

Medway Community Safety Partnership

Strategic Assessment 2023



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Medway Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) brings together the key agencies involved in crime prevention and community safety work, namely:

- Medway Council
- Kent Police
- The Probation Service
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS)
- Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board

To ensure we effectively address crime, ASB, and reoffending issues which impact on Medway we:

- Conduct an annual Community Safety Strategic Assessment to collate and analyse data and crime patterns.
- Listen to the views and concerns of Medway residents and undertake consultations to ensure we address the issues that matter the most to residents.
- Review and monitor performance and delivery against objectives.
- Strive to build and maintain strong relationships between partner agencies to ensure a cohesive approach to tackling crime and ASB.

The purpose of the strategic assessment is to provide an analysis of the levels and patterns of crime and disorder. The assessment analyses any changes since the previous assessment and will review the possible causes as well as assessing the implementation of the previous Community Safety Plan. Consideration will be given to the views of Medway's residents and what they identify as priorities together with the analysis of crime and disorder to identify the key matters that the Partnership should prioritise.

This report is a summary of the key findings of the Partnership's Strategic Assessment 2023. It will reflect upon the work that has been undertaken to support the priorities outlined in the Community Safety Plan. It will also identify gaps or future aims for the CSP.

Introduction

I am pleased to introduce Medway Community Partnership's annual strategic assessment for 2023, the first under a new administration and my first as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement. Each year the Community Safety Partnership is provided with a strategic assessment to review performance and reconsider its priorities and targets. The strategic assessment is a partnership document that takes account of the priorities of partners, views of the community, current trends, volumes of crime, and future projections.

There is a wealth of work occurring across Medway to keep our residents and visitors safe. This work involves all our partners who work together to deliver our statutory duties and initiatives aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour as well as providing support to victims and those impacted by incidents when they do occur. It is a focus for the partnership to continue to tackle anti-social behaviour (in its many forms), county lines, drug-related violence and reoffending. It is envisioned that this plan will put communities back at the heart of community safety, giving local people and business a say in ideas to improve their area and to work together to improve our environment.

The information in this report is set against the Community Safety Plan 2020-2024, the last of the current plan, with a new plan to begin next year. This gives the Community Safety Partnership an opportunity to refresh its aims and targets to further progress in keeping Medway safe.

You will see lots of examples of great work throughout this document including our introduction of a Public Space Protection Order to challenge nuisance biking; challenging fly-tipping and environmental crime; strengthening community payback; initiatives to reduce violence against women and girls and work to keep people safe whilst they try to save money during the cost-of-living crisis. We will continue to tackle the issues that matter most to our residents.

This document has highlighted the key areas of focus for the next three years, and I commend this assessment and its findings as we continue to help Medway be an even greater place to live, work, learn and visit for years to come.



Councillor Tristan Osborne

Chair of the Community Safety Partnership
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Enforcement

Community Safety Plan 2020 – 2024

In line with the Community Safety Plan 2020-2024, the priorities of the CSP are:

Safeguarding Adults and Children (Tackling Serious Violence and County Lines)	Reducing Vulnerability	Reducing Reoffending	Listening to our Communities and Partners
Violence against women and girls	Homelessness	Probation	Community Engagement events
County Lines	Substance Misuse	Interventions	Consultation
Prevent	Tackling ASB	Youth Offending	Empowering Communities
Serious Violence	Domestic Abuse		

Overview

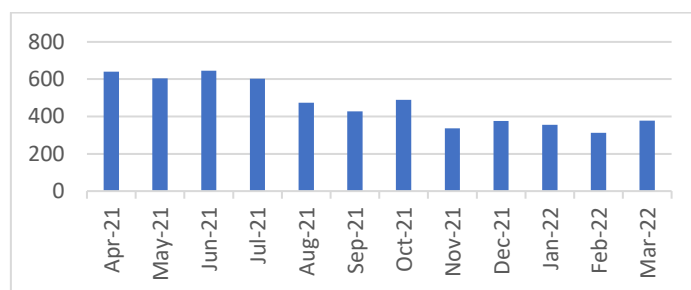
Priority	What we have been doing
Safeguarding Adults and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) walk and talk events have taken place to provide both engagement and reassurance. • Partnership working between Kent Police, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and other partners has seen several County Lines shut down. • Domestic Abuse and Extremism training has been rolled out and the initial stage has been completed. • Funding has been confirmed for the Medway Accident and Emergency Navigator which will remain in place until March 2024.
Reducing Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway has been chosen to work under the MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) approach, with a coordinator recruited. • April 2023 saw the launch of RIVER, the Medway Treatment and Recovery Service under the Forward Trust. • Medway Council's Environmental Enforcement Team (EET) undertook 673 investigative actions in 2021-22 with 158 fixed penalty notices issued. • Discussions have taken place with adult survivors of abuse which have identified key things that may help survivors in the future.
Reduce re-offending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuity of Care project begins in October 2023, ensuring Probation are notified if a referral has been made to community treatment. • Interventions Alliance have partnered with the Sunlight Centre Development Trust opening further opportunities for programmes. • A project called the 'Giants Head' was developed and shortlisted for a 2022 HM Prison and Probation Service Celebration of Wildlife and People Award. • 20 children have successfully completed the Adaptive Quality Assessment (AQA) qualifications since April 2023 by working with the Youth Offending Team (YOT).
Listening to our Communities and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KFRS have run a Save Safely campaign, giving money saving ideas whilst also promoting safety during the cost-of-living crisis. • Medway Council's Housing Team and partners won a Kent Housing Group Excellence award for services for vulnerable people for their Ladies Night project. • Consultation survey shows 80% of respondents felt very or 'fairly safe' in Medway during the day as well as identifying the most concerning issues.

The Crime Picture in Context

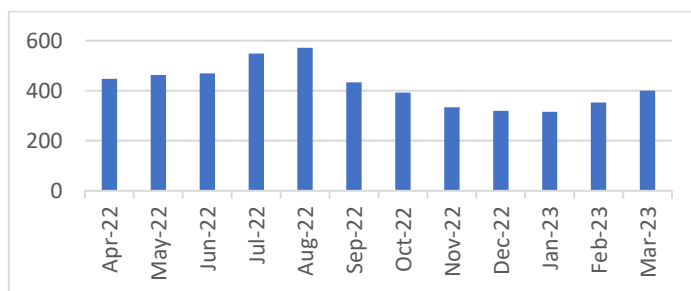
To allow for consistency and due to the way that data is collected, this strategic assessment will reflect on crime and ASB data from April 2022 - March 2023.

Following increases in recorded crime in the previous two years, there has been a 4% decrease in recorded crime between April 2022 and 2023. Whilst not significant it is positive to see a decrease occurring, particularly against a backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis.

It is very positive to see that cases of ASB have once again declined in the 2022-23 period, falling by 10%. Kent Police and partner agencies have undertaken many initiatives to tackle cases of ASB which will be discussed in further detail within this document. The top 5 wards for ASB once again account for a significant amount of all cases, 45%, but there has been a change in the wards with Peninsula Ward being included in the top 5 for the first time. Data such as this is important to ensure that resources are targeted appropriately.



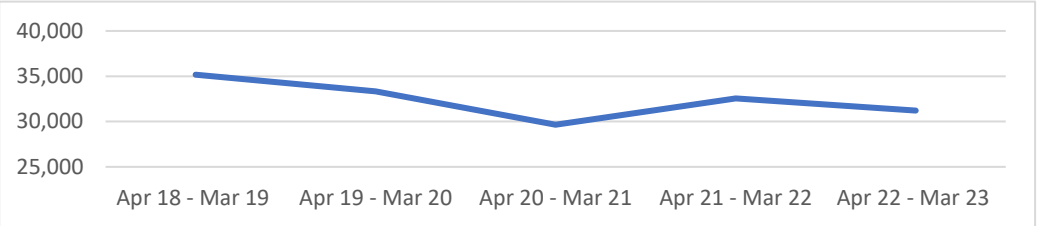
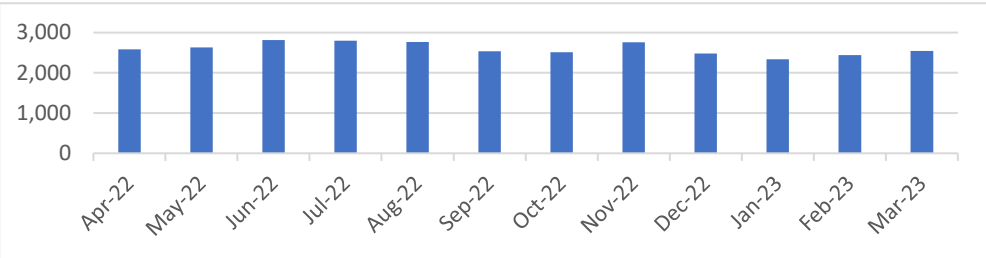
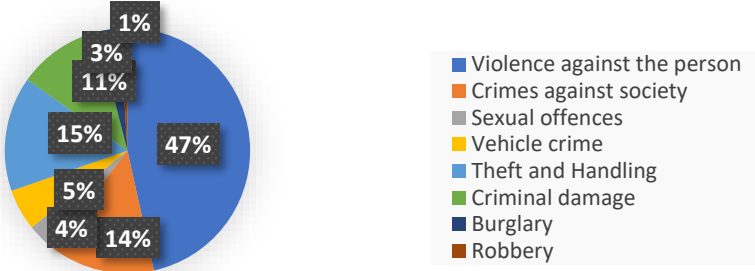
ASB Reports Seasonality 2021-22



ASB Reports Seasonality 2022-23

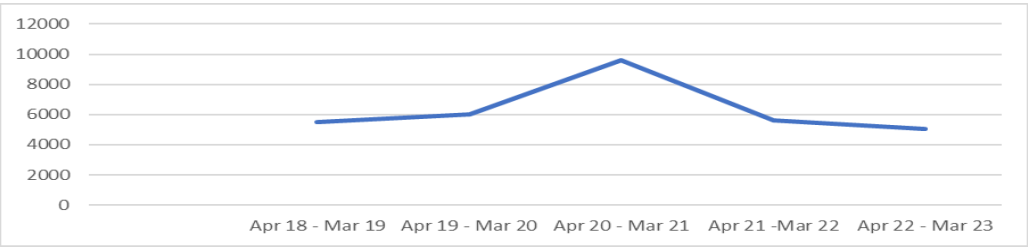
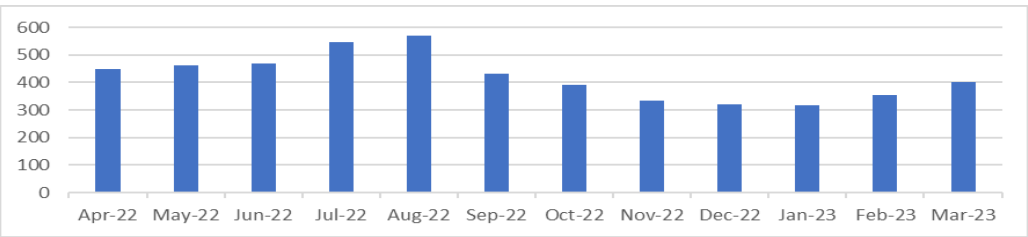
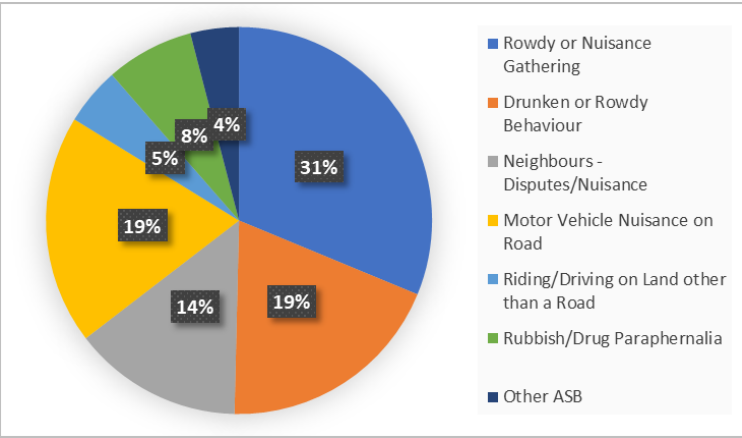
Kent Police have also moved to a new Neighbourhood Model as part of their continued investment in Neighbourhood Policing. They aim to have a dedicated Beat Officer for each Ward, a team to concentrate on Child Centred Policing and a Task Force. This is a growing model with some results already being seen with arrests, reduction in ASB report and better communication with partners. It is hoped that the more it grows and with greater experience this will provide a great partnership response.

All Recorded Crime

Level of Crime	31,198 recorded crimes (April 22 – March 23, Kent Police Data October 2023) 112 per 1000 people (Based on the population of 279,800 in the 2021 Census available at ONS Website).
Peer Comparison	18th highest number of recorded crimes for Unitary Authorities (59 responding authorities, Iginform.gov.uk) (Down from 11 th previously)
Annual Change	4.1% decrease (Based on final figures of 32,541 for 2021-2022)
General Trend	
Seasonality	
Breakdown of Crime Types	
Top 5 Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River • Gillingham South • Gillingham North • Luton and Wayfield • Strood South

	Top 5 wards account for 45% of crime.
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Anti-Social Behaviour

No of Incidents	<p>5046 incidents between Apr 22 - Mar 23 (Based on Kent Police data available Sept 2023).</p> <p>18 incidents per 1000 people (Based on the population of 279,800 in the 2021 Census available at ONS Website).</p>
Annual Change	<p>10.5% decrease</p> <p>595 fewer incidents (Compared with the 5641 incidents between Apr 21 - Mar 22).</p>
General Trend	
Seasonality	
Breakdown of incident types	
Hotspots	<p>Top 5 Wards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River • Gillingham South • Luton and Wayfield • Gillingham North • Peninsula <p>These 5 Wards account for 48% of all ASB incidents in Medway.</p>

Benchmarking

For the purposes of benchmarking all comparisons have been made with CSP's belonging to the Home Office's 'Most Similar Group'. Medway has been compared with 13 CSP's within the grouping to provide transparency in the comparison process. The ONS use the Crime Severity Score (CSS) to calculate harm, this data is currently experimental in nature but published to help users develop it further.

The CSS is designed to reflect the relative harm of offending, rather than how many crimes there are. Offences are given a score, for example under the current system, murder is giving the top weighting score whilst cannabis possession has the lowest point score per offence. The weighting score is calculated by analysing sentencing data, the tougher the sentence the greater the weight for that offence. Once calculated it is multiplied by the number of incidents. The total is then divided by the population for the area being looked at which gives the CSS. It should be noted that the CSS can fluctuate according to changes in the way Police Forces record offences.

Offence rate per 1,000 population (Total Recorded Crime)

	Apr '21 to Mar '22	Apr '22 to Mar '23	% change
England and Wales	89	94	5%
Medway	117	111	-4%
Basildon	106	106	0%
Bolton	125	122	-3%
Bury	110	108	-2%
Dartford and Gravesham	112	104	-7%
Gosport	85	92	8%
Havant	85	87	3%
Kirklees	103	111	8%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	85	85	0%
Peterborough	110	114	3%
Stevenage	93	87	-7%
Tameside	118	120	2%
Thurrock	96	96	0%
Wigan	112	112	0%

Crime Severity Score – Total Recorded Crime

	Apr '21 to Mar '22	Apr '22 to Mar '23	% change
England and Wales	15.9	16.4	3%
Medway	20.4	19.4	-5%
Basildon	17.9	18.3	2%
Bolton	24.1	23	-5%
Bury	21.3	19.5	-8%
Dartford and Gravesham	18	17.8	-1%
Gosport	13.3	15.1	14%
Havant	15	14	-7%
Kirklees	18.1	18.7	3%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	18	16.3	-10%
Peterborough	20.1	19.1	-5%
Stevenage	14	13.2	-5%
Tameside	21	19.9	-5%
Thurrock	16.8	16.4	-2%
Wigan	18	18.8	5%

(Data from the Office of National Statistics, Crime Severity Score dataset available at [ONS Website](#))

The number of recorded crimes continues to rise slightly across England and Wales. Whilst Medway remains near the top of the cohort, it is in line with the average totals for both offence rate and CSS. There has been a slight decrease this year by around 4% which is a positive, especially as the majority of the cohort have seen no change or an increase in the same period. This suggests that the work taking place in Medway is now heading in the right direction and work needs to continue to ensure further decreases in future.

Medway is again showing one of the lower percentage increases when compared with the majority of other CSP's in the Violence against the person category. Medway has seen great success in securing funding for tackling various types of crime. Most recently Medway was awarded further funding from the Home Office Safer Streets Round 5 funding. Funding through the Kent and Medway VRU and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), as will be discussed in further detail within this document, has provided opportunities to tackle county lines and the associated criminality.

Offence rate per 1,000 population - Violence Against the Person

	Apr '21 to Mar '22	Apr '22 to Mar '23	% change
England and Wales	35	35	0%
Medway	56	52	-7%
Basildon	47	44	-7%
Bolton	50	50	1%
Bury	42	42	-1%
Dartford and Gravesham	47	42	-11%
Gosport	40	44	9%
Havant	42	40	-4%
Kirklees	46	40	5%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	37	35	-5%
Peterborough	43	44	2%
Stevenage	37	33	-10%
Tameside	50	50	0%
Thurrock	37	34	-8%
Wigan	44	46	5%

Crime Severity Score – Violence Against the Person

	Apr '21 to Mar '22	Apr '22 to Mar '23	% change
England and Wales	5.1	5.1	0%
Medway	7.8	7	-7%
Basildon	6.3	5.9	-5%
Bolton	8.1	7.9	-3%
Bury	6.3	5.6	-11%
Dartford and Gravesham	6.9	5.7	-14%
Gosport	4.7	4.8	5%
Havant	4.7	4.6	-1%
Kirklees	6.3	6.7	7%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	6.2	5.8	-6%
Peterborough	6.6	6	-7%
Stevenage	4.6	4.4	-5%
Tameside	7.6	6.9	-12%
Thurrock	5.2	5.1	-3%
Wigan	6	6.7	4%

Progress on our priorities

Safeguarding Adults and Children

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Following a number of high-profile cases of serious violence against women and girls there has been a focus from both central government and at a local level on tackling the issue. Kent Police have used officers on an uplift to deploy to Rochester and Chatham town centres for the nighttime economy. This means more officers are present in the areas that women and girls may be socialising, to provide a visible presence to improve feelings of safety and to also act as a deterrent to anyone who may be targeting women and girls. This has included engagement with licence premises, gathering information and listening to their concerns as well as giving advice to staff at premises and hotels, to support them in their responsibilities to their customers. Officers have also engaged with women who appear to be alone or vulnerable to prevent any possible crimes. There has also been observation of possible suspects who hang around pubs or clubs, this has resulted in 52 interventions, 34 stop and searches and 4 arrests with 65 intelligence reports also submitted.

The Safe Spaces scheme continues to be in operation across Medway, with over 100 businesses signed up to the scheme. Each business displays the Medway Safe Spaces logo in their window, providing a visible representation of the perception of feeling safe knowing there are those to help when needed. Those taking part in the scheme are able to offer space to someone who may be scared, unwell or confused, offering them use of a phone or a place to wait for further help to arrive such as a family member, or police.

VAWG 'Walk and Talk' events have taken place in several locations as well as online. They have provided an opportunity to consult directly with women and girls to better understand their concerns around their safety. The events also look at factors that people feel cause violence against women and girls and what could possibly be done to address these factors in the hope of preventing further occurrences. It is also hoped that the events provide enhanced reassurance that the issue is taken very seriously by both Kent Police and partner agencies and that women and girls should feel safe going about their daily lives.

County Lines

Tackling county lines continues to be a priority for the CSP. Kent Police proactively tackle county lines using intelligence and proactive means to disrupt activity and bring offenders to account. A dedicated team collate intelligence and target the Lines that are causing issues within Medway. These Teams are supported by several partnerships such as the Kent and Medway VRU. As a result of the work of all agencies many lines have been closed down and Kent Police continue to gather intelligence on others.

There are also diversion programs that identify vulnerable children at risk to county lines or being involved in drug dealing and they use their expertise to divert them away. The new Child Centred Policing Team (CCPT) will eventually be able to work with the VRU to assist with diversion and visits to children who have been identified as involved or at risk of involvement with drug dealing and/or county lines. These children are identified through substantiated meetings like the Serious Organised Crime Board. At these meetings partners discuss those at risk and use tactics to engage and divert them such as closer working with Schools to prevent drugs misuse.

The newly created Neighbourhood Model within Kent Police has only just started and once fully staffed there will be a Beat Officer for each Ward. Beat Officers will be able to work in local communities and create a knowledge of those involved in drug supply. They will share this intelligence with County Lines and Gangs Team (CLGT) and other partners. If required once identified the Neighbourhood Task Force (NTF) have the ability to execute search warrants to enforce the laws and show communities that we are targeting this activity.

In June 2023, both the County Lines Teams and NTF worked together in train stations across Medway, targeting those suspected of involvement in county lines activity. Using stop and search powers on those suspected of bringing drugs into the county, officers were able to make several arrests and also recover a number of weapons.

Prevent

There is good engagement with Medway schools and education partners. The Prevent Education Officer (PEO) attends regular catch ups with the Medway Education Safeguarding Officers and a newsletter is shared on Medway Council's MedSpace Intranet. This is shared wider with partners across various departments. From August 2022 to August 2023 the PEO has delivered Prevent Radicalisation awareness training to just under 1000 members of staff in Medway Education settings. Workshops have also been delivered to over 550 Medway school pupils in the same period. In May 2023 the PEO arranged for a gaming bus to be located at Holcombe Grammar School and New Horizons Primary School as part of the Gaming Together Project. The bus allowed access for years 6 and 7 to safely explore gaming and have discussions about their online use. The project was supported by Medway Community Safety Team and Policing Teams. The project was well received by students and gave them an opportunity to reflect about their online lives focusing on online hate.

Medway continues to receive ongoing Prevent training which is delivered to partners across Medway but there was also an aim by the CSP to ensure that there was an increased awareness for all staff and partners about the links between domestic abuse and radicalisation vulnerabilities. The Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse and Extremism project showed that over a 2-year period from September 2020 to September 2022, 45% of referrals included a link with domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse and Extremism training was rolled out and the initial stage has been completed. Training has been delivered to targeted

commissioned domestic abuse services, teams across Medway Council and other officers across Medway. Feedback so far has been excellent, and it was identified that further training is needed in terms of embedding the understanding of Prevent within domestic abuse cases and the potential need for a Prevent referral.

There has been a number of incidents regarding extreme graffiti and stickering in Medway. Areas with high Eastern European populations within Medway have reported anti-immigration stickering which is likely being influenced by media coverage including reports of organised crime and exploitation by gangs who organise the sailing of small boats travelling from France with people trying to reach England.

A large challenge faced by the Prevent Education team is the lack of engagement from the Medway Zone meetings. These started prior to the pandemic and whilst the PEO was initially invited and attended these meetings, there have been no further invites since they resumed. Medway Safety in Action did not go ahead this year, this impacted an opportunity to engage a lot of year 6 pupils in the area in one hit with those important online safety messages. The PEO would support this project which it is aimed to be reinstated next year.

Serious Violence

The aims of the CSP to tackle serious violence include both strategic overviews of intelligence and hotspot identification as well as commissioned services and interventions that provide a practical means to tackle serious violence as well as supporting those at risk of harm to move in a more positive direction.

There is a large amount of work ongoing to create a multi-agency data sharing platform which will allow user-generated analysis of serious violence. It is hoped this platform will allow for data to be shared widely and quickly to provide a bigger picture helping agencies understand better the causes of violence. This should allow for better and quicker interventions to reduce the levels of serious violence. There are ongoing discussions about how Medway Council can contribute to the platform.

There is current analysis of existing and emerging hotspots of serious violence, and this is shared with partners through the VRU with a multi-agency response planned and coordinated using a single planning structure. This ensures agencies resources are coordinated to provide maximum impact on the places that are experiencing harm. This may include an increase in enforcement activity alongside diversionary activity.

The Kent and Medway VRU have confirmed funding for the Medway Accident and Emergency Navigators for a year (April 2023-March 2024). They will also continue to fund Focussed Deterrence activity to tackle gangs or young street groups. There is also funding to allow community organisations to deliver sport in locations of concern and sport activities will take place in a number of areas. Those under 25 who are at risk of exploitation are able to receive mentoring from Catch 22 who are jointly funded by the VRU and the PCC.

Aims and items to note for the CSP -

- Consider closer partnership working on cases of suspected cuckooing to protect those who may not be easy to engage.
- Reinstate the Safety in Action programme and event to ensure key safety messages can be delivered to families in Medway.
- Ensure PEO's are included in key meetings and develop working relationships further.

Reducing Vulnerability

Homelessness

We have continued to see significant numbers of vulnerable people threatened with homelessness through a variety of factors such as, but not limited to, poor mental health, physical health concerns, substance misuse or offending history. Medway Council's Housing Solutions Team, work with those at risk of homelessness and work to find solutions where possible but in some cases, homelessness cannot be prevented.

Medway Council's Housing department continues to work effectively with people sleeping rough, offering support and trying to get people into accommodation where possible. Joint work with the Community Safety Team has resulted in people being supported to engage wherever possible. Where efforts to engage have been unsuccessful, notice has been served on sites where there is an impact on the local community. The Rough Sleeper Initiative Team attend regular catch ups, meetings and joint site visits with the Community Safety Team and the outreach team. Joint working enables more effective work to support anyone at these sites and to facilitate engagement with partner agencies, such as Drug and Alcohol Treatment Providers and Adult Social Care. The Navigators Service works continues with preventative work and helping service users to maintain a tenancy particularly those that have become long term entrenched rough sleepers.

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)

There has been a focus, in the area of homelessness, upon partnership working. This has included the MEAM approach, with direct delivery led by Medway Council's Housing Team whilst a MEAM Coordinator is recruited. An innovative approach to the recruitment of this post has been taken with involvement from those with lived experience, a formal panel, steering group panel and aptitude test to ensure the right candidate is found.

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) is a coalition of national charities – Clinks (Criminal Justice), Homeless Link, Mind, and associate member Collective Voice. Working together MEAM supports local areas across the country to develop effective, coordinated services that

directly improve the lives of people facing multiple disadvantages, using shared knowledge and practical experience from this work to influence policy at the national and local level.

Since joining the MEAM Network, Medway has developed the Medway Multiple Disadvantage Network (MMDN). The MMDN will bring together a number of workstreams that work with people in Medway that face multiple disadvantages to ensure a coordinated team approach, best use of resource through partnership work, improved outcomes for the people using our services and provide better evidence for the continuation of funding and for system change.

Specifically, the MMDN will coordinate under one umbrella, services commissioned through Medway MEAM, the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG) and the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) alongside other services commissioned or otherwise that work with MMDN clients.

The MMDN will work to support adults who face multiple disadvantage and who meet criteria for some or all of the MMDN criteria namely:

- For MEAM: those who are at highest risk of premature mortality (as determined by the MMDN) despite the best efforts of existing frameworks/structures of support due to systemic barriers.
- For RSDATG: to improve access to drug and alcohol treatment services for rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping.
- For RSI: to relieve and prevent rough sleeping.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

The purpose of this project is to improve overall standards of exempt supported accommodation, quality of accommodation and support which, in turn, improves value for money for the partnered local authorities and residents. Medway SHIP has been fully mobilised since mid-July 2023.

The team have carried out 47 visits, to assess the quality of accommodation, verify support needs and support being delivered, and to build relationships with providers.

SHIP held their first EHB provider forum in September 2023. The Forum was held face to face in Trinity House, Maidstone and was well attended by a mixture of providers across the 4 boroughs. The forum will be held twice per year and will encourage learning, sharing best practice and networking between providers of Supported Accommodation.

Substance Misuse

Following the Government's latest drug strategy, 'From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives', the Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP) was set up with representatives from across the system, along with a needs assessment based on requirements from the strategy. The CDP is led by the Senior Responsible Officer, James

Williams Medway Director of Public Health who is accountable to the National Joint Combating Drugs Unit. The CDP is a standing agenda item at the CSP Strategic Executive Group (SEG) where progress against the priorities is presented. Medway CDP is finalising an Outcomes/Performance Framework that presents data from relevant agencies to demonstrate progress against the Drug Strategy goals and increases accountability. Work is underway with the Public Health intelligence team to produce an automated quarterly report that highlights areas of progress and areas that require further examination.

In April 2023 the Medway Treatment and Recovery Service known as 'RIVER' was launched and is now fully operational under the Forward Trust. The service has mobilised well and there have been no issues transitioning between the current and previous providers. This is a significant success which has allowed treatment plans to continue without disruption. In June 2023 the Peer-to-Peer Outreach Contract was awarded to Pathways to Independence. This project will support people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping to engage in treatment services, as well as training people with lived/living experience to become peer mentors.

On the back of the Government's 10-year drug strategy 'From Harm to Hope', substance misuse commissioners have received funding from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). This is in two streams, a Rough Sleepers Drugs and Alcohol Treatment Grant and a Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant. Whilst very positive and funding is hugely welcomed, the strict criteria of the grants has resulted in substance misuse services across the region (and nationally) advertising for similar roles at the same time which has created a significant challenge for commissioned services. As well as a recruitment issue, this has also seen increased movement of staff between different substance misuse providers which has created additional vacancies. Substance misuse providers are now having to explore new ways to be innovative in recruitment whilst also ensuring stability in the current workforce. The funding for these grants has been confirmed until March 2025, and although the strategy is a 10-year plan, there is no guarantee of the same level of investment beyond March 2025. This poses a risk for some projects and roles funded by the grants; however contingency plans will be in place to ensure Medway residents have access to appropriate support.

Another challenge has been seen in the quality of criminal justice referrals. RIVER have reported concerns as a large proportion of the referrals do not progress due to unwillingness to engage, the person being discharged out of area or substance misuse is low/occasional and therefore brief advice is more appropriate than structured treatment. The quality of referrals is currently being discussed with criminal justice partners along with the co-location of substance misuse recovery workers in custody suites and in prison to improve referral outcomes.

ASB

Medway Council's Community Safety Team have continued to deal with unauthorised encampments. In 2023 (as of November) the team have dealt with 20 encampments. Each has resulted in the issuing of a Section 77 notice, with 15 requiring escalations to a Section 78 notice. In certain circumstances a senior Police Officer has the discretion to order an encampment to leave and remove any vehicles and other property they may have with them (Sections 61 and 62 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and ASB Act 2003). One encampment required Kent Police to utilise Section 61 powers due to an increased level of ASB associated with the encampment.

The primary purpose of CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) across Medway is to support Medway Council and the CSP to reduce the level of crime and also the fear of crime across Medway. Between October 2022 and November 2023 there have been over 1000 incidents captured on CCTV with 194 arrests made which have been directly attributed to the use of CCTV monitoring and partnership working across Medway. Funding has also been secured to install three new cameras in Chatham Town Centre. Rapid Deployment Cameras (RDC) are also available to swiftly tackle crime hotspots or areas with spikes in criminal activity and ASB. There are currently 10 cameras deployed in areas such as Barnfield Recreation Ground and in Hoo St Werburgh where incidents of ASB have been reported.

Medway Council's EET have continued to work with Kent Police Rural Task Force on Operation Assist. This bi-monthly operation targets illegal waste carriers and scrap metal collectors. It continues to be a very productive joint initiative across Kent and over several years the team have been able to educate individuals and businesses as well as enforce legislation when necessary. The Enforcement Team also work with Kent County Council's Intelligence Team who collate and disseminate information relating to fly tipping, the incorrect disposal of waste and the persons/vehicles involved. They are also able to conduct a number of checks including ascertaining the details of persons/vehicles and businesses involved and provide country wide reports.

Partnership working is very helpful due to the high level of enquiries, with many involving a large amount of these involving complex investigations with a small team on hand to deal with them, with recruitment proving a challenge. There is also a consultation for proposed changes to the simple/ formal caution, whereby individuals can be tasked to carry out community activities i.e., litter picking. This could be seen as a future 'quick fix' to some offences, however, may lead to increased workload for officers due to site visits, risk assessments and possible monitoring of the activities to ensure the required work is carried out. Despite being a small team there have been 673 investigative actions in 2021-22 with 158 fixed penalty notices compared to 59 in 2020-21.

Medway Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Team, who manage around 3000 properties in Medway, have introduced changes to improve how they tackle ASB. The recent

Housing White Paper and changes being brought in by the Regulator of Social Housing call for clear and easy ways to report ASB and effective communication. Improvements have been made to ASB pages on the Housing webpages with an ASB toolkit to help identify what is considered ASB and how to report it. The department has also invested in an ASB 'app', which is provided, where appropriate to tenants reporting ASB. It allows incidents of ASB to be reported at any time of the day, with users able to upload diary sheets, audio, and video clips.

Domestic Abuse

There has been an increase in referrals into the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service since the start of the new contract with Oasis Domestic Abuse Service. It is believed this is due to a greater awareness of the support available and as well as agencies being more aware of making referrals. There has also been a steady increase in referrals identified as 'medium' risk which suggests cases are being identified at an early stage. The uptake of the service has been steady at around 85% and clients who access the service consistently see a reduction in risk following support from the service. Risk can fluctuate significantly in cases of domestic abuse so this can prove challenging to measure but for most clients, alongside the IDVA'S perception, report a complete cessation or reduction in both emotional and physical abuse following support from an IDVA.

As with substance misuse services, domestic abuse services are also facing the challenge of recruiting staff. At a national level staffing across the domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) sector has been a challenge. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, some staff within the sector have retrained and are now working in different sectors. An increase in referrals has put a strain on the service and there is not funding available to manage the increase in referrals. This in turn has further negative impact on staffing.

Some key themes have been identified during discussions with adult survivors of domestic abuse.

Key needs -

- Community based activities to access are vital to help victims integrate into new areas.
- Support to link into health services, such as registering with a GP/Dentist etc.
- Good access to mental health support.
- Counselling services in house at refuge accommodation for both adults and children. It is important for there to be no waiting list.
- Support to access civil orders.
- Accessible refuge accommodation for disabled victims – ground floor or adapted properties.
- Activity days for adults and families in refuges.
- Fun for the children.

Discussions also identified a number of challenges faced by those that have suffered domestic abuse which a number of partner agencies could potentially support.

- Challenges of getting into schools for those in refuge/temporary accommodation#
- Issues with housing officers from out of area responding to victims/survivors.
- Waiting lists for mental health services.
- Difficulty navigating mental health support services.
- Lack of ongoing support following on from IDVA support.
- Issues with police officers getting back to victims/survivors locally and out of area.

There has been a shift in focus around early intervention and prevention with bystander/upstander interventions with a series of active bystander training for those working in public spaces which advises on how to intervene when poor language or behaviour is witnessed without posing a risk to the bystander or others. Public Health, and the commissioned IDVA service continue to work closely with the VRU on this theme.

Aims and items to note for the CSP -

- Work to improve the quality of referrals into treatment services for substance misuse.
- Agencies to work together to support the MEAM project and consider any learning from it that may benefit how their agency works with individuals with complex needs.
- Continue to build upon the success of active bystander training.

Reducing Reoffending

Reducing adult reoffending – The Probation Service

It has been widely reported in the media that there is a large issue with overcrowding in prisons across the country. There has been a recent change in operational practice whereby some low-level offenders can be released 18 days earlier than expected. This increases the volume of people coming through the Probation service during this period.

Within Kent there has been steady progress in meeting employment and training targets. 19% people are gaining employment post release from prison, with this figure rising to 27.5% 6 months post release. This falls within Amber status and isn't far from expected standards. At 6 months since the imposition of the community order, Kent Probation is at 42% which places it in green status as the target is 38%. There has also been a lot of work around substance misuse. Drug testing by Probation practitioners for those sentenced to a Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) is now mandatory and adds value to supporting people through recovery and treatment and risk management. Further to this, a new Continuity of Care project goes live in HMP Rochester, Elmley, Swaleside, East Sutton Park and Stamford Hill from 16th October. This project notifies probation if a prison leaver has been referred into community treatment to support engagement.

Following the unification of the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies in 2012, Kent became two Probation Delivery Units (PDU's), East and West. Medway falls within the West Kent PDU which was inspected on April 2022. The priorities over the last 12 months have been to stabilise the Unit following a difficult HMIP Inspection and to address the recommendations following the inspection. A notable success was the immediate implantation of a performance management framework that has led to a 30% uplift in performance. Workforce planning has also seen fewer staff vacancies, the PDU is currently at 77% of its staffing target compared to 57% at the time of the HMIP inspection which is a significant difference in a short period of time and an incredible accomplishment considering Kent is nationally recognised as a hard to recruit area and the loss of the market forces supplement in April 2022, a payment incentive to draw applicants.

Reducing Adult Reoffending – Interventions Alliance

Interventions Alliance have been working jointly with the PCC and Look Ahead to provide domestic abuse (Healthy Relationships) and stalking interventions (Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Intervention) within Kent and Medway. These interventions have received good feedback since their inception in 2021 and a positive impact has been noted by both the perpetrator interventions and by victim services. There is also an evaluation being undertaken by Canterbury Christchurch University which Interventions Alliance are taking part in.

In April 2023 Interventions Alliance were recommissioned for a two-year period to continue providing both interventions and an enhanced service which will comprise of a group activity for those made subject to a Diversionary Caution when the programme goes live. Another service Interventions Alliance will be providing is a stronger link with the police and other agencies that may refer through enhanced engagement and motivational work with service users who have been referred for the main Healthy Relationships Intervention but have been assessed as being not quite ready to engage.

Interventions Alliance also manage the Chatham CFO Activity Hub. The CFO Activity Hubs project is funded via His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service Co-financing Organisation (CFO). In February 2023, Councillor Vince Maple (now Leader of Medway Council) visited the Hub with a showcase of all the great work that takes place there on display. On the afternoon of 8 March 2023, the team from Chatham CFO Activity Hub joined forces with The Probation Service, Kent Police and the Medway Task Force (MTF) to spread awareness of VAWG. This included talking to the public about safety, domestic abuse and violence and raising awareness of the support services on offer. The Chatham CFO Activity Hub are also partnering with the Sunlight Centre Development Trust who have made their sustainable garden project available to service users for a project that promotes environmental sustainability, recycling, and community engagement. A project called the 'Giants Head' was also developed and shortlisted for a 2022 HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Celebration of Wildlife and People Award.

Within Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) there has been the successful completion of many referrals over the last year which has supported the reduction of reoffending. Services have also become an impactful part of a participant's journey towards, suitable and sustainable housing, meaningful and aspirational educational and employment opportunities, personal stability and reintegration within the community. Medway support services (inclusive of local authority homelessness and outreach) are synonymous with partnership working, great communication and being particularly reactive to people in crisis. All contracts have reported this as a key feature (locally wise) that assures consistent and meaningful support along with the best possible outcomes for our participants both during the referral and after the service has concluded.

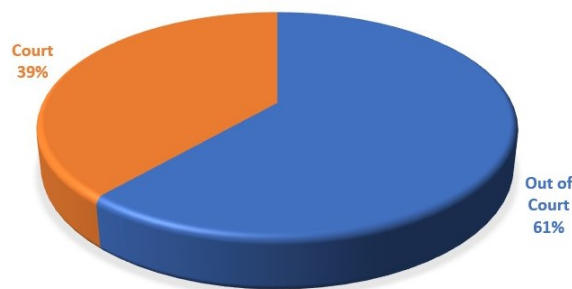
A majority of the service delivery is now face-to-face in Medway which has been challenging post pandemic. There is an example of excellent feedback from a service user who was a participant in the Accommodation Support service. They had been sofa surfing with a deadline to move on, no priority need evidenced and two failed tenancies previously, held and lost within the last five years. *'I just didn't know where to start but time was running out and it made me feel stressed and not want to face the problems at all. I didn't really want to talk to 'S' at the start and that it was pointless but after our first meeting I knew she could help me. She has done a cracking job, and I now am just waiting for a move in date for my room. I have asked for some time to help me set up and make sure I can manage which is the plan. I couldn't have done it without her'.*

A recent drive to further improve quality, particularly with Accommodation Support has focussed on the delivery of participant centred support in line with protected characteristics, developing a truly bespoke service which could look like advocacy and facilitated support to coaching and empowerment to achieve goals and aspirations independently

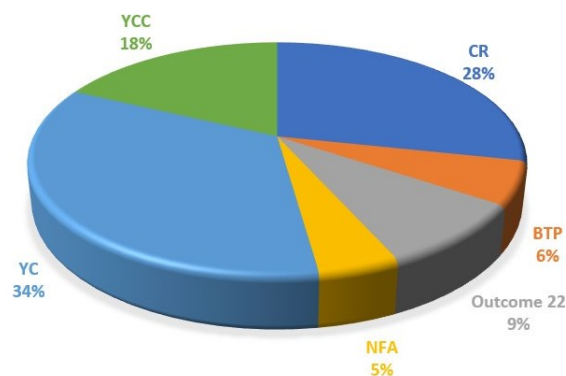
Reducing Young Peoples Offending

The National Youth Justice Board have introduced a system of rating the submission of Youth Justice Plans, as well as introducing a set of national Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Medway's YOT plan has been rated as 'Good'. The HM Inspectorate of Probation have issued 'draft' new criteria for the inspection of youth justice services, the emphasis on desistance from offending has changed to achieving positive outcomes. In line with this change, we are investing in work to improve children's sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. The aim is that children's work with the YOT leads to them getting a formal accreditation using the AQA framework. This work is happening at pace, with over 20 children gaining AQA's since April 2023. This is supported well by the YOT partnership that is functioning well. There is a good compliment of the necessary specialisms within the team including a substance misuse specialist, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) nurse and an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) specialist.

The Ministry of Justice have funded a national project called Turnaround, a prevention project aimed at preventing children on the cusp of offending from entering the youth justice system. In Q1 and Q2 there have been 14 children who have engaged with the programme. Of these none have been identified as re-offending. It is however early days, the initiative only started this year, so it is early days in the terms of gathering re-offending data. The programme has proved a challenge and Medway are not to set to meet their completion targets for the programme (32 cases completed in the year 2023/24). The main reason for this a lack of referrals into the programme. The YOT have struggled to engage the police with the programme but are currently working with them to increase the level of referrals.



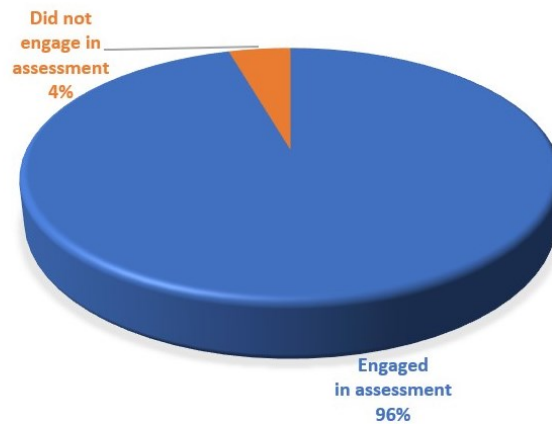
Court referral: 42
 Out of court referral: 67



Type of disposal:
 Court referral: 19
 British Transport Police: 4
 Outcome 22: 6
 No further action: 3 (No further action taken by police after referral accepted by YOT)
 Youth Caution (YC): 23
 Youth Conditional Caution: 12

The data presented is by case closure rather than the total number of referrals in. The reason that case closures are presented is that through these the engagement of children through the entire process can be ascertained. In 2021 / 22 there were a total of 74 case closures by the YOT from referrals from both the court and the police – out of court referrals. In 2022 /

23 there had been a significant increase to 109 case closures – albeit that the actual percentages of court / out of court remained fairly similar. In 2021 / 22 Community Resolutions (CR's) were the most commonly used disposal (total of 52% 27 children). In 2022-23 the most frequently used disposal was the YC 34% 23 children. This represents a significant increase in the use of YCs from 10 in 2021-22 to 23 in 2022-23.



Engagement

Did not engage:3
Engaged:64

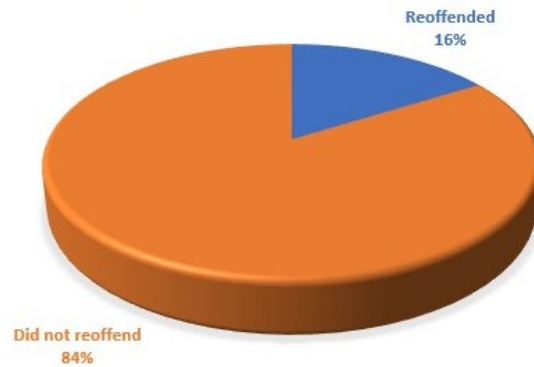


Interventions

Did not complete: 28
Completed interventions: 36.

This table differentiates between engagement and completion. Except for Youth Conditional Caution (YCC's) engagement with the out of court process is entirely voluntary. This in itself presents a challenge as it would be reasonable to expect children and their carers not to necessarily want to engage with a criminal justice process unless they have to. The number of children completing these interventions is dependent upon the YOT staff motivating and encouraging them to see these interventions as being worthwhile to them.

Engagement here refers to children participating in the initial assessment and attending the police clinic where the disposal is actually delivered to them. Completion refers to when a child completes the plan of interventions put to them at the start of the process. The KPI stipulated by the Ministry of Justice only records the completion of interventions.



Re-offended: 5
 Did not re-offend: 26

The Ministry of Justice records re-offending as a proven new offence within 12 months of the completion of an intervention. In order to use this 12-month timeframe only the closures from Q1 and Q2 have been used in this table. This represented 31 children 5 of whom re-offended. This represents a 16% re-offending rate – an improvement on the previous year’s rate for the same period, which was 28%.

Aims and items to note for the CSP

- Monitor the Community of Care programme and whether improvements are seen.
- Further promote the CFO Activity Hub when working with those that meet the specified criteria, such as when appropriate cases are referred to the Vulnerability Panel.
- Improve partnership working between the YOT and Kent Police to ensure referrals into programmes such Turnaround can be maximised.

Listening to our Communities and Partners

The CSP ran a Consultation this year which asked respondents about how safe they felt and what they felt the partnerships focus should be upon; 80% of respondents felt either very safe or fairly safe in Medway during the day which is a very positive figure with only 2% reporting that they felt very unsafe, perhaps due to perception of crime or having been a victim. When asked how safe they felt in the evening, 36% felt safe or fairly safe with 33% reporting that they felt fairly or very unsafe. This is not uncommon with less people around at night to provide a natural surveillance, there is a greater perception of danger.

However, it does also provide an opportunity for the CSP to identify the reasons people feel unsafe and look at ways of tackling concerns for example could it be due to poor lighting, or cases of ASB.

The top 5 issues that respondents felt were an issue for Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (80%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (79%)
- People dropping litter (72%)
- People fly tipping (72%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (62%)

These were also the top five issues respondents felt should be addressed as priorities by the CSP in Medway.

Respondents were asked to choose three things they felt would have the most impact on making people feel safer in Medway. The most frequently chosen options were:

- Visible and effective policing.
- Well maintained public spaces and infrastructure i.e., parks, streetlighting, pavements, shop fronts, alleyways, etc.
- CCTV.

The next question asked which partner agencies they felt most able to share their concerns about local/personal safety issues with. 59% said Kent Police and 32% said Medway Council. This is unsurprising given that Kent Police are the main partner concerned with people's safety, whereas many members of the public will not have encountered the Probation Service and would likely be discussing their health concerns with the National Health Service (NHS) rather than safety issues.

When asked whether they were aware how to raise concerns about extremism and terrorism under Prevent, 65% said no with 30% saying yes and 5% not replying. They were then asked whether they were aware how to raise concerns about racist and extremist graffiti and 62% said no with 32% saying yes and 6% not responding. This would suggest that greater education and promotion of prevent is required for the public to ensure they know how to respond with such concerns.

KFRS supported the rough sleeper street count which not only provided an overview of where rough sleepers were and some of the potential hazards, they may face but was also a great opportunity to have a positive engagement and deliver key safety messages to those that can be harder to reach. KFRS have previously attended several fires set by people who are rough sleeping to help them keep warm. Working alongside the rough sleeper team enabled KFRS to provide safety advice around the starting of fires and alternative ways to keep warm.

The cost-of-living crisis continues for many across the country. With fuel prices increasing some people have looked to alternative methods of heating and lighting such as candles which can carry a risk of causing a fire. KFRS have run the Save Safely campaign, delivering ideas that may save money but will also reduce the risk of a dangerous incident. Each week during January, February and March 2023, crews and the MTF attended Gillingham Street Angels to give information about the Save Safely Campaign and offering Home Fire Safety

Visits. This will be repeated in the winter months. Crews also knocked on every property along Luton Road in Chatham talking about the Save Safely Campaign and offering home fire safety visits.

Medway Council's Housing Team, along with partner agencies, continue to run the very successful Ladies Night Project. The sessions continue to be well attended by marginalised women who typically do not engage with mainstream services. It aims to provide support and advice to women that are sex working and/or homeless. At the sessions the women participate in quizzes on topics such as personal safety, sexual health, and substance misuse. A wide range of support services attend including domestic abuse services, Kent Police, drug and alcohol support and sexual health services. The project won an award at the Kent Housing Group Excellence Awards for delivering services to vulnerable people.

Aims and items to note for the CSP -

- Identify other means of communicating information about the CSP with communities.
- Look at ways to increase the number of replies to the CSP Consultation.
- Consider this as a theme throughout the Partnership's work and focus instead on another significant issue that can draw partners expertise such as Road Safety or Vehicle Safety.

To Conclude

This year the Strategic Assessment has once again shown an incredible amount of work that has been undertaken by the CSP. There has been a large amount of success in each of the key themes. This includes award winning projects such as the Ladies Night project which has helped services reach vulnerable women who may have previously been hard to reach, as well as giving those women an opportunity to engage with service and gain help and support where needed. The VAWG Walk and Talk events have also improved engagement and have provided a chance to receive feedback from women about how services such as Kent Police can improve their feelings of safety.

It is clear across all the priority areas that services in Medway are performing well. Both crime and ASB have decreased compared with the previous year. Figures for benchmarking show that Medway continued to improve in terms of recorded and violent crime with the harm figures also reducing. Medway is on a par with or faring better than its comparable areas. Whilst positive, it is also clear that agencies are not being complacent. There is still much work to do, and all agencies appear committed to continuing to improve their outcomes to keep Medway safe.

There have also been challenges throughout the year. Recruitment seems to be a key issue for many, with the need for more skilled workers with the appropriate training. This is likely to be ongoing in the current climate. There are still some challenges in partnership working and this appears to be a key priority for agencies such as the YOT who require the input of others such as Kent Police to ensure they get the referrals needed for projects that aim to improve the outcomes of young people on the cusp of criminality or already involved in crime.

From the CSP survey, it is apparent that whilst there is a lot of training and awareness of various subjects for professionals, there may be a gap in the sharing of knowledge with members of the public. This is the case for Prevent with a large proportion of people reporting that they were unsure how to raise concerns they may have about extremism. A high proportion were also unsure how to report concerns about racist or extremist graffiti. Promotion of the topic and further education opportunities would help to improve this.

All agencies have worked extremely hard against the key priorities of the current community safety plan. Next year will see the introduction of a new Community Safety Plan with refreshed priorities, giving agencies a new opportunity to develop upon the work they have already achieved with a greater focus on emerging issues.

Recommended priorities for 2024-27

- Tackle Drugs and Alcohol.
- Reduce Re-offending.
- Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour encompasses a wide range of behaviours that cause nuisance and harm to others. It is also recommended that all priorities adopt Listening to our Partners and Communities.

Background and Data Information

Annual strategic assessments of crime and disorder are carried out to satisfy the requirement under Regulation 5 of the Formulation and Implementation of Strategy Regulations 2007.

The assessment is based upon information that has been made available by partner agencies and information available in open-source material. The data will have some limitations; it is not always possible to get the same time frame from every source as Partners measure their data in different ways. It should also be noted that not all data has been cleansed due to the large volume.

The following is a list of departments and data sources used to inform the strategic assessment.

- CSP Action Plan 2021-2022 / 2022 -2023 Quarterly Updates
- Interventions Alliance
- Kent and Medway NHS
- Kent and Medway Prevent
- Kent and Medway Public Health
- Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service
- Kent Police ASB data and published crime data April 2021 - March 2022 Control Strategy.
- Local Government Association – LG Inform Database
- Medway Council – Child Friendly Medway Initiative
- Medway Council – Community Safety Team
- Medway Council – Housing Team
- Medway Council – Power BI and Ward Profiles
- Medway Council – Public Health
- Medway Council – Trading Standards
- Medway Council – Youth Service
- Medway Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Medway Task Force
- Office of National Statistics
- Public Health England – [Local Health Website](#)
- The Probation Service

Glossary of Terms

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCPT	Child Centred Policing Team
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDP	Combating Drugs Partnership
CR	Community Resolution
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CSS	Crime Severity Score
CLGT	County Lines and Gangs Team
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DRR	Drug Rehabilitation Requirement
EET	Environmental Enforcement Team
EHB	Enhanced Housing Benefit
HMPPS	HM Prison and Probation Service
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KFRS	Kent Fire and Rescue Service
MEAM	Making Every Adult Matter
MMDN	Medway Multiple Disadvantage Network
MTF	Medway Task Force
NHS	National Health Service
NTF	Neighbourhood Task Force
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PEO	Prevent Education Officer
PDU	Probation Delivery Unit
RDC	Rapid Deployment Cameras
SEG	Strategic Executive Group
SHIP	Supported Housing Improvement Programme
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit
YC	Youth Caution
YCC	Youth Conditional Caution
YOT	Youth Offending Team

Appendix 1

Figure 1: Breakdown of Crime Types shown in All Crime Summary

Violent Crime
- Violence Against the Person
- Homicide
- Violence with injury
- Violence without injury
- Most Serious Violence
- Sexual Offences
- Rape
- Other sexual offences
Robbery
Burglary Dwelling
Burglary Other than Dwelling
Burglary - Residential
Burglary - Business and Community
Vehicle Crime
- Theft Of Motor Vehicle
- Theft From Motor Vehicle
Vehicle Interference
Theft and Handling Exc VI
- Shoplifting
- Theft of Pedal cycle
- Other Theft
Criminal Damage
- Arson
- Criminal damage
Crimes against society
Drug Offences
- Trafficking
- Possession of drugs
Possession of weapons
Public order offences
Other crimes