or 'good' • There were several interactive Question and Answer Sessions held throughout the day around the topics discussed. • A Resource information Pack has been created and has been emailed to all attendees who attended the event, it is also available via the Safer Communities Portal and has been shared with the April edition of the e-bulletin. The pack contains useful information covering government guidance and legislation, a summary of the government's ASB action plan, reporting routes, ASB related organisations, and details of support services and useful resources.
<p>Extend the reach of the Tonbridge Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) into rural locations [pilot project]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new radio system has recently been installed and is working well. The scheme went 'live' at the end of March 2024. • Several retailers have already joined the scheme in the project area whilst other rural businesses have expressed interest and are monitoring progress. • Three radios have also been issued to Beat Officers covering the area which will enable officers to keep in touch with rural businesses in both the day and night-time economy as the scheme expands. • The lead agency has confidence that the scheme will expand as time goes by and extend to other towns and villages.

Priority: Substance Misuse

Context

In a national review of drugs and drug treatment services by Dame Carol Black, it was found that the illicit drugs market in the UK, is worth an estimated £9.4 billion a year, with around 3 million people taking drugs in England and Wales including 300,000 in England taking the most harmful drugs (opiates and/or crack cocaine)¹. Kent Drug deaths from 2018 to 2020 were the highest on record (182 deaths to Kent residents) and the Kent Alcohol specific mortality rate 11.4 per 100,000 people which while lower than the national average is still the highest rate it has been in Kent since 2010. The total number of drug and alcohol-related deaths from Kent real-time surveillance data (the data gathering is a partnership between the police and public health) between April 2023 and March 2024 was 383 deaths. This is a crude rate of 31 sudden deaths from drugs and /or alcohol per 100,000 adult population in Kent. It indicates another increase in sudden deaths from drug and

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

alcohol in Kent. Nitazenes, which are illegal in the UK, are synthetic drugs produced in laboratories. They are similar to heroin and morphine, but can be several hundred times more potent. This contributes to the rising drug deaths in Kent. In response, KCC Public Health are working with all partners including police, in tackling the opiates problem, sharing the latest warnings, guidance and intelligence with partners as quickly as possible to help keep people safe via the Local Drug Information System – a network that includes police, public health, hospitals and substance misuse providers. The team are also in constant contact with councils across the country, pooling knowledge about effective ways to tackle these illicit, dangerous copy-cat products.

Drug and alcohol addiction fuels many costly social problems, including homelessness and rising demands on children's social care¹. The drugs market is driving most of the nation's crimes: half of all homicides and half of acquisitive crimes are linked to drugs². People with serious drug addiction occupy one in three prison places². Taking the health harms, costs of crime and wider impacts on society together, it is estimated that the total costs of drugs to society is over £19 billion, which is more than twice the value of the market itself¹. These findings were anticipated in the Kent Needs Assessments on drugs and alcohol in 2022. Here findings of the increasing complexity, needs of rough sleepers, high degree of co-occurring conditions (mental illness and substance misuse), vulnerability of slipping through gaps in services, poor physical health outcomes, family trauma and early death were outlined alongside changes in substance misuse supply and the harm resulting from complex drug misuse involving cocaine (as well as alcohol and opiates).

The department of health estimates that there is a £3 social return for every £1 spent on alcohol treatment³. Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill-health and disability among 15-49 year-olds in the UK and the fifth biggest risk factor across all ages⁴. It is estimated that there are around 10 million adults in England who drink above the UK Chief Medical Officers' low risk guidelines⁵ and in Kent, around 308,000 were drinking above the recommended levels of alcohol in July 2021³.

National & Local Strategies & Reviews

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 drugs⁶. By the end of 2024/25 the aim is to:

- prevent nearly 1,000 deaths, reversing the upward trend in drug deaths for the first time in a decade⁶
- deliver a phased expansion of treatment capacity with at least 54,500 new high-quality treatment places (an increase of 20%) – with a specific focus on opiate and crack users, rough sleepers and offenders with addiction⁶
- contributed to the prevention of three-quarters of a million crimes including 140,000 neighbourhood crimes through the increases in drug treatment⁶
- close over 2,000 more county lines through relentless and robust action to break the model and bring down the gangs running these illegal lines⁶
- deliver 6,400 major and moderate disruptions (20% increase) against activities of organised criminals⁶

The [Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy for 2023 to 2028](#) is overseen by the Kent Substance Misuse Alliance (a Strategic partnership meeting). The alliance is a partnership of key stakeholders including Kent Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner, KCC Commissioners, NHS commissioners, Mental Health Trust, KCC Safeguarding, Social Care, Trading Standards, Community Safety and others who work together to tackle alcohol and drug related harms. All the priorities in the Kent Strategy are taken from local needs and stakeholder's views and are also

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

aligned to the National Drug Strategy: “From Harm to Hope”. The Alliance governance is reporting to both the Kent and Medway Health and Well Being Board and the Kent Community Safety Partnership. This is important for the wide-reaching nature of substance misuse and the importance of tackling supply, crime and disorder. The heart of this Strategy is to empower, encourage and support individuals and communities to take a more active role in preventing and reducing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol in Kent.

Corporate responsibilities

The 10-year Drug and Alcohol Strategy is required to establish a **combating drugs partnership** that will bring together local partners in order to understand their populations, identify challenges and solutions. These Partnerships will be accountable for delivering the outcomes in the National Outcomes Framework with a named Senior Responsible Officer reporting to central government. Alcohol harms are implicit in this government guideline. In Kent, key systems have been set up to ensure the partnerships and delivery are fit for purpose. The strategy is in place post public consultation. A network is in place via the Kent Substance Misuse (Drug and Alcohol) Alliance which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services. The programme’s Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Kent is the Director of Public Health and reports to central government. A Senior Executive Group has been created chaired by the Director of Public Health and has leads from key agencies (Police, Probation, Providers, Commissioners, ICB (NHS) and Secure Estate. This drives the objectives of the strategy – including its key objective of getting more people into structured treatment and recovery services. There is also a group sitting alongside the Executive Group and the Alliance that tackles system learning on preventing drug deaths and this is linked closely to the Adult Safeguarding Board.

Three main aims of Kent’s Strategy for tackling Alcohol and Drug Harms are:

- Reducing the harmful effects of drug & alcohol on the Kent population.
- Reducing health inequalities caused by drug & alcohol misuse
- Reducing crime and the economic burdens from drug & alcohol misuse

The 13 Priorities for the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy⁷ 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
- 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

Each of these priorities will have an action plan and report to the senior executive group.

Need for Services in Kent

In 2022, the deaths in Kent that are related to alcohol are 36.9 per 100,000⁸. This equates to 603 people in 2022/23. This a little lower than the national rate which is 39.7 per 100,000. However Thanet, Gravesham, and Maidstone rates are higher than Kent’s average at 36.9 per 100,000, and Thanet and Gravesham are higher than national average at 39.7 per 100,000. In Kent and Medway (2022/23) there were over 6,550 hospital admissions in which alcohol is recorded as a primary or

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

secondary diagnosis (including those admitted for toxic effect of alcohol, mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol, etc).

Given the increasing number of people in Kent drinking to hazardous and harmful levels (22% of the Kent population are drinking over recommended units each week and 15% are binge drinking) this is leading to a higher incidence of people becoming physically dependent on Alcohol. Over 14,000 people in Kent are estimated to need help for alcohol dependence and currently only 2,600 are in treatment creating an unmet need of 82% (higher than national average of 80%). For Crack and Opiates – there is an estimated 5,600 people in Kent needing help for this and a treatment gap of around 63% (using Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) estimates).

In Kent, there were over 800 hospital admissions in which substance misuse is recorded as a primary or secondary diagnosis (including those admitted for mental and behavioural disorders resulting from opioids, cannabinoids, cocaine, etc.).

People with mental health issues, who are not accessing care, are known to self-medicate with alcohol and drugs. Co-occurring conditions (Dual Diagnosis) refers to the co-existence of mental health and substance misuse problems. Problematic substance use is one of the most common co-morbid conditions among people with a major mental illness, with prevalence of mental health of around 75% in users of drug services and 85% among users of alcohol services². From Kent real-time surveillance data between April 2023 and March 2024, depression is the predominant psychological health issue followed by anxiety. Depression and anxiety were noted along with reports of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The proportion of clients entering drug treatment with mental health issues is 73.2% (688 patients) while receiving treatment for mental health in Kent; and 82% of clients entering alcohol treatment while receiving treatment for mental health. In Kent the Treatment Substance Misuse Suicidality Audit in 2018 found that 15 to 25% of clients had suicide intent and 41% reported a mental health diagnosis.⁹

Given the figures above – getting people into high quality structured treatment as soon as possible is a key priority for Kent.

Treatment

Between March 2023 and February 2024, there were 5,498 adults accessing structured treatment (for both drugs and alcohol) in Kent with over 1,500 successfully completing treatment free from dependence. During the same period over 1,300 young people received group work and almost 200 accessed structured treatment,

In recognition of the recommendations outlined by Professor Dame Carol Black and the government's 10-year drug strategy, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) has announced a three-year funding package for local authorities. The funding named the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant, is aimed at implementing local measures to address the aims of the treatment and recovery section of the national drug strategy. As a result there will be an investment of approx. £7 million into Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services in Kent over the next 3 years which will increase capacity to tackle substance misuse, provide access to the most vulnerable groups including rough sleepers and those people with co-occurring conditions and via the criminal justice pathways.

This is a direct result of the Dame Carol Black Review and the Government's response to the national crisis in drug and alcohol services. There is national stipulation that there must be no further disinvestment into substance misuse treatment services for the services to remain safe. Kent has traditionally always had better outcomes than the national average, however nationally all services have had cuts over the last 10 years and subsequently a loss in quality services has resulted. Kent services have maintained good ratings however with increased prevalence and

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

complexity services have been stretched. Therefore the re-investment into the services has been welcomed by providers enabling them to re-instate outreach services, psychology services, better training and increased volume of people accessing rehab and detox services. It is noted that it is important to acknowledge the impact of covid 19 pandemic on both the changes on alcohol consumption and access to care and treatment.

Partner services have also been significantly re-organised over the last few years (probation, social care, mental health) and all services are facing increased complexity of patients, a renewed need to work together and improve the pathways to care and support.

One of the key challenges facing the partnership and the commissioned services are getting more numbers of opiate clients into treatment as these are falling nationally and locally. The Commissioning team has done a review of declining numbers of opiate users in treatment in Kent, and outlined what is working and plan for 2024/25:

Improving Treatment and Recovery services

- Learning from opiate drop-out work
- Learning from breakfast/dinner clubs
- Buprenorphine (which is a new opiate substitution therapy) – additional funding
- OHID deep dive - Multiagency Stakeholder engagement into the drop in opiate users into treatment services.

The information provided will help us build on the dialogue between Kent and Central Government to support delivery of the drug strategy and consider what action can be taken to support delivery, including bespoke support for the Kent system and developing case studies that will support others.

Criminal justice

- Communication continues to strengthen between all stakeholders
- Various meetings including CSTR, Custody subgroup, Prison subgroup, reducing reoffending meetings, task and finish meetings and more. Drug and alcohol services and prison data leads reviewing information
- Meetings with NDTMS to ensure that Kent Criminal Justice Partners are recording information accurately
- Audit and review of the Criminal Justice pathways - this includes working with Medway to utilise the Continuity of Care tool affectively.
- Review of Criminal Justice protocols
- Utilisation of bridging prescriptions and 3-way meetings for releases
- Prison in-reach roles
- Reviewing co-location
- Friday prison releases ending

Substance Misuse continues to be identified as a priority for most of the local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) either as a stand-alone priority or as part of a broader theme and following the latest review it remains a priority within the county agreement. It should be noted that there are strong links between Substance Misuse and other CSA priorities such as 'Serious Violence and Organised Crime' in the form of County Lines drug dealing and other associated activities and as such there may be some actions in the 2023/24 action plan which link across more than one priority.

The following actions and progress updates highlight just some of the key areas that partners are working together on to help tackle the issues of substance misuse. The illegal nature of many drugs and the widespread use of alcohol means actions to tackle misuse must be both practical,

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

cost effective and related to the substance in question.

References:

- 1) Home Office. *Independent Report (Dame Carol Black) – Review of drugs: Summary (updated 17 September 2020)*
- 2) Dept. of Health & Social Care. *Independent Report - Review of Drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery (updated 2 August 2021)*
- 3) Kent Public Health Observatory *Alcohol Needs Assessment (December 2021)*
- 4) Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. *Local Alcohol Profiles for England*
- 5) Office for Health Improvement & Disparities. *Guidance - Alcohol: applying All Our Health (Updated 1 March 2022)*
- 6) UK Gov. *Policy Paper. From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives (updated 29 April 2022)*
- 7) *Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028*
- 8) *Local Alcohol Profiles for England*
- 9) *Report to the Kent and Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Board (19th March 2019) – Reducing Alcohol Consumption Deep Dive.*

Public Health Guidance: Alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and recovery: why invest? (published February 2018)

Actions 2023/24	Progress
<p>Work in partnership to deliver the national 10 year 'From Harm to Hope' drugs strategy and the Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy has been published. The webpage and strategy document can be found via this link: https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/health-policies/substance-misuse-drug-and-alcohol-strategy • Senior Executive Meetings / Combating Drug Partnerships and Kent Substance Misuse Alliance meetings took place quarterly throughout 2023/24. • Public Health successfully organised a workshop on alcohol licensing and cumulative impact policy (CIP) involving partners such as licensing officers, community safety managers in the districts, Kent Police and Trading Standards. • The numbers in treatment services have been increased, and Public Health are currently working on analysis focused particularly on increasing numbers of opiate patients into treatment services. • Probation continue to chair the CSTR (Community Sentence Treatment Requirements) Steering Group and the Ops Group. There is good partnership attendance and this continues to support increasing statutory drug rehabilitation requirements (DRRs), alcohol treatment requirements (ATRs), and mental health treatment requirements (MHTRs) at sentence. A further direction is helping to improve women's services in this area recognising the specific circumstances and needs of this cohort. • Continuity of Care Needs is a focus to ensure those requiring drug treatment are linked in with treatment providers within three weeks of release from prison. This will improve chances of successful engagement and treatment. Improved joint approach between prison health, partners and improved information sharing is key. Roll out has started with Probation introducing the 'Probation Notification and Actioning Programme' (PNAP) to improve how Probation are notified that a person has been referred to a community treatment provider from custody so Practitioners can follow up and support the Person on licence to attend the treatment provider appointment.

Priority: Serious Violence and Organised Crime

Context

As a result of changes in legislation and government strategies such as the 'Serious and Organised Crime Strategy', the scope of community safety has expanded over the years beyond the traditional remit of 'crime and ASB' to consider issues such as human trafficking, modern slavery, gangs, organised crime groups (OCGs) etc. In addition, there has been an increased focus around violence reduction, initially with the publishing of the government's Serious Violence Strategy, the development of a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Kent and more recently the introduction of new legislation and statutory duties for agencies around tackling violence. These issues are a priority for many of the local CSPs as well as the KCSP and as such 'Serious Violence and Organised Crime' remains a priority within the CSA.

Legislation and Strategies

In December 2023, the Government published its latest 'Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy 2023-2025: No Place to Hide'. The Strategy states that serious and organised crime is estimated to cost the UK at least £47 billion annually with a minimum of 59,000 people in the UK known to be involved in serious and organised crime¹. The mission of the strategy is to reduce serious and organised crime in the UK which will be achieved through five lines of action; In-county, UK Border, International, technology and capabilities, and multi-agency response. The strategy looks at measuring success through a clear set of performance metrics on the impact of law enforcement activity on reducing serious and organised crime in the UK. Locally partners continue to deliver the aims using the framework that has been developed for counter terrorism and modern slavery as this is a fully embedded framework across Kent partnerships, using the four thematic pillars often referred to as the 4P's, Protect, Prepare, Prevent and Protect (Home office, Nov, 2018)

In March 2019 the Home Secretary announced £100 million Serious Violence Fund, with around a third of the funding (£35million) being invested in Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in 18 police force areas across the Country. Kent received £1.16million in 2019/20 to tackle serious violence including establishing a VRU. The VRU is a multi-agency approach bringing together police, health, local authorities, etc. The initial funding from the Government in 2019/20 has been renewed on an annual basis since that date, and in 2022 the Home Office confirmed that the Kent VRU would receive further funding for the next three years until March 2025.

In July 2021 the Government introduced the Beating Crime Plan which sets out the strategic approach to: cutting homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime; exposing and ending hidden harms; and building capability and capacity to deal with fraud and online crime. It complements other existing strategies, and sits alongside other work on hidden harms.

The Serious Violence Duty (SVD) was introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, to commence on 31st January 2023. The duty places several requirements upon local areas, including agreeing a local partnership arrangement to lead on the duty, a definition of serious violence, having consistent data sharing, analytical processes to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment, and production of a Strategy to set out how the duty will be implemented locally. The work to respond to the serious violence duty has been coordinated by the VRU. There was an existing agreement by the majority of authorities for a partnership board with a definition of serious violence. The Board, which is chaired by the PCC with senior leaders from the specified authorities in attendance, have met and agreed:

- A definition of serious violence for the purposes of the duty which is: Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, robbery and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent such as in domestic abuse, sexual offences, gangs, county lines and drug supply.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

- The Terms of reference for the Board and how the Board will work collaboratively with existing multi-agency meetings where risk factors relating to serious violence are addressed.
- To support a data sharing platform which is now in phase two.
- The Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and Strategy via consultation along with the specified and relevant authorities. Workshops were held across all areas along with surveys to gain the key points to be included. These were finalised on 31st January 2024 and published to the OPCC and VRU Websites as well as being shared with the CSPs².

Kent and Medway's Serious Violence Duty (SVD) priorities are:

- Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse
- Serious Youth Violence a 0-25 approach
- Violence linked to drugs and alcohol

The next steps are for the leads to the three strands of the Strategy to agree plans for delivery and what that will look like.

Prevalence of Violence

Nationally the ONS report on Crime in England and Wales, year ending December 2023, showed that police recorded 2 million offences of violence against the person³, a decrease of 3% compared with the year ending December 2022 (2.1 million offences). This follows large increases in police recorded violence against the person since 2015³. Knife-enabled crime recorded by the police in the year ending December 2023 (excluding Greater Manchester Police and Devon and Cornwall Police) increased by 7% (to 49,489 offences) compared with the year ending December 2022 (46,153 offences), but remain 3% lower compared with the year ending March 2020 (51,206 offences)³.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides the best picture of the overall trend in violent crime³. Estimates from the CSEW for the year ending December 2023 showed that people aged 16 and over experienced an estimated 1 million violence incidents, indicating no change compared with the year ending December 2022 survey³. This follows on from a general downward trend in violent crime since its peak in 1995³.

In Kent violent crime (offences of violence against the person, sexual offences, and robbery) account for the greatest proportion of total crime. In the 12 months November 2022 to October 2023, there has been an 8.2% decrease (-7,188 offences) compared to the previous 12 months for the county. For Kent (excluding Medway) there has been an -8.5% decrease (-6,105 offences) with all districts seeing decreases. It is important to recognise that most serious violent crime remains rare. The vast majority (91%) of violent offences fall within the category of violence against the person (including violence without injury); followed by Sexual offences (8%) and then Robbery, all of which have declined during this 12 month period.

Public place violence is unevenly spread across the County with districts on the North Kent coastline being those most affected. It also affects those aged under 25 more than those aged over 25, with 40% of the victims of public place violence aged between 10-25 and 48% of the suspects being in this age group. Children are of particular concern as some of the reductions in overall levels of violence are not replicated when looking at those aged 10-17. The majority of suspects and victims of serious violence are male.

Serious and Organised Crime

Serious and Organised Crime is defined in the 2018 Strategy as individuals planning; co-ordinating and committing serious offences; whether individually; in groups and/or as part of transnational networks. The definition remains unchanged in the 2023 strategy. The main categories of serious

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

offences covered by the term are: child sexual abuse; modern slavery and human trafficking; organised immigration crime; illegal drugs; illegal firearms; organised acquisitive crime; cybercrime; fraud; money laundering; and bribery, corruption and sanctions evasion.

In Kent the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) that pose the highest threat and risk are discussed at the OCG Disruption Panel (*all OCGs across the UK are measured in terms of disruptions – minor, moderate or major impact against the OCG*). At a district level Serious and Organised crime panels (SOCP) operate on a monthly basis (chaired by Kent Police) with representatives from a range of public sector organisations and enforcement agencies. Disruption activity relies on good and appropriate information sharing between local partner agencies. SOCPs hold valuable intelligence that can enable law enforcement agencies to pursue Organised Crime Groups.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) publishes the National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) with the most recent assessment published in July 2023 covering the calendar year 2022 (January to December 2022)⁴. The NCA's Director General stated: *“Over the past year, we have felt the reverberations of international conflict, instability and poverty. Organised crime groups capitalised on the war in Ukraine and the cost of living pressures, shifting their campaigns to prey on the well-meaning and the vulnerable, whilst human traffickers and drug smugglers have adapted their routes and methods to maximise profits. The consequences play out on our shores and streets on a daily basis: last year (2022) a record 45,755 people used small boats to arrive on UK shores, while drug prices fell and drug production and deaths rose. The harm to the public is not always so visible. More crime is online, taking place behind closed doors, on the dark net and through encrypted apps. We now estimate that there are between 680,000 and 830,000 people in the UK (1.3% to 1.6% of the adult population) who pose varying degrees of sexual risk to children, and assess that viewing indecent images of children increases the risk of offenders escalating to contact abuse.”*⁴

Vulnerable individuals continue to be exploited across a range of threats⁴. Organised crime groups involved in organised immigration crime facilitate the movement of people into the UK in hazardous conditions with no regard for their safety. The exploitation of victims occurs at home and abroad, with offenders trafficking people within the UK and across borders, forcing people into various forms of modern slavery. Globally, serious and organised crime places children at risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation, both in person and online⁴.

- It is estimated there are a minimum of 59,000 known individuals engaged in serious and organised crime offending in the UK (excluding child sexual abuse offending); and that there are an estimated 680,000-830,000 individuals in the UK posing varying degrees of sexual risk to children from downloading and sharing indecent images of children to direct contact abuse⁴
- Fraud is a prevalent and consistent threat, with all of UK society affected by its economic and social consequences. There were 3.7 million frauds experienced by individuals in England and Wales in the year ending December 2022⁴.
- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework to identify potential victims of modern slavery and ensure they receive the appropriate support. Referrals for modern slavery and human trafficking have increased: in the year ending December 2022, 7,936 referrals were made for potential victims of exploitation (an increase of 10.3% on the previous year). It is likely this represents an improved awareness of the modern slavery and human trafficking threat, alongside increased movement across the UK border since COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted⁴. From January to March 2024, 4,524 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office⁵.
- Drug use, drug seizures and drug offences continue to increase within the UK with a total annual cost to society of over £21 billion⁴.
- Organised acquisitive crime focuses on high-harm and cross-border burglary, vehicle crime, robbery, heritage and cultural property crime, plant and agricultural thefts and metal and infrastructure crime, amongst other crime types. It is highly likely that all areas of organised

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

acquisitive crime will increase in the coming years due to increases in the cost of living⁴.

Kent Police Divisional County Lines and Gangs Teams (CLGT) provide a proactive and preventative capability to reduce the harm caused to Kent communities from County Line criminality and Kent-based Gang activity. They investigate the County Line activity which carries the greatest threat risk and harm and target those who supply controlled drugs and fit the current NPCC definition taken from the 2018 Home Office Serious Violence Strategy, 'A County Line is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons.'

Many local CSPs have well established multi-agency arrangements in place to address OCG and gang activity within their local areas by using a range of partnership powers resulting in a number of successes which are shared to promote good practice. Young People at risk of County Lines exploitation are identified through the sharing of intelligence between partners, locally this includes District Contextual Safeguarding meetings / SOC Panels, etc. There is discussion at the multi-agency Prevent, Prepare Protect agenda item within each District's multi-agency meeting structure and a plan agreed on how individuals will be protected from harm.

Details of some of the partnership activities undertaken in 2023/24 to address the priority of 'Serious Violence and Organised Crime' are included in the table below. However, it should be noted that much of the activity relating to Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) is at an operational level undertaken by Kent Police and district / borough partners, as such much of the activity of the KCSP over the last year has been in relation to the implementation of the Serious Violence Duty.

Notes

- 1) HM Government. *No Place to Hide: Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023-2028* (published December 2023)
- 2) Kent and Medway *Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2027*
- 3) Office for National Statistics. *Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2023* (published 25 April 2024)
- 4) National Crime Agency (NCA). *National Strategic Assessment 2023 for Serious and Organised Crime* (published July 2023)
- 5) Home Office. *Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, quarter 1 2024 – January to March* (published 10 May 2024)

Actions 2023/24	Progress
Work with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and other partners to implement the 'Serious Violence Duty'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VRU worked with partners across the county during 2023/24 to develop a Serious Violence Strategy • The Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Strategy were published in January 2024. The needs assessment included bespoke analysis of public place serious violence for the 13 CSPs along with the picture for the county.
Improve the sharing of data so that there is a common understanding of serious violence informed by a multi-agency data set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A data sharing platform that allows analysis of locations and the impact of serious violence has been created and tested. Additional work is required to install software on partner systems to allow the platform to go live. • Additional work to extend and enhance the platform is ongoing.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

<p>Reduce the harm experienced by communities linked to knives and weapons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VRU share data on knife crime with all CSPs as part of monthly reporting on public place serious violence. • Quarterly analysis of knife crime to illustrate patterns and trends has been commissioned and the report is anticipated in April 2024. • The VRU has partnered with Kent Police and the Ben Kinsella Trust to develop resources on knife crime which are available through the VRU website.
<p>Support the government's new tactic for protecting the public and tackling serious and organised crime: 'Clear, Hold, Build' (2023) which builds on the government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (2018)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOC team continue to offer input into the local CHB implementation. Additional work is required here to extend and enhance the partnership contributions. • SOC team are well established in all SOCPs across Kent and Medway and provide substantial input. Additional work is required to enhance the partnership input into the SOCPs. • Prevent and SOC Week of Action 20/11/23 delivered training to KCC staff, Kent Police, Partners and key stakeholders with over 1200 participants and a far reach in raising awareness. • Intelligence reporting training has been delivered on regularly intervals and the SOC team will continue to promote the importance of reports and reporting lines available.
<p>Work in partnership to share information on the exploitation of adults and children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Joint Exploitation Group (JEG) continues to meet quarterly with ongoing support from a range of partners. Briefings from JEG are regularly shared and updates given at the KCSP meetings. • The quarterly report presented at JEG which highlights the issues around missing children, modern slavery, etc. is shared with Safeguarding Leads across Kent and Medway to raise awareness and highlight emerging issues. • Kent County Council SOC team continue to promote the Kent Police Intelligence portal and demonstrating the organisational leads training available to staff via the KMCSB. The SOC team are members of JEG and continue to provide input on themes pertinent to the group and addressed at SOCPs. • Work with partners to educate, raise awareness, understand and provide safeguarding and signposting for those who are at risk of being exploited or being exploited • Development of SOC newsletters which are being shared regularly alongside additional Rapid reads, whilst promoting Kent Fraud Alert across organisations • High level of training delivered regularly by KCC SOC team. Training specifically covers organisational responsibilities under the Modern Slavery Act as a First Responders.

Priority: Safeguarding Vulnerable People

Context

The priority of Safeguarding Vulnerable People reflects the outcome of strategic assessments undertaken by local community safety partnerships (CSPs) with many choosing safeguarding and/or vulnerability either as a stand-alone priority or selecting elements for inclusion within their plans. In the latest review Safeguarding Vulnerable People continues to be identified as a priority within the CSA.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Whilst CSPs have a role to play within this priority there are a number of multi-agency groups including the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP), Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB), Joint Exploitation Group (JEG) etc. which take a lead on a number of these issues. As such, the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) link into these boards and subgroups and is working with them to support and implement actions, as well as monitor performance via their reporting processes. Reciprocal arrangements have been established for the KCSP to report into the Safeguarding Boards/Partnerships or their subgroups to ensure effective links are established and maintained.

Information and reports produced by the groups are shared with community safety partners through the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) e-bulletins and Community Safety Information Sessions (CSIS). Topics relating to this priority covered at CSIS events in 2023/24 included scams and doorstep crime, homelessness, dangerous dogs, hate crime, co-occurring conditions, healthy relationships and compulsive obsessive behaviour interventions, buildings safety and the domestic abuse strategy. The regular e-bulletins shared with partners during 2023/24 also raised awareness and promoted a range of related information including but not exhaustive to: service information e.g. AMPARO support following suicide, Local and National strategies/policies e.g. Domestic Abuse Strategy, new legislation e.g. Online Safety Act, Local and National surveys/consultations e.g. CSP review & ASB powers and Domestic Homicide Review Legislation, Local and National awareness campaigns e.g. the Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week and the Know, See, Speak Out; End Domestic Abuse Communications Campaign and the publication of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs).

Although there is no single indicator or group of indicators that can effectively be used as a proxy measure to monitor such a broad topic as safeguarding or vulnerability, as mentioned above KCSP members are linked into JEG and other safeguarding groups which play a key role in monitoring issues such as sexual exploitation, youth violence, radicalisation, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, missing children, etc. As appropriate other data sources may also be looked at, for example scams.

Scams / Doorstep Crime

In the NCSC's Annual Review for 2023 (Sept '22-Aug '23) it was noted that fraud continues to be one of the most significant threats facing UK businesses and citizens¹. The UK [Fraud Strategy](#) 2023 outlines a comprehensive plan to tackle fraud and protect the public. It aims to reduce fraud by 10% compared to 2019 levels by December 2024 and emphasized the collaboration between government, industry and the public². Scams are a significant concern in the UK, affecting individuals and businesses alike, in Kent, the Trading Standards Victim Safeguarding Officers work closely with KCC Community Wardens who visit and work with scam victims, identified by the National Trading Standards Scams Team (NTSST). In 2023/24 Kent Trading Standards Victims Safeguarding Officers conducted 139 interventions on behalf of the most vulnerable victims of Fraud. These victims were defrauded out of more than £600,000 but through the interventions undertaken officers prevented these victims losing in total a further £286,000, achieved through refunds, stopping further payments, compensation by their banks and negotiating new contracts. Additionally, the Community Wardens engage with scam victims. This is significant work, as victims require at least 2 visits and results in victims being safeguarded through partnership working, referrals to Adult Social Care and support service, engagement with family and charity liaison, as well as by providing them with advice and guidance on doorstep crime prevention. It should be noted that people defrauded in their own homes are 2.5 times more likely to either die or go into residential care within a year. Stopping scams and protecting the public is the focus of the government's Fraud Strategy.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Research has shown that a quarter of people who experience loneliness have been the victim of a scam – and the same proportion of older people report feeling lonely at least some of the time³. Not having someone to double-check things with is one of the main causes of these people falling victim to fraudsters but fraud can also come from within families, as well as occurring when lonely people use fraudsters as their only contact with the world. Loneliness has many negative effects on those who have the misfortune to experience it, most notably poor mental and physical health, but one further consequence that is often overlooked is the increased likelihood of becoming the victim of a financial scam⁴.

Doorstep crime is a significant concern in Kent, affecting vulnerable individuals who may fall prey to deceptive tactics by doorstep criminals. These criminals, also known as rogue traders, cowboy builders, or building and gardening scammers, cold-call unsuspecting households with convincing deals to persuade them to agree to work being carried out. Trading Standards, with the assistance of the wider Service, delivered three Doorstep Crime Awareness Weeks in 2023/24 to engage with communities identified as having a higher prevalence of these sort of crimes. Staff delivered guidance to households, engaged the support of banks, gave presentations to vulnerable groups, visited chemists, building supply merchants and doctors surgeries. Additionally, have attended various public events and delivered scam/fraud awareness presentations to community groups and businesses. This included: Church groups, community centres, Kent Showground Dementia event, Kent Police Open day, Age Concern, MP drop-in centre, British Sign Language Centre, Barclays, HSBC, Mencap and so on. In total engaged with around 2130 members of the Kent community

Suicide Prevention

The Department for Health and Social Care published their new national suicide prevention strategy in September 2023, [Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118422/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england-2023-to-2028.pdf) which aims to reduce the suicide rate over the next five years. The Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention multi-agency Network, originally formed in November 2009 developed and published the [Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Strategy 2021-25](#), which is the driver to reduce local suicides and is led by the multi-agency group.

The Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Strategy has seven strategic priorities⁵:

1. Reducing the risk in high priority groups (Middle aged men, people with a previous suicide attempt, people with a history of self-harm, people known to secondary mental health services, people who misuse drugs and alcohol, people who are impacted by domestic abuse, people with problematic debt, children and young people).
2. Tailor approaches to improve the mental health and wellbeing across the whole population; (working with all relevant partners to improve the mental health and wellbeing in high-risk groups including; LGBTQI+, military and veterans, people with learning difficulties, ethnic and religious minorities, individuals impacted by family breakdown, prisoners and other people in contact with the criminal justice system)
3. Reduce access to the means of suicide
4. Support research, data collection and monitoring
5. Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide
6. Provide better information and support for those bereaved by suicide
7. Demonstrate system leadership and quality improvement across the system and within services.

There is an implementation plan setting out actions and accountabilities, which is overseen and delivered by the suicide prevention team based in KCC's Public Health department.

The Suicide Prevention team manage and use a data set called 'real time suspected suicide surveillance system' (RTSS). This is where data on suspected suicides is received on a fortnightly basis from Kent Police. This allows the team to improve data, evidence and understanding around suicide, including priority groups and subsequent risk factors and to ensure that interventions

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

continue to be developed and adapted in a timely manner. The team analyses the data regularly to monitor any concerning or emerging trends and escalate as appropriate. A monthly analysis is shared with the Director of Public Health. An annual analysis of the RTSS is presented to key stakeholders to share key findings, including demographics and risk factors, and how this data acts to inform priority areas for the programme.

The Kent and Medway Network meetings include the Suicide Prevention Network which delivers the aims of the strategy, the Children and Young People Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Network and the Better Mental Health Network where wider health issues such as social isolation, resilience, gambling, etc. are shared. These Networks consist of over 100 multi-agency partners, including, VCSE, statutory agencies, academics, individuals with lived experience. The Network have been responsible for drafting the local strategy and provides an opportunity for system learning regarding best practice sharing, discussing issues/current challenges and opportunities for collaboration or improvement.

It is clear that safeguarding is not the responsibility of a single agency but can only be achieved by effective partnership working. The following actions and progress updates highlight some of the areas that partners are working together on to support Safeguarding Vulnerable People.

References:

- 1) *National Cyber Security Centre Annual Review 2023 (September 2022-August 2023)*
- 2) *Policy Paper. Fraud Strategy: stopping scams and protecting the public (May 2023)*
- 3) *Love is Blind: Feelings of Loneliness and Isolation Go Hand in Hand with Romance Scams, Nationwide Building Society (February 2022)*
- 4) *St James's Place Partnership: How loneliness can contribute to financial scams*
- 5) *Kent and Medway Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Strategy 2021-25*

Actions 2023/24	Progress
<p>Support the work being undertaken by the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Steering Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release the Pressure continues to be promoted. Materials can be downloaded from the bottom of the webpage: www.releasethepressure.uk inc. five posters designed to target particular population groups i.e. the LGBT+ Community and people in financial difficulty. Over 3,000 calls per month and 54,000 text conversations were had by the two 24 hour services at the heart of the campaign in 2023/24. • Over recent years, the programme led a national conversation regarding the links between domestic abuse (DA) and suicide culminating in 2023 in DA being included as a risk factor in the Government's Suicide Prevention Strategy for the first time. • The Suicide Prevention team worked closely with DA colleagues and as part of the '16 days of action: end domestic abuse campaign' hosted a Learning event and share actions that frontline practitioners can take to reduce the risk of suicide. A digital briefing continues to be distributed to workforces across the system. • In 2023/24, around 770 people attended suicide prevention training across Kent and Medway. • The team are working with Public Health experts to develop a bespoke full-day training package for frontline professionals, looking at DA, suicide, substance misuse and trauma. • The Amparo Support Service for People Bereaved by Suicide supported around 90 bereaved individuals and families during 2023/24. Amparo also offer community response plans where support to individuals, students or the workplace is offered as a whole www.amparo.org.uk

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme funds the 'Money and Mental Health' project, delivered by Citizens Advice, to provide financial support and mental health support. A total of 627 clients were supported in 2023/24 with just under a million pounds of financial outcomes for their clients and a 100% reported improvement for mental health. • Quarterly Networks hosted by the team bring together over 500 members across three of the Networks to discuss best practice, shared insight and learning and opportunities for improvement or collaboration. • System leadership elements within the programme include providing the system with insight and learning from data sources, such as Real Time Suspected Suicide Surveillance, provided fortnightly by Kent Police. As well as developing toolkits and audits for front line professionals with guidance and implications for practice. Much of the research and reports are here: Suicide Prevention Team Resources (padlet.com)
<p>Work in partnership with the Safeguarding Boards to raise awareness and link into local and national campaigns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week (SAAW) took place in late November 2023 with a different theme for each day. The Kent and Medway Adult Safeguarding Board (KMSAB) worked with partners on the communications and the KCST worked with community safety colleagues to identify activities taking place during that week. • The KCST and the KMSAB jointly delivered a DHR/SAR learning webinar on 22nd November themed around 'Who Cares for the Carers as part of the SAAW. • The KMSAB website 'Carers' pages was promoted widely as part of this event and KMSAB website data shows that the pages for carers and also useful links and resources pages had significant increases (1358% and 308% respectively) in visits following the 2023 SAAW campaign compared to the previous year.

Priority: Preventing Extremism and Hate

Context

'Preventing Extremism and Hate' has been a standalone priority within the Kent Community Safety Agreement since 2018/19. Over the last 8 years there has been disruption to 37 late-stage attack plots and as before this is a mixture of different ideologies and extremism such as extreme right-wing, Islamist extremism and predominantly self-initiated terrorist attacks. During the last five years the terrorist threat level was raised to Severe 3 times, it is currently standing at Substantial, which it has been at since February 2022. It should be noted that the threat level of Substantial is still classified as a 'heightened' threat level and there is very little between Severe and Substantial levels. The most recent review of the CSA priorities identified the need to keep 'Preventing Extremism and Hate' as a priority for the partnership. There are many threats that have occurred over the last couple of years, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, increased assertiveness of the Chinese Communist Party and the instability of Iran. In October 2023 the biggest terrorist attack in the last few years with the Israel and Hamas conflict. This conflict in Gaza is causing more radicalisation than the declaration of the caliphate by Daesh and other similar events because of the polarisation in society and the impact of fake news. Partners are aware that more radicalisation is being created in the country and the majority of this is due to the spread of 'misinformation and disinformation'. Due to this attack the proscription of further extremist groups has taken place [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk). The UK faces constant threats from Islamist Extremism, Extreme Right Wing, and self-initiated terrorists. Low sophisticated style attacks using bladed articles and vehicles are still classes as the preferred method.

Preventing Extremism

The UK counter-terrorism strategy (known as CONTEST) was refreshed in July 2023. PREVENT forms part of the CONTEST strategy and aims to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent work also extends to supporting rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism.

Alongside further recommendations from the Independent Review of Prevent (IRP) back in February 2023, the updated Prevent Duty Guidance (PDG) was released in October 2023 which came into force in December 2023. This guidance replaced the 2015 PDG.

The objectives of Prevent are to:

1. tackle the ideological causes of terrorism.
2. intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation.
3. enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

To tackle the ideological causes of terrorism, Prevent focuses on reducing the influence of radicalizers on susceptible audiences, as well as reducing the availability of, and access to, terrorist content. Work to counter radicalisation and reduce permissive environments extends across academia, civil society, communities, government, and industry. Prevent takes a partnership approach to disrupting radicalisers, including those who sow division and hatred, by working with local, regional, and national partners, law enforcement agencies, and other government partners. Prevent intervenes early by identifying people who are susceptible to radicalisation and providing support to those suitable for intervention.

The Kent and Medway Prevent Duty Delivery Board (PDDDB) is the strategic body overseeing the delivery of the Prevent Duty across Kent, it is jointly chaired by a Corporate Director from KCC and Medway Unitary Authority. Part of the remit of the PDDDB is to ensure information is shared as appropriate with partners, this includes relevant elements of the Counter-Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) which sets out the risks and threats in Kent and Medway. The collection plan and development for the latest Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) improves year after year and this year Kent and Medway were again the highest returning areas in the Southeast for the CTLP questionnaire from partners. A CTLP subgroup of the PDDDB meets quarterly to ensure the CTLP process is a genuine partnership approach. The CTLP for the year ahead has been presented and shared as appropriate and is used to inform the development of the Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment (CTSRA) and Prevent Partners Action Plan which will also be shared with partners once complete via a briefing in July 2024.

Following the IRP, the Channel Duty Guidance was updated in October 2023. The Channel Programme is part of PREVENT and uses a multi-agency approach to;

- identify people at risk.
- assess the nature and extent of that risk
- develop the most appropriate support plan for the person concerned.

Channel provides early support for anyone who is at risk of radicalisation, supporting terrorist organisations, or committing acts of terrorism, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity, or background. People can receive support before they begin on, or once they are on a trajectory towards participating in terrorist related activity. Cases should not be adopted onto Channel where no such terrorism concerns exist.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed the Channel programme on a statutory footing and created a duty on each local authority in England and Wales to ensure that there is a panel in place for its area. Statutory guidance for Channel panels was originally published in March 2015. The success of Channel is dependent on the co-operation and co-ordinated activity of

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

partners. It works best when the person and their families engage and are supported consistently. Further information relating to consent for Channel support and engaging people and their families can be found in section 6 of the Channel Duty guidance. The Channel Duty is intended to secure effective local co-operation and delivery of Channel and build on good practice. Channel Annual Assurance Statements for KCC are completed each year and sent to the Home Office by the local authority Chief Executive.

Kent and Medway have now been a non-Dovetail site since December in 2022, the first area to transition back to Counter Terrorism Policing Southeast. Referrals are now received straight to CTPSE who co-ordinate activity by requesting relevant information from panel partners about a referred person. The police use this information to make an initial assessment of the nature and extent of the concerns. Based on meeting the Prevent threshold the information will then be presented to a Channel panel. The Prevent Duty Delivery Board oversee the Channel Panel process, KCC remain as the lead authority for the overall delivery of Channel Panel across Kent and Medway.

A review of the transition from Dovetail was completed by CTPSE and further discussions are ongoing with CTPSE and Homeland Security.

Since April 2019 Kent and Medway has remained a designated Prevent priority area which brings with it additional Home Office funding to increase local resources, namely a Prevent Coordinator and Prevent Education Officer. In 2020 further funding was received leading to the addition of a second Prevent Education Officer and a Prevent Community Engagement Officer. For the year ahead (2024/25) Kent and Medway continues to receive priority status, one of a number across the country and the only priority area in the Southeast, which brings its own challenges with the high level of expectation for the small team alongside the local threat and risk level. The Kent and Medway Prevent Team deliver Prevent activity across the county, including managing the Channel process, providing training and awareness, engaging with schools, 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 Statistics

Since the introduction of the Prevent duty in 2015, over 4,400 referrals have been supported through the Channel Programme¹. In the year ending 31 March 2023, there were 6,817 referrals to Prevent, this is an increase of 6.4% compared to the year ending March 2022 (6,406), and the third highest number of referrals since the first period reported in 2015/16². Similar to last year, the Education sector made the highest number of referrals (2,684; 39%), followed by the Police (1,943; 29%). As in previous years, where gender was specified (6,801), most referrals were for males (6,125; 90%)². Of the referrals where age of the individual was known (6,796), those aged 15 to 20 again accounted for the largest proportion (2,203; 32%). Those aged 14 years and under account for the second largest proportion (2,119; 31%) of referrals. Nearly half (46%) of referrals that became adopted cases are for individuals aged between 11 and 15².

Looking in more detail at the journey of individuals referred, the number of referrals discussed at a Channel panel (1,113, 16%) and adopted as a Channel case (645, 9%) decreased when compared with the previous year, despite the overall number of referrals increasing². The proportion of referrals being discussed at a Channel panel has decreased (16% this year versus 23% last year). The proportion of referrals that were adopted as a Channel case also decreased (9% this year versus 13% last year)².

Similar to the previous year's publication, for the type of concern associated with referrals, Home

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Office analysts have amended the type of concern categories which disaggregates the 'Mixed, unstable and unclear' (MUU) category into its respective sub-categories². The category 'vulnerability present but no ideology of CT risk' accounted for the largest proportion of referrals (2,505; 37%) in the year ending March 2023². For the third year running, the number of referrals for Extreme Right-Wing concerns (1,310; 19%) is greater than referrals for Islamist concerns (781; 11%)². Of the 645 referrals that went on to be adopted as a Channel case, 296 (46%) were for Extreme Right-Wing concerns, 115 (18%) were for Islamist concerns, and 103 (16%) were for those with a Conflicted ideology².

The IRP made a recommendation on 'mixed, unstable or unclear' and 'other' strands of referrals. Recommendation 16 advised that the Home Office should 'improve Prevent datasets by revising how referrals are categorised. The Homeland Security Group should consider all options, including delineating and/or removing the 'mixed, unstable or unclear' and 'other' strands, against Prevent objectives. The Government accepted this recommendation and committed to improving understanding of the categorisation of referrals.

The response to this recommendation included a research piece to understand the types of referrals and cases being categorised as 'mixed, unclear and unstable' (MUU). To further understand the category of 'Mixed, Unstable or Unclear' (MUU) ideologies, the Home Office conducted internal analysis and external research. The research found variation in understanding and use of the 'MUU' category. This suggested work was required to disaggregate the category and improve recording practices. Approaches to managing risk and supporting 'MUU' cases varied, although practitioners reported that holistic support, using both ideological IPs alongside other forms of support, was generally felt to be best practice. Further updates are awaited on this with the introduction of a new case management system, which goes live in May 2023 and a number of new categories will be shared.

Following the identification of 'Preventing Extremism and Hate' as a priority within the CSA in 2018/19, the KCSP recognised a need to raise awareness of the issue across Kent and Medway and to cascade information and learning. In 2023/24 the fourth successful Hateful Extremism conference was delivered in February 2024, with increasing numbers of attendees both online and in person. In total around 300 people attended the event from a variety of organisations including police, fire and rescue, local authorities, NHS, etc. (172 online and 130 in person). Based on the feedback, 78% of online attendees were new to attending the event whilst 56% of those in person were new to attending. The 2024 event was extremely well received with an overwhelming 95% awarding the event a 4-5 star rating with an average rating of 4.6% out of 5. Over 90% of all attendees felt confident using what they learned at the conference to help safeguard people from radicalisation and extremism, which in turn has a positive impact on the reduction of related crime. Additionally, feedback indicated that the topics covered during the event will be useful in their work..

Due to this continued success and much needed type of event another CPD event is planned for February 2025, again with a range of relevant and high-profile speakers sharing their expertise and knowledge. The 2024 feedback received highlighted the quality of speakers and greatly assisted attendees with their understanding, being able to spot the signs, to intervene early, to deter individuals, and to increase referrals. This CPD event is in line with the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent (IRP) due to the need for ongoing and updated training delivering to practitioners and as stated in the IRP complies with '...countering ideologies that can lead people to committing or supporting acts of terrorism which can only be done if Prevent properly understands the nature of these ideologies and how they attract and suborn individuals'.

Hate Crime

Hate crime is defined as any incident, that may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

personal characteristic. There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime: race or ethnicity; religion or beliefs; sexual orientation; disability; and transgender identity. Whenever an incident has occurred, this will be recorded on Kent police systems as a Non-Crime Hate Incident (NCHI). Though Kent Police are in line with Policing Codes of Practice, they have adopted an additional threshold test which clarifies that personal data should only be included in an NCHI if the event presents a real risk of significant harm to individuals or groups with a particular characteristic or characteristics or that a future criminal offence may be committed against individuals or groups with a particular characteristic or characteristics.

Kent Police works across statutory and non-statutory partners as well as community groups to ensure the most appropriate and proportionate response to reduce associated risks of serious physical and emotional harm, as well as reducing community tension and division.

Hate crime is everyone's business and can impact on anyone. In order to maintain trust and confidence from the public, it is a vitally important aim to get the response right first time, especially as hate crime is under-reported and often victims do not report on the first occasion. Hate Crime is a priority for Kent Police.

Kent Police are working with the existing themes from the Government Hate Crime Action Plan (listed below), which are also used to direct the work of the Hate Crime Forum and is shared as everyone's responsibility in tackling hate crime:

- 1) Work in Partnership to tackle Hate Crime
- 2) Build our understanding of hate crime
- 3) Respond to hate crime in our communities
- 4) Increase the reporting of hate crime
- 5) Improve support for the victims of hate crime.

Nationally the Law Commission published recommendations to reform hate crime legislation and to remove the disparity in the way hate crime laws treat each protected characteristic – race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. These are with the Government and may lead to changes in the future coverage of the monitored strands. These are:

- Levelling up the protection for disability and LGBT+ victims: Hate crime laws do not protect all five protected characteristics to the same degree. For example, aggravated offences only apply in respect of racial and religious hostility. This current hierarchy of protection is widely seen as unfair and sends a negative message to victims of hate crimes on the basis of disability, sexual orientation and transgender identity. The Law Commission has recommended that across the various hate crime laws all protected characteristics should be treated equally.
- Tackling sex and gender abuse: The Law Commission has recommended that "sex or gender" should not be added to the protected characteristics for aggravated offences and enhanced sentencing as it would be ineffective at protecting women and girls and in some cases, counterproductive. The Commission has recommended: Extending the offence of stirring up hatred to include of sex or gender, which would help to tackle the growing threat of extremist misogynist "incel" ideology; In addition, there is also a recommendation that the government review the need for a specific offence to tackle public sexual harassment.
- Protecting freedom of expression: Whilst the Commission has recommended some extensions to hate crime legislation, these are coupled with reforms to hate speech laws and new protections for freedom of expression to ensure that only the most egregious hate speech is criminalised.

At a county level, the multi-agency Hate Crime Forum chaired by the Strategic Hate Crime Lead works with various partners including the IAG (Independent Advisory Group), KCC Prevent Team, Education, Victim Support Services and NHS to monitor and track the partnership response in tackling hate crime. In addition, the Strategic Hate Crime Lead chairs the Southeast Regional

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Forum and is a member of the National Hate Crime & Cohesion Gold Group to ensure an enhanced response to any trigger events/factors impacting hate crime and community sentiment.

The dedicated Police Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) who are based within district Community Safety Units (CSUs) act as the key point of contact for Kent's diverse communities. They work with diverse communities, raising awareness around hate crime, act as tactical advisors to police and partners, and signpost support for victims.

Independent review and scrutiny of hate crime is integral to legitimacy and community trust and confidence therefore there are platforms in place to provide this. This includes in Kent, a Hate Crime Advocate in the Victim Support Service who contacts each victim of hate crime and works in partnership to ensure victims are provided tailored support. Two weekly meetings between the Advocate and Strategic Hate Crime Lead ensure a review of police action and ongoing safeguarding and signposting support when appropriate following discussions between the Advocate and the victim.

The Neighbourhood Policing Model has three pillars focussed on engaging communities, problem solving and targeted activity to ensure a high-quality policing service is provided as per the commitment in the Kent Police Pledge. Police and partner agencies work together to provide the most appropriate engagement and response when tackling hate crime. The Neighbourhood Policing structure is:

- Prevention Hub
- Rural Task Force (these are both centralised, specialist functions)
- Child Centred Policing
- Neighbourhood Task Force
- Beat Team (these three functions sit within the Community Safety Units)

Monthly updates between the Strategic Hate Crime Lead and the Crown Prosecution Service ensure victims of hate crime receive a sensitive and appropriate service. Hate Crime Conviction rates and sentence uplifts are reviewed with feedback on any adverse outcomes or good practice.

There is a strong working relationship with the KCC Prevent Team where there is also representation on tactical and strategic meetings. Not all hate crime is linked to extremism and terrorism, but it is likely that a terrorist act will be motivated by hate which may be personal, ideological or the result of manipulation by others so police and partners have access to regular training, CPDs and events to recognise the links and make referrals. Many perpetrators of terrorist activity commit less serious hate crimes prior to progressing to more serious offending. Not every hate crime offender will escalate to extremist crime, and the challenge is to identify those with the potential to do so, thereby enabling counter-terrorist colleagues to reduce the risk posed.

Hate Crime Awareness week takes place annually in October across the country. This week of action encourages police, local authorities, key partners, and communities to continue raising awareness about hate crime, reporting mechanisms, signposting tailored and timely support in order to tackle hate crime. Hatred not only has the potential to cause serious physical and emotional harm, it can damage communities and cause division. In addition to the awareness week there is an annual award scheme 'No2H8 Crime Award' which is run nationally by a coalition of organisations and is designed to recognise upstanding individuals who have contributed toward the cohesion of different communities within the UK through the tackling of hatred and prejudice. The Strategic Lead for Hate Crime at Kent Police is one of the judges.

The Home Office report on Hate Crime in England and Wales 2022 to 2023 (year ending March 2023)³ reported:

- there were 145,214 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales (excluding Devon

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

and Cornwall police), a 5% decrease compared with the year ending March 2022 (153,536 offences) , the first annual fall since the Home Office began collecting comparable data in the year ending March 2013³.

- there were 101,906 race hate crimes, 8,241 religious hate crimes, 24,102 sexual orientation hate crimes, 13,777 disability hate crimes and 4,732 transgender hate crimes in year ending March 2023³
- Hate crimes targeting transgender people saw a rise of 11% from 4,262 to 4,732 the highest number since the time series began in the year ending March 2012. Transgender issues have been heavily discussed over the last year which may have led to an increase in these offences, or more awareness in the police in the identification and recording of these crimes³.
- The number of hate crimes recorded by the police has more than tripled since the year ending March 2013, from 41,294 offences to 145,214 offences recorded in the latest year (it is thought this is linked to improvements in crime recording by the police and a growing awareness of hate crime leading to improved identification of such offences³).

In Kent and Medway for the rolling year up to March 2024, there have been a total of 5,433 incidents (4,228 notifiable offences and 1,205 non-crime hate incidents) compared to a total of 6,156 incidents last year. Of the incidents recorded up to March 2024, the prejudice breakdown was: Racial 2,843, Religion 161, Disability 436, Transgender 163, Sexual Orientation 667. By being professionally aware, other offences are identified early on, i.e. Domestic Abuse related hate crime, in the rolling year to March 2024 there were 222 such offences identified.

Monitoring of hate crime and community sentiment continues throughout the year and can be impacted by trigger events and activities such as the Middle East crisis, migration, humanitarian crisis, protests, media, political horizon, actions of activists. However, in Kent & Medway, there have not been any spikes or concerns.

Hate crime remains under reported so partners need to continue to raise awareness and encourage reporting through Kent Police or the various other third party reporting platforms such as Report It, Community Security Trust (CST), Tell MAMA, GALOP, Kent Police colleagues and also remain professionally curious for other offences such as domestic abuse and vulnerabilities such as to radicalisation to ensure appropriate safeguarding, interventions, and signposting support as part of our partnership response.

Whilst Community Safety Partnerships have a role to play within this priority the Prevent Duty Delivery Board and multi-agency Hate Crime Forum take the lead on a number of the issues. As such, members of the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) link into these boards and groups and are working with them to support and implement actions, as well as monitoring performance via their reporting processes.

References:

1) Home Office. *Prevent and Channel factsheet – 2023 (released 7 September 2023)*

2) Home Office. *Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2022 to March 2023 (published 14 December 2023)*

3) Home Office. *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 (updated 2 November 2023)*

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

Actions 2023/24	Progress
<p>Work in partnership to share information about Prevent and Channel alongside the referral process to reassert the overall objective of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The multi-agency Prevent Duty Delivery Board (PDBB) meets quarterly throughout the year. The last meeting of 2023/24 was held on 11th April. • The Prevent Coordinator and Assistant Director CONTEST/Serious Organised Crime regularly attend CSP meetings across the county. • Prevent Community Engagement Officer link in with all priority area Community Safety Units (CSUs) and Task Forces. • Regular updates of Prevent Action Plan • Briefings and newsletters are being shared regularly • High level of training delivered in 2023/24. The training offer for 2024/25 is in the process of being updated. • The Hateful Extremism CPD Event was successfully delivered on 27th Feb '24 (see 7.5 below for further details) with next year's event in the planning stages. • Delivery of KCSP funded project by PEOs in local communities (Gaming Bus) (see 7.6 for further details)
<p>Work with partners to understand the key issues from the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) and Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment (CTRSA) and encourage intelligence reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refresh of the latest CTLP is now complete (undertaken between Jan '23 – Dec '23) with partners feeding back information to help inform the refresh, with over 53 CTLP responses received. • The CTLP briefing event for Strategic Leads across the partners agencies took place on 27th March 2024. • Going forward wider briefings will be shared including the Counter Terrorism Situational Risk Assessment (CTRSA) which will be delivered to partners on 9th July 2024. • Graffiti and stickering updates provided to partners. • High level of training delivered in 2023/24 with training ongoing including information about the CTRSA, threat and risks updates. • Dissemination of information to KCSP partners.
<p>Work in partnership to educate and increase the reporting of hate crime; increase access to support for victims; and improve the operational response to hate crimes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings and updates are shared with CSPs with hate crime data and request raising hate crime awareness and changes in community sentiment to be reported. • Hate crime presentations delivered with a 365 partnership approach all year around, including themed months/weeks and days of action. • New work of pilot listening circle re hate crime with student community at Canterbury Christchurch University working in partnership with Community Liaison Manager at the venue. • Translated Hate Crime Leaflets continue to be shared with communities of interest at events, activities and key festivities. An identification of gap with an audio awareness is being filled. • Reporting and recording with breakdown of home office recording under prejudice types continues to be monitored, shared in appropriate meetings to improve reporting, performance, outcomes and victim support. • In addition to promoting third party platforms for reporting, a new one has been launched called RAKKHA focused at educating Sikh and South Asian Communities and thus increased reporting and signposting support.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

<p>Work with partners to educate, raise awareness, understand and provide safeguarding and signposting support for hate crimes and early identification of other vulnerabilities such as those to radicalisation and domestic abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate Crime Business Guide continues to be shared with business industry for preventative messages and reporting of hate crime and other vulnerabilities • A new Security Industry Authority (SIA) poster has been created and approved by the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) / National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and SIA and awaits final artwork before sharing with security personnel. This will aid in the prevention and reporting of hate crimes in the business industry and security personnel. • Increased awareness of how to make a Prevent referral and reporting graffiti stickering across all platforms • Regular monitoring of hate crime repeat data has allowed for early targeted and appropriate response by police and partners.
<p>Support delivery of the Hateful Extremism CPD* event <i>(*continuous professional development)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KCSP used some of the Crime Reduction Grant (CRG) project funding provided by the PCC to support delivery of the Hateful Extremism event. • The hybrid event was delivered on 27th February 2024 with around 300 partners and professionals in attendance - 130 people attending in person and a further 172 online. • Based on feedback 78% of online attendees were new to the event whilst 56% attending in person were new. • Speakers included a range of professionals from across the county as well as impactful input from survivor or a terrorist attack. • The event was well received with 95% of respondents giving the event a 4-5 star rating.
<p>Gaming & Online Awareness of Hate and Extremism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KCSP used some of the Crime Reduction Grant (CRG) project funding provided by the PCC to support the use of a 'gaming bus' which is a community engagement initiative to promote awareness of how hateful extremism and potential radicalization is spread via gaming and how it can be countered. • Three funded sessions were successfully delivered between March and April 2024 in Gravesend, Folkestone and Canterbury. • The bus was in each location for the whole school day, engaging with approximately 750 pupils from Year 6 and Year 7. • Students engaged well with the gaming bus and held conversations with the agencies during the sessions. • The full year end feedback report will be compiled following the delivery of the final two sessions.

Priority: Violence Against Women and Girls

Context

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is an umbrella term used to cover a wide range of abuses against women and girls such as domestic homicide, domestic abuse, sexual assault, abuse experienced as a child, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, misogynistic behaviours by Incels (involuntary celibates) and harassment in work and public life. While men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) was added as a standalone priority within the Kent Community Safety Agreement in April 2022. In the latest strategic assessment review process most of the local community safety partnerships (CSPs) have referenced VAWG within their plans

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

alongside topics such as domestic abuse and tackling violence, as such it remains a priority for the KCSP for the forthcoming year.

The initial inclusion of VAWG as a priority within the Community Safety Agreement was in response to a number of issues:

- The publication of the HO strategy in 2021/22: Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls;
- The inclusion of VAWG as a priority in the Kent PCC's Police and Crime Plan entitled 'Making Kent Safer 2022-2025'.
- Public concern following several high-profile cases in recent years, including the murders of Sarah Everard, Sabina Nessa, and the Kent Police Community Support Officer, Julia James.

In February 2023 the Home Secretary included VAWG within the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) which recognises VAWG as a national threat alongside terrorism and serious and organised crime. In May 2023, the National Police Chiefs' Council published the first national strategic threat risk assessment (STRA) of violence against women and girls aiming to provide a better understanding of the influences and levers that contribute to VAWG being a national threat

The Government's 'Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls' strategy published in July 2021, stated that Violence against women and girls is an unacceptable, preventable issue which blights the lives of million's. Crimes of violence against women and girls are many and varied¹. They include rape and other sexual offences, stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour-based' abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage and 'honour' killings), 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting', as well as many others¹. These crimes are deeply harmful, not only because of the profound effect they can have on victims, survivors and their loved ones, but also because of the impact they can have on wider society, impacting on the freedom and equality we all should value and enjoy. These impacts can include day-to-day decision-making, but also extend to the social and economic costs to the economy, society, and taxpayer. We know that the devastating impact of these crimes can include the loss of life, the destruction of homes, futures, and lives¹.

In September 2022 a prototype dashboard for data relating to VAWG was released on the GOV.UK website and provided data on a number of abuse types. The prototype will not be developed further, instead the ONS are exploring extending the questions used in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to include harassment and are exploring potential data collection to understand young people's attitudes to VAWG. Whilst the dashboard has been removed, the data was primarily taken from the CSEW and updated figures are included below (March 2023):

- 5.7% of women aged 16 and over, were victims of domestic abuse in the last year²
- 3.2% of women aged 16 and over, were victims of sexual assault in the last year³
- 4.4% of women aged 16 and over, were victims of stalking in the last year³,
- estimated 25% of women aged 18 to 74 experienced abuse before the age of 16⁴,
- 2,905 cases of honour-based-abuse (HBA) related offences were recorded by the police in the last year, a slight increase of 1% compared with the year ending March 2022.⁵

In January 2023 CrimeStoppers released a report on Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces following a number of high profile murders (some of which are mentioned above)⁶. The report acknowledged that these incidents had reignited societal conversations about gendered violence and women's right to feel safe in public. With the rise of smart phone technology to document instances of sexual harassment and gendered violence, combined with online platforms which allow women and girls to attest to their experiences, there has been a groundswell of academic and popular attention to this topic, both in the UK, and globally⁶. The findings from the report demonstrate that the majority of those who experience sexual harassment encounter it for the first time during adolescence or childhood. The survey also found that that 10% of women said they had been raped, with 23% saying they had been 'forced' to have sex⁶.

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

The high-level findings from the National Police Chiefs' Council STRA (May 2023) show⁷:

- VAWG accounts for at least 15.8% of all recorded crime and is a significant contributor to demand on policing (Based on a six-month period 1 October 21 - 31 March 22).
- The VAWG statistical bulletin identified that at least 507,827 offences against women and girls were recorded in a six-month period (1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022) in England and Wales.
- There is considerable underreporting of VAWG crimes. The Crime Survey for England and Wales consistently outlines high volumes of women and girls who experience VAWG, such as sexual assault and stalking and harassment but do not report to police. Barriers to reporting are particularly pertinent in relation to minoritised communities.

Specific VAWG crime types⁷

- Data available indicates the following VAWG threat areas have seen increases over recent years: domestic abuse, sexual offences, stalking and harassment, and modern slavery and human trafficking.
- Domestic abuse is a key contributor to VAWG overall. There were 447,431 DA flagged offences for all genders recorded in a six-month period across England and Wales.
- Stalking and harassment accounts for 43% (217,945) of all VAWG and is recorded by forces as varying between 26% and 56% of total VAWG locally. Domestic abuse is a key driver for stalking and harassment, and crime data identifies that 32.4% of all stalking and harassment offences are domestic abuse related.

In the 12 months November 2022 to October 2023, Kent Police recorded 41,013 VAWG offences, this is a decrease of -11.2% (-5,165) compared to the previous year, with reductions seen across all districts. In Kent (excluding Medway) there were 33,473 recorded VAWG offences which equates to an -11.2% reduction (-4,218) compared to the previous year. Of the VAWG offences recorded, 54% were domestic abuse related.

Following on from the Violence Against Women and Girls Conference (in March 2023) delivered by the KCSP, the partnership utilised some of the Crime Reduction Grant funding from the PCC in 2023/24 to deliver training around Victim Blaming Language. Initially, four sessions were delivered in but due to their success, a further two sessions were delivered resulting in over 480 people from a wide range of community safety partners having a greater understanding of victim blaming language and rape myths. Excellent feedback was received from attendees and follow-on training / awareness raising is being explored for 2024/25.

There are a number of prominent White Ribbon Ambassadors across Kent including the Kent PCC, Independent Chair for KMSAB, KCC's General Counsel and KCC's Head of Community Safety, who are supported by a multitude of White Ribbon Champions. White Ribbon UK's work is preventative, with an aim to end violence before it starts. It encourages everyone, especially men and boys, to make the White Ribbon Promise to never use, excuse or remain silent about men's violence against women. All men can make a difference and stop violence against women before it starts. KCC is an accredited White Ribbon organisation alongside other partner agencies. Work to actively promote the White Ribbon campaign continues, led by the Steering Group. Last year strong links were forged with the 16 days of action to end domestic abuse (mentioned within the Domestic Abuse section above)

Kent Police' 'Project Vigilant' is routinely used in the Night Time Economy and refers specifically to the tactic of deploying officers to identify predatory behavior traits and make interventions, with the wider deterrence factor achieved by advertising the tactic, and deterring potential offenders through visible engagements. Kent police have now trained over 100 officers in Project Vigilant tactics across the County and the training will continue to rollout on 2024. Throughout 2023 Kent Police continued to promote the Licensing scheme of Best Bar None, building on the success of the previous year. By agreeing to join the scheme, licencees work closely with police, council, and

Appendix B: Kent Community Safety Agreement - Priorities and Actions 2023/24

businesses to reduce crime and keep their communities safe. Kent now has over 130 licensed premises signed up to this self-accreditation scheme and has been recognised nationally for its work on successfully introducing the scheme into Kent and Medway.

The following actions and progress updates highlight some of the areas that partners are working together on to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls.

References:

- 1) Home Office – Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (published July 2021)
- 2) Domestic Abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2023
- 3) Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: year ending March 2023 (published 6 March 2024)
- 4) The lasting impact of violence against women and girls (published 24 November 2021)
- 5) Statistics on so called ‘honour-based’ abuse offences, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 (published 19 October 2023)
- 6) Crimestoppers report on Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces (published January 2023)
- 7) National Police Chiefs’ Council, Violence Against Women and Girls, Strategic Threat Risk Assessment 2023 (published May 2023)

Actions 2023/24	Progress
<p>Raise awareness of the national Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and consider adopting the Kent Police VAWG action plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAWG walk and talks have taken place monthly. Starting in October 2022 and continuing throughout 2023/24 with a different district each month. Police coordinating the events but working with local partners to develop and deliver. • Two VAWG Engagement Events were held in 2023/24 on 26th April 2023 and 14th December 2023 (hybrid) in-person or online – Chaired by Police but partners and public invited. Group discussions took place both online and in-person. To ascertain what could be done better and the public perception / demands.
<p>Share resources and best practice arising from the VAWG conference delivered in March 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VAWG resource pack completed after the Conference in March 2023 and shared with partners following the event – the resource pack included a range of information on VAWG and related information from a range of services and organisations, as well as reports, leaflets, and videos. • Kent Police are currently undertaking research into delivery across the country and if beneficial will be shared with partners during 2024/25
<p>Deliver Tackling Victim Blaming Language training to multi-agency partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial funding was approved for four sessions but following positive feedback from attendees a further two sessions were commissioned. All six sessions were well attended with approximately 80 people attending each session virtually via MS Teams. • The sessions had excellent interaction from the audience throughout. • Feedback from those attended was asked for in both comments and a poll. Responders rated the sessions an average 4.9 out of 5 and the comments were extremely positive. • This has led to over 480 people having a greater understanding of victim blaming language and rape myths. • Those attended came from a wide range of community partners including Social Services, Public Health, Domestic violence charities and Local Authorities. • As such the wider understanding of victim blaming and myths around Rape has been increased and improved across the county.

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By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Scrutiny Committee, 5 June 2024

Subject: Work Programme

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

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.
- 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 wish to call-in the decision.

2. Recommendation

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

Background Documents

None

Contact Details

Anna Taylor
Scrutiny Research Officer
anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk
03000 416478

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Work Programme - Scrutiny Committee June 2024

Items identified for upcoming meetings

Date requested	Item
November 2023	Framing Kent's Future (deferred from November 2023)
06.12.23	Decision 23/00083 – Supported Accommodation Service 16-19 and transitional arrangements – Possible report back to Scrutiny December 2024.
January 2024	23/00107 Kent SEND Sufficiency Plan 2023 - Chairman request to place this decision on the Scrutiny Committee/SEND Sub-Committee agenda for discussion at an appropriate time. (This went to Cabinet Committee in November 2023 and Cabinet in January 2024)
24.01.24	Request at Scrutiny Committee for: a. a deep dive into the mainstream home to school transport budget; and b. cross examination of the Council's school admissions, home to school transport and public transport policies.
28.02.24	Discussion with ASCH Chairman, Scrutiny Ch & Spokespeople in relation to further scrutiny of ASCH contracts – potentially 6 month on review. Ensure minimal duplication in Committee.
April 2024	European Union Entry Exit System – further monitoring

Work Programme

ADDITIONAL MEETING DATE – END JUNE – Subject to review	
Item	Item background
Budget Monitoring Year End	In line with the Committee's resolution around Securing Kent's Future
Scrutiny Committee – Review of Activity	Report from the Monitoring Officer following the Annual Governance Statement
SEND Scrutiny arrangements update	Confirm planned approach for scrutiny of SEND provision in Kent.

10 July 2024	
Item	Item background
Section 106 Agreements/SIL briefing	Member request
Homeless Connect	Requested on 06.06.23 - report back on social and financial impacts of the decision to end funding to Homeless Connect

Provisional Future Items

November 2024 – Kent Flood Risk Management Committee Annual Report

November – Draft Budget

Jan 2025 – Draft Budget and MTFP

March/April 2025 – Review of SEND Sub-Committee – Annual Report

June 2025 – Budget monitoring year end

June 2025 – Scrutiny Committee meeting as Crime and Disorder Committee