Medway Community Safety Partnership

Strategic Assessment 2025



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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).
- NHS 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 2025. 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 2025. The CSP produces our annual strategic assessment to review performance against our aims and objectives. The Strategic Assessment assesses and prioritises the crime and disorder and substance misuse problems that we face. By doing so the assessment assists in the most effective deployment of available resources in a manner that will have the greatest impact on the most relevant problems.

The Strategic Executive Group is the strategic group of Medway's CSP and meets four times a year. The group consists of strategic and operational officers who are collectively responsible for addressing crime and disorder, community safety, substance misuse, and reoffending across Medway. The group has overall strategic responsibility for making sure that the priorities identified from the annual Strategic Assessment are outlined within the Action Plan, and the projects within the Action Plan are delivered.

Our partners work together to deliver to keep our residents, and those visiting Medway, safe. They work to deliver our statutory duties and initiatives aimed at reducing crime and ASB as well as providing support to victims and anyone who is impacted by incidents that occur.

This is the second strategic assessment since the refresh of the Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Plan 2024-2027. The partnership continues to prioritise the tackling of ASB as well as aiming to reduce VAWG along with priorities to tackling drugs and alcohol and also to reducing reoffending. By identifying these four areas as ones to focus on, the Community Safety Partnership are able to create aims and objectives with resources shared more efficiently and effectively.

The delivery of our Community Safety Partnership Plan requires all stakeholders, partners and the communities across Medway to work towards shared objectives. We will work hard to maximise our effectiveness as a partnership, tackling not only the obvious impact, but also the underlying issues which drive crime and disorder within our communities to ensure Medway continues to be a great place to live, work, learn and visit for years to come.



Councillor Alex Paterson
Chair of the Community Safety Partnership
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement

Community Safety Plan 2024 – 2027

In line with the Community Safety Plan 2024-2027, the priorities of the CSP are:

Priority 1: Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

Priority 2: Violence Against Women and Girls

Priority 3: Tackle Drugs and Alcohol

Priority 4: Reducing Reoffending

Overview

Priority	What we have been doing
Tackling anti-social behaviour	 Target ASB and crime in town centre. Support victims of ASB and assist perpetrators in changing behaviours. Increase awareness and interventions to reduce deliberate fires. New approach to tackle environmental crime, with a focus on fly tipping. Review of CCTV (closed-circuit television) and additional mobile technology to assist in the detection of ASB and environmental crime. Effective Problem-Solving Plans based on engagement and targeted enforcement. Through Channel, challenge the ideology of extremism and provide support to those vulnerable to radicalisation.
Violence against women and girls (VAWG)	 Deterring potential offenders via engagement and diversion schemes. The arrest and successful prosecution of known offenders. Visible policing and partnership work in Town centres and public spaces. Covert policing deployments to protect women and girls via Op Vigilant. Child Centred Policing Team (CCPT) actively engaging in education spaces with partners addressing VAWG related issues. Engaging effectively with all communities to deal with key issues and responding to them. Using My Community Voice to understand issues and areas of concern. Implementing Problem Solving Plans where appropriate with partners and specifically in relevant licensed premises.
Tackle drugs and alcohol	 Improved information sharing through the Outcomes Framework and Local Drugs Information System. Reducing the prescribing of Dependency Forming Medicines (DFMs) that may lead to problematic substance use in the community. Increasing substance misuse community treatment capacity, ensuring that recovery is more visible and celebrated. Improved pathways between prison and community substance misuse services to enable continuity of care. Develop an improved understanding of the reasons behind problematic substance use in Medway (behaviour change). Improved harm reduction and awareness programme to steer young people away from harmful substance use. Enabling improved collaboration across organisations. Targeting Organised Crime Groups, effectively disrupting county lines and relentless targeting known offenders. Supporting those at risk from drug related criminality with a focus on children and other vulnerability. The arrest and successful prosecution of known offenders.

Reduce reoffending

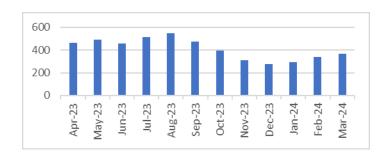
- Increase the number of participants accessing the CFO Activity Hub voluntary provision and to deliver Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (Accommodation and Personal Wellbeing) to referred male participants across Medway.
- Working towards keeping people safe through active and responsive safeguarding practice towards children and adult.
- Regional programme being rolled out focused on keeping people safe in the community through effective probation practice.
- Targeted interventions to help people secure and maintain employment; accommodation; substance dependency, wellbeing, health, thinking and behaviour and wider family and readjustment to society interventions and support.
- Working with partnership agencies in reducing incidents of offending including youth offending services, prisons, police, safeguarding services and wider statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- To reduce the number of children who are first time entrants in the criminal justice system to below national and regional levels and increase the use of diversionary responses for children.

The Crime Picture in Context

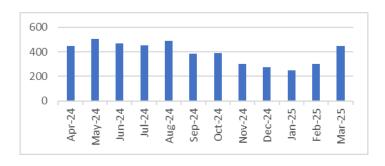
To allow for consistency and due to the way that data is collected, this strategic assessment will reflect on crime and ASB data from April 2024 - March 2025.

Following on from last year's 9% decrease in recorded crime there has been a further decrease by 7.7% between April 2024 and March 2025. It is extremely positive to see a continued decrease occurring, particularly against a backdrop of a cost-of-living crisis.

Whilst there has been a slight reduction in ASB numbers reported in the financial year 2024-2025, we have now seen a change in the manner in which ASB is recorded by Kent Police. This has shown an increase in reported cases of ASB throughout the Summer of 2025. Data is reviewed daily by CSU Inspector to identify patterns and deployment of resources is adjusted accordingly. Part of the increase is felt to be linked to enhanced engagement and visibility due to the uplift of staff and opportunities to report. We continue to have clear plans to address ASB and prevent it. We will continue to do all we can, with our partners, to most effectively tackle ASB in the year ahead. Initiatives to tackle ASB have continued and are highlighted within this document.

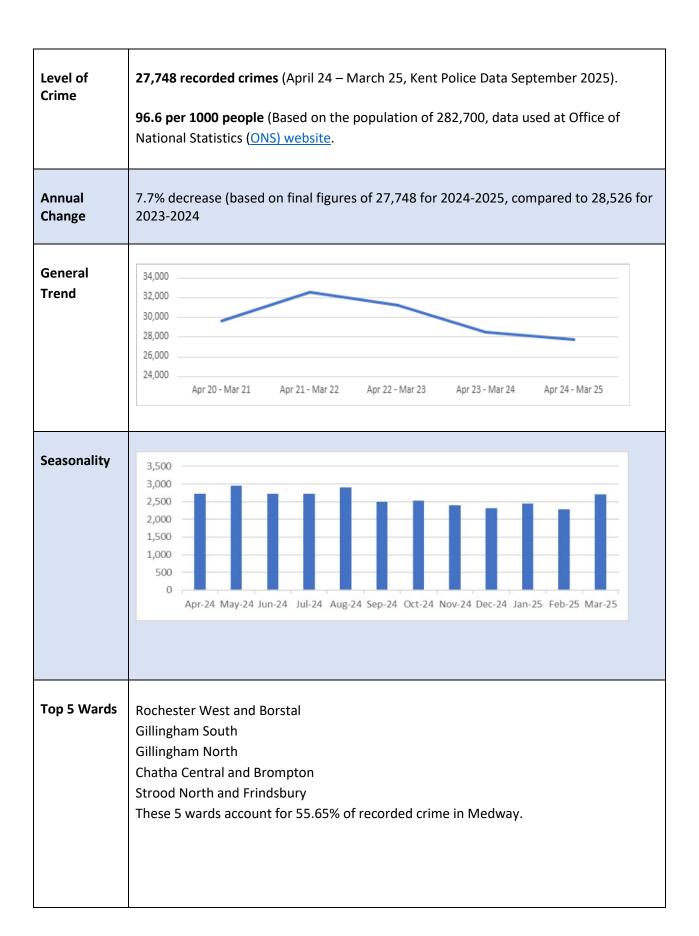


ASB Reports Seasonality 2023-24



ASB Reports Seasonality 2024-25

The Neighbourhood Model established by Kent Police has continued to develop with Beat Officers for every Ward in Medway as well as the CCPT and the Neighbourhood Task Force (NTF). This has seen greater partnership links with Beat Officers able to establish effective relationships with key stakeholders in their areas, improving communication and the sharing of intelligence.



Benchmarking

Previous benchmarking was made with CSP's belonging to the Home Office's 'Most Similar Group' and using the Office of National Statistic (ONS) Crime Severity Score (CSS) to calculate harm. The data was experimental in nature but was published to help users develop it further. Unfortunately, the data set has not been updated since August 2023 which has meant that benchmarking has been more difficult this year. This year we have used the same authorities in the previous 'Most Similar Group' and have taken data from the Recorded Crime Data by Community Partnership Area data set available on the ONS Website.

CSP	Recorded Crime Rate per 1000 Population (Excluding Fraud)	% change April 2023 – March 2024 and April 2024 – March 2025
Medway	96.6	-3%
Basildon	87	-13%
Bolton	104.1	-6%
Bury	95	-9%
Dartford and Gravesham	99.4	0%
Gosport	78.8	-3%
Havant	78.4	-3%
Kirklees	93.3	-8%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	82.9	0%
Peterborough	105.9	1%
Stevenage	86	12%
Tameside	101.7	-5%
Thurrock	90.6	0%
Wigan	94.5	-11%

The first table shows the rate of recorded crime per 1000 people in the local population for year ending March 2025. The average rate per 1000 people is 92.4. This means Medway is only very slightly above the average for these areas. All areas have seen a decrease in recorded crime which is very positive with Medway showing a 3% decrease, over twice the decrease of neighbouring CSP Dartford and Gravesham.

CSP	Violence against the person Rate per 1000 Population	% change April 2023 – March 2024 and April 2024 – March 2025
Medway	42	-9%
Basildon	33	-21%
Bolton	44	-5%
Bury	39	-5%
Dartford and Gravesham	37	-3%
Gosport	36	-3%
Havant	35	-2%
Kirklees	42	-5%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	32	-7%
Peterborough	44	6%
Stevenage	37	20%
Tameside	43	-5%
Thurrock	29	-11%
Wigan	41	-8%

This table shows the rate of violence against the person offences per 1000 people in the local population for year ending March 2025 along with the percentage change between April 2023 – March 2024 and April 2024 – March 2025. The average rate is 38.1 with Medway the fourth highest (was second) out of the 14 areas. However, whilst all areas are showing a decrease in violent crime it is encouraging to see Medway having one of the larger decreases out of the areas.

Progress on our priorities

Priority 1: Tackle anti-social behaviour

Neighbourhood policing continues to be at the heart of the policing approach in Kent with a dedicated Community Safety Unit (CSU) for Medway. This leads to more effective local policing and better engagement with our communities. The force approach compliments the CSP in bringing together the local authority, fire, health and probation services to work together to keep Medway a safe place.

The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee has seen a significant investment in the CSU and resulted in an increased number of officers within the department.

Each Ward has a dedicated officer; Medway has an NTF which focuses on significant problems, the CCPT and dedicated Town Centre Teams. We have seen the newly uplifted Town Centre teams have started to make a significant impact.

Tackling Serious Violence is a key focus. Violent and Victim based crime levels have reduced, but we must never be complacent. This is an area which blights lives and leaves a legacy on victims, families and communities. The NTF and local proactive investigation team focus on key workstreams such as the threat from County Lines and Gangs and Serious Crime and Organised Crime. These departments are further supported by the Force's Serious Crime Directorate.

In a force led by the National Intelligence Model there is a clear tasking and coordination process to ensure the best and most effective use of resources. There is a daily review of serious violence, sexual and predatory offences and key intelligence. This is addressed by direct action, arrests, dedicated tasking and specific operations. There is an in-depth monthly review of serious violence, analysis of crime and the harm caused using the Cambridge harm index, a full intelligence review, and a force wide tasking procedure to ensure force resources are used in the most impactful way. Plans are set for priority nominals, the people causing most serious violence and an enhanced focus on them is in place. The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) also provide analysis and insight for action.

There have been three Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) areas for focus as linked to data on Serious Violent Crime and ASB. These are -

- Chatham
- Gillingham
- Rochester

Kent Police utilised allocated funding to ensure an enhanced patrolling regime and specific problem-solving plans to address significant issues. The Summer saw increased visibility in

Chatham and Gillingham High Streets to tackle Shoplifting, ASB and drunken behaviour. Officers have deployed with Medway Council's Community Safety Team (CST), Rough Sleeper Team and Forward Trust to ensure safeguarding opportunities as well as PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) enforcement. Officers have also been using Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs) to target those causing ASB; during the summer period 18 CPWs were issued, 7 CPNs and 7 arrests made for breach of CPN.

Since June over 2,000 hot spot patrolling hours have been recorded by Kent Police officers in our High Streets. Rochester has seen increased visibility during Nighttime Economy to ensure visible presence and enhance the safety of those attending our historic High Street.

As mentioned earlier, Medway Councils CST have been deployed to Chatham High Street, conducting pro-active patrols in partnership with Kent Police, taking appropriate enforcement action against individuals found to be engaging in ASB, street drinking and aggressive begging. Pro-active high visibility patrols have been welcomed by local businesses and residents, delivering public reassurance, displacement and disruption of ASB and provide early intervention for individuals with substance and alcohol addiction.

The Medway CST continues to work closely with statutory CSP partners, as well as a wide range of other organisations and Council services. These include the Rough Sleeper Team, Youth Outreach Service, Greenspaces, Medway Norse, Street Scene Team, Waste Services, Medway Council Housing, Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Kent County Council Prevent Team, Southeastern Trains, Network Rail, MHS Homes, and other social housing providers with stock in Medway.

Operation Checker is led by the CCPT who work with the Youth Offending Team, Education and Social Services to address youth offending, support and to divert those at risk of involvement in any offending.

We have also seen through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and the Neighbourhood model being embedded, that people feel more confident to report ASB.

Data is reviewed daily by the CSU Inspector to identify patterns and deployment of resources is adjusted accordingly. Analysis showed an increase in nuisance vehicles, although this has now seen an improvement due to the introduction of the PSPO, as well as with drunken rowdy gatherings. Chatham High Street is a focus of the increase and has seen a significant increase in Police presence working alongside partners especially Medway Council's CST.

Part of this work has been to address an increase in Rough Sleepers and disruptive gatherings after the closure of the Night Shelter in Spring, with many of the attendees remaining in the High Street area who were originally from out of area. There have been several arrests in the High Street and CPW/CPNs issued for persistent drinking and rough sleeping. Local businesses and key stakeholders are reporting this work and report it is making a positive difference.

A closure order was achieved on a known problematic address in Chatham for ASB and drug use, which meant the address was closed for 3 months, with anyone found inside the address being arrested. This excellent result will allow residents to live their lives without continued ASB related to drugs and alcohol. This tactic is a tool that will be used across Medway where needed.

Each Hotspot Location, via its Problem Management Plan (PMP), ensures activity and issues are recorded, and each town centre has a dedicated Seasonal Plan attached to it, identifying what activity and Policing response is going to be utilised to reduce Serious Violence and ASB. Medway's High Streets are nuanced and therefore the plans are bespoken for each, Chatham sees an increase in visibility during daytime and evenings whereas the focus for Rochester is the nighttime economy.

Kent Police are working on specific projects with the Home Office and McDonalds to reduce ASB related offences in High Street locations and this will continue to target those in that area and increase public safety.

The partnership continues to target nuisance vehicles and deliberate ASB fires. Barnfield Recreation Ground in Chatham remains a key location for ongoing work, Operation Irradiate is a plan that involves working alongside Tactical Operations and Special Constables to address ASB and offending.

Our My Community Voice surveys highlighted that E Scooters and E Motor Bikes remain a problem linked to ASB. Kent Police have and will continue to focus on this and have delivered targeted activity by the CSU within the town centres. This included E Scooters seizures in Chatham and Gillingham during days of action. In August 2025 Neighbourhood officers ran a joint operation with Medway Council and other agencies targeting Nuisance vehicles in Rochester. During the operation 56 Traffic Offence Reports were issued, 10 vehicles seized, and 9 Section 59 warnings issued for various vehicle matters (Police Reform Act 2002, which grants police the power to issue a warning to a driver or rider for anti-social use of their vehicle).

CST officers work with Kent Police to pro-actively enforce the nuisance vehicle and alcohol PSPOs. From the 1 January 2025 to 19 September 2025, 67 fixed penalty notices were issued to individuals contravening PSPOs, which is in addition to warnings, CPWs and CPNs administered by Kent Police.

Key Data (To August 2025)

- Victim Based Crime 23,163 recorded crimes. A reduction of 742 (3.2%) on the rolling year.
- Violent Crime 13,153 recorded crimes. A reduction of 900 (6.8%) on the rolling year.
- ASB 5,208 incidents. An increase of 406 (7.8%) incidents on the rolling year.

 Solved Outcomes. A total of 485 more Victim based crimes solved this rolling year compared to last.

Community Safety Unit Beat officers productivity rolling year to August -

- 598 arrests
- 2,647 Intel Submissions
- 668 Stop and Searches

The frequency and volume of unauthorised encampments have placed a significant demand on service delivery during 2025 for the CST with 13 unauthorised encampments to September 2025. Although the CST has a streamlined process for managing unauthorised encampments, they continue to impact service delivery with each encampment typically taking in the region of 15 officer hours to move on. Work continues with Medway Norse to address access points to the many green spaces that we have in Medway.

There has been a reduction in dangerous dog related calls. Kent Police continue to take this offending very seriously to keep the public safe and support dog owners.

Kent Police work closely with KFRS and Medway Council in relation to a number of derelict buildings, there was a PMP in operation to record the work being done on these and regular meetings are had with partners in relation to the concerns and incidents reported at these locations. This is work all agencies are working together on to reduce ASB and the associated risk with these buildings. It is hoped further significant progress can be made in relation to these in the months ahead to solve the problems linked to them.

Derelict buildings pose a serious risk to both the public and emergency responders who may need to access them. The high costs, complex ownership issues, and processes of gaining demolition notices and the complexities of the overall demolition process, which includes planning permission and high costs continue to create significant obstacles in addressing these risks. This has been amplified by the continued rise of social media, where certain content providers promote activities like urban exploring. We suspect this has led to an increase in trespass incidents and emergencies in these hazardous structures. In addition, we have observed a limited but concerning number of incidents involving tunnels and underground structures, areas that present unique and complex operational challenges for partners.

Following on from the success of KFRS Aspire Programme last year, a programme previously funded by the CSP that ran during the summer holidays aimed at those aged 11-17 years who were accessing or likely to access derelict buildings, KFRS Education Intervention Team have run several Fire Cadet Challenge sessions within secondary schools in Medway as well as running a further Aspire Session during the 2025 Summer Holidays.

The Fire Cadet Challenge trial programme was delivered to three Medway Secondary schools in March 2025. The aim of the Fire Cadet Challenge was to encourage conversations about making safer choices, aspirations and resilience. This programme will continue to be offered

as appropriate. Fire Cadets run out of Rochester Fire Station - the first cohort, consisting of 18 young people - successfully completed their course in June 2025. A new cohort of young people will join Fire Cadets in September 2025 and include 4 Cadets from the previous cohort who will join as Crew Managers.

Rapid deployment camera requests submitted by the CST to Kyndi have been actioned expediently resulting in an increase in the effectiveness of the Council's rapid deployment camera stock for the prevention and detection of crime.

Operation Assist (targeting illegal waste carriers / scrap metal collectors) is a joint operation between Medway Council's Environmental Enforcement Team (EET) and the CSU. This operation continues to be a very productive joint initiative. The EET have over several years, been able to educate individuals / businesses and enforce legislation when necessary. The partnership has, since April 2025, changed from working with the Rural Task Force to local Neighbourhood Teams, which allows for Kent Police officers to get valuable experience working with partners and targeting those causing issues on their beats. This is now run monthly, with Medway Council officers working with Police Officers who have been able to widen their knowledge around environmental crime and legislation related to this.

KCC (Kent County Council) Intelligence Team are used to collate and disseminate information relating to fly tipping/incorrect disposal of waste and persons/vehicles involved. They conduct a variety of checks for us to ascertain details of persons/vehicles/businesses and provide county wide reports.

The team have a partnership with the Environment Agency with more joint working over the last year with several unannounced visits to waste / scrap sites within Medway and the sharing of intelligence.

In terms of the Street Scene Enforcement contract, this is targeted at Litter/Dog PSPO breaches, with the current contractor (District Enforcement) having issued nearly 1,900 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) between October 2024 to mid-September 2025.

- Fly tipping Incident reports 2023 24 (latest figures available via Defra) 5332
- Fly tipping reported actions 2023 24 (latest figures available via Defra) 1577 (449 Investigation Actions)
- FPNs issued 2023 24 (latest figures available via Defra) 59

The 'Clear, Hold, Build' (CHB) project has run in the Bryant Street area of Chatham since March 2024. The intention of the project was to take a small geographical area and clear associated criminality, hold the area via enhanced policing presence, and then look to build the area by enhancing the environment in general. This is all done with a focus on partnership working. CHB has seen significant Police, Council and MHS Homes investment, and resulted in several arrests, closure orders and collaborative work with residents. The initiative will be subject to full review and assessment. During KFRS involvement at the event days, they were able to

engage directly with residents, delivering various fire safety messages and offering to arrange home fire safety visits.

The project is ongoing and currently led by Medway Council with environmental work being conducted to improve the local area. Our legacy project would be for a suitable location for a youth centre or community hub to be established when the project is handed back to the local community in the coming months. The intention is to then undertake similar work utilising the techniques and collaborative links to positively impact the ongoing work in Chatham High Street.

Engagement is key to delivering the best possible service to the public and Kent Police have utilised the My Community Voice app to deliver this. Medway has 3,300 people signed up to the App, which is growing in use.

A total of 600 responses has been received from Kent Police surveys since June 2025. The results of these suggest that Drugs, ASB and Nuisance vehicles are the areas of concern for Medway and therefore each Beat has a PMP to record activity and target those causing issues. Some of the positive feedback we have had includes that from Pentagon Centre Management who report a reduction in ASB and theft over the summer period, from elected Members who have provided positive feedback regarding officer engagement at surgeries and from local businesses in Chatham who have seen a reduction of ASB in the High Street. Each ward has a surgery/meeting booked in next 3 months and is advertised on Single Online Home.

KFRS Community Intelligence and Partnerships Team have worked to streamline the deliberate fire process, to ensure trends in deliberate fires are identified at the earliest opportunity. This enables trends to be raised at the CSU meeting and a partnership response to be agreed to tackle this form of ASB. KFRS are working nationally with the National Fire Chief's Council on a national framework for tackling ASB related fires.

In terms of consultation, KFRS have developed a new Community Intelligence Form, a digital tool designed to capture crucial data from engagement with customers. This information is gathered by teams on the ground, those who have direct contact with the communities we serve, including KFRS community liaison officers and operational crews. This form allows KFRS to capture a wide range of information about our customers, to build a more comprehensive understanding of the communities we serve. By collecting this intelligence, they effectively target the groups that need them the most, ensuring they are not just reacting to incidents but proactively addressing underlying risks. This intelligence will also help KFRS to adapt policies and strategies, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in an ever-changing environment. By using data directly captured from our communities, they can ensure their approach is evidence-based and genuinely serves the needs of our customers.

A significant volume of young people have been identified as being placed within Medway by other local authorities in independently run care homes, many of which are unknown or were previously unknown to Medway Council. A signification proportion of young people placements within Medway have been made by London Boroughs into a concentration of care

homes positioned within Chatham and Gillingham. Due to the proximity of care homes to Chatham and Gillingham train stations, with readily accessible transport to London, it is possible that this will contribute to vulnerability of young people in care as well as ASB and it is further possible that some young people in care may become vulnerable to radicalisation.

There is no doubt that partners continue to be challenged by demand and the number of incidents reported. This can lead to the CSU being abstracted from its local work to answer emergency and priority calls for service. This is managed and mitigated where possible but does affect capacity. Crime is becoming more complex, with increases in cybercrime, fraud, and exploitation. Kent Police must balance its visible response and community policing focus with specialist investigations, often with limited resources.

Financial challenges are well documented and addressed by the Chief Constable. Projected savings required are significant and will last for many years.

The Criminal Justice System nationally has significant backlog and capacity issues. This leads to negative impacts on victims and witnesses due to the length of time taken for cases to be heard in court. Kent Police continue to do all it can to support victims and focus on crime prevention to reduce the backlog.

Nationally there has been increased levels of protest linked to immigration. Kent Police continue to review intelligence and is well prepared to allow lawful protest and manage it whilst dealing with any associated offending and risk to public safety. This is likely to be an ongoing challenge.

We cannot underestimate the challenge of Serious Violent Crime, knife crime, and the effects of drug related crime and that linked to county lines. We again remain well prepared and focused on meeting that challenge and making Medway a safe place to live, work and visit.

Priority 2: Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

VAWG is an ongoing priority for the partnership. It remains a fundamental aspect of Kent Police's Control Strategy for 2025. Locations and individuals are discussed at a local level enabling problem solving and disruption activity to take place alongside support and signposting from partner agencies.

There is a relentless focus on the pursuit of suspects for offences related to domestic abuse (DA) and sexual crimes and the management and focus of these individuals are reviewed each day. In the rolling year 6,176 VAWG related offences were reported a reduction of 449 offences on the previous year seeing a 6.8% reduction.

The National Intelligence Model whilst used for Serious Violence, also provides a framework for prolific/dangerous offenders being identified as Priority Nominals and increased focus and disruption placed on them by officers across Kent and not just Medway. This has proved successful with several registered sex offenders and high-risk DA perpetrators being targeted, arrested and remanded for offences due to the increased disruption offered by this process. Information and intelligence in relation to offences such as accosting's, stalking and repeat locations are discussed and addressed daily utilising resources across Medway to target and provide support to the most vulnerable. CCPT provide support and visibility around schools to target and prevent accosting and exposure offences. Policing of High Streets and open spaces is vital, and CSU staff work closely with Medway Councils CCTV provider, Kyndi, to ensure that CCTV is operational and working in vulnerable locations.

Medway's CSU has a dedicated VAWG Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who leads engagement activity working in collaboration with partners and other Policing departments. Events such as a 'VAWG Walk and Talks' are scheduled to hear the issues that the public raise. Once such event took place in June 2025 in Gillingham High Street, well supported by partner agencies, during which 75 VAWG related questionnaires were completed.

Project Vigilant continues providing an uplift of visible police resources and plain clothes officers into the area during the Nighttime Economy. This project will be continued throughout the year, and additional funding will be used to uplift staffing and provide visible reassurance. To increase the visibility and success of this project Kent Police are working with Medway Council to install a Police Pod in Rochester for visibility and engagement during the NTE and provide a potential safe space if required. During the year there have been several arrests by Project Vigilant staff for offences such as sexual assault linked to alcohol.

Additional Training has been provided to staff across Medway regarding Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPOs) to ensure staff are considering preventative measures to protect victims when prosecution might not be possible. Feedback and training are also being provided in relation to DA initial attendance and ensuring that officers capture best evidence

at domestic incidents to protect the most vulnerable and secure golden hour evidence to support prosecutions. Operation Nightingale was launched in July 2025 to support this.

The Vulnerability panel continues to support referrals and allows a platform for partners to support victims; over 220 people have been referred, discussed and supported in the panel.

The Medway One Stop Shop (OSS) is well attended by victim/survivors of DA and supported by the DA services in Medway as well as the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Citizens Advice, River Drugs and Alcohol Support Service and Home Start (the venue is a community hub and so not obvious it is for DA support). The OSS sees an average of 6 victim/survivors of DA weekly. This is an increase from an average of 5 last year.

The Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service has been fully staffed and referrals into the service remain high but manageable. Medium risk cases into the service continue to be steady which is good as it highlights cases being picked up at an early stage and referred into the IDVA service.

The IDVAs are now co-located across services in Medway, e.g. adult social care, children's social care and Police. Feedback around co-location has been very positive from both sides and is improving relationships, strengthening pathways between services and improving quality of referrals into the service and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

The service has seen an increase in LGTBQ+ clients which is positive as work has been ongoing to reach this community and suggests strengthened pathways. The service saw three times the number of clients identifying as transgender and bi-sexual.

An additional 2-year post, Head of Children and Young People's services, was commissioned to focus on children and young people (CYP) experiencing DA. The post will work directly with CYP to deliver workshops and an advisory group to capture lived experience, the post will also work at a strategic level, completing mapping work across the system to identify what support services are available to CYP either experiencing CYP in the home or as part of their own relationships.

The New Burdens Fund, which Medway Council Housing receive is uncertain for the upcoming year. This fund allows Housing to commission core Housing support services for DA victims and additional IDVAs which build in capacity to the core IDVA service. If this did not continue it would impact those fleeing DA due to less housing options and stretch the IDVA service.

There is significant uncertainty in relation the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) contract – consisting of community and housing providers. The contract is due for recommissioning in October 2026; an extension was initially agreed but has since been informed they will have to re-commission due to local government reorganisation.

In the period 2024-25 there were 432 referrals with clients accepted into the service; 96% of clients report feeling safer following support from the service; 66% experienced a complete cessation of abuse.

Priority 3: Tackle Drugs and Alcohol

This priority is largely focussed on the work of the Medway Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) which is now well established. The National strategic outcomes are reducing drug use, reducing drug related crime and reducing drug related deaths and harm. The priorities are:

Breaking drug supply chains

- Improve intelligence gathering and data sharing
- Understand how partners can support delivery of the Police strategy
- Reduce dependency forming medicines prescribing rates
- Use contextual safeguarding approaches
- Restrict the supply of drugs into prisons.

Delivering world-class treatment services

- Review, evaluate and strengthen drug and alcohol treatment services with particular focus on:
 - a) Transition pathways between young people and adult substance misuse services
 - b) Pathways for people who have co-occurring conditions
 - c) Transition pathways between residential and community settings.
- Coproduce, deliver and evaluate training for the wider workforce
- Improve workforce recruitment and retention

Achieving a generational shift in the demand for drugs

- Deliver education (prevention and early intervention) programmes
- Improve communication between partners
- Apply tougher and more meaningful consequences
- Support young people and families most at risk of substance misuse or criminal exploitation
- Conduct a meta-narrative analysis

Working together as a Combating Drugs Partnership

- Embed more Lived and Living Experience voices
- Finalise the outcomes framework to measure and monitor impact
- Increase visible recovery and celebrate success
- Learn lessons by ensuring that action is taken
- Ensure that regular meetings and annual conference are organised.

The Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Recovery and Improvement Grant (DATRIG) plan for 2025/26 has been approved by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and mobilisation commenced in Q1 on agreed projects and CDP priorities.

Increasing Numbers in treatment is a priority outlined in the government Drugs Strategy 'From Harm to Hope'. This remains a key priority for substance misuse services in Medway; however, it continues to be challenged by ongoing difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Despite these pressures, 2025 has seen a positive trend in referral numbers, particularly within the alcohol-only and non-opiate cohorts. Notably, Q1 also recorded an increase in opiate referrals, indicating broader engagement across treatment pathways. These developments highlight both the growing demand for services and the need for sustained workforce to meet that demand effectively.

National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) data also shows a steady increase throughout 2024-25 of young people in treatment with robust plans in place to continue with this trend.

A pilot to co-deliver an intervention for co-occurring conditions in the Mental Health Together pathway has been delivered this year, led by the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT). The Joint Substance Misuse and Mental Health Services pilot has delivered promising outcomes, and plans are now underway to expand the initiative across all community mental health provider sites in Kent and Medway. This represents a significant achievement in integrated service delivery across the system. Expanding access needs of those accessing substance misuse services who also present with mental health challenges remains a critical next step in ensuring equitable and comprehensive support.

The Medway Day Programme has been running for nearly a year, with 12 individuals beginning their journey in the first quarter of the 2025 financial year. In addition, Celebration of Recovery was held in Q2. This event honoured the achievements of individuals who have engaged with the service and highlighted the value of lived experience through peer mentoring and volunteering. Furthermore, two individuals who completed the Forward Trust Day Programme have since secured paid employment.

Streetlight UK continues working with sex working women in Medway offering regular contact with the service, signposting and practical support for example benefits applications.

Moving Parents and Children Together (M-PACT) is a whole family, structured support programme which aims to improve the well-being of children and families affected by substance use. MPACT started in 2024, with 3 families completing the course. In Q1 this year another 3 families enrolled on this programme who are due to complete it in Q2.

Public Health have also commissioned the running of a weekly Breakfast Club at the Recovery Hub to engage rough sleepers in treatment services and increase delivery of harm reduction interventions to people facing multiple disadvantages.

The Medway Alcohol Support line was established to support individuals whose alcohol consumption is at increasing risk. The service went live on 1 January 2025 accepting referrals from the NHS Health Checks team and Forward Trust and expanded to self-referrals from 1 July 2025.

There has been a recruitment of a CYP worker in the young person's drug and alcohol service to re-establish the Hidden Harms programme – providing support for children aged 8+ affected by parental substance misuse. The role started taking referrals from May 2025 and in Q1 had received 19 referrals, the majority coming from children's social care. The role is working with designated safeguarding leads in schools to increase visibility and awareness of the service. This has included Hidden Harms worker delivering professionals training to two DSL (Dual Sensory Loss - combined vision and hearing loss) forums.

To support young people and families most at risk of drug and alcohol use or criminal exploitation the CYP service has increased the number of educational workshops delivered in schools, focusing on targeted groups.

In 2025, the CDP has continued to build momentum through its quarterly meetings, successfully bringing together a wide range of partners to foster meaningful collaboration across sectors. Following the success of the 2024 CDP Conference, this year's 2025 Conference will focus on CYP, aiming to further strengthen our collective response to substance misuse and drive innovation in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The Medway CDP's Strategic Needs Assessment has been updated, ensuring that the CDP priorities are underpinned by evidence of need.

To embed more living and lived experience voices in the CDP, an ambition of 2025/26 is to mobilise a Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO) in Medway.

In response to the growing number of national reports concerning contaminated substances being consumed by CYP, the CDP has taken proactive steps to address the issue. A dedicated task and finish group has been established to develop an action plan focused on delivering age-appropriate preventative drug messages to young people. As part of this initiative, the group will conduct a thorough review of available data and incorporate insights from lived experience to ensure the approach is both evidence-based and impactful. These findings will help shape the next steps.

Public Health commissioners from the Programmes Team (DA, Substance Misuse and Sexual Health) and Children Commissioning have established a regular meeting with Youth Justice to discuss partnership opportunities and system gaps for collaboration.

Significant collaborative work has been undertaken with partner agencies to deepen our understanding of the prison-to-community care pathway for individuals with structured drug treatment needs. As a result, we now have a clearly defined community pathway that has

been jointly agreed upon by both prison and community service providers across Kent and Medway. This development not only brings greater clarity to the transition process but also enhances the preparation and overall experience for individuals leaving custody-supporting more effective continuity of care and improved outcomes.

The continuity of care working group have identified the need for a similar approach to explore housing referral pathways and the systemic challenges associated with them. In response, an extraordinary meeting was convened in September 2025, bringing together key stakeholders to initiate this important conversation. A dedicated task and finish group has since been established to carry this work forward, with the aim of developing clearer processes and more coordinated support for individuals navigating housing services.

The Local Drugs Information System (LDIS) remains active, and while only one meeting was held during this period, no alerts were issued.

The Medway Drugs and Alcohol Related Deaths (DARD) Panel continues to meet quarterly and identify actions to prevent future DARD's. Medway Public Health commissioned Kings College to review the number of drugs and alcohol related deaths in Medway. National data shows that the DARDs in Medway are increasing, but the data across various systems varies. The review identified disparity between Medway and ONS/OHID data, due to a variety of reasons (including date of death versus date of registration). We are also working with the Coroner's Office to improve communication lines. Most reported deaths are those in treatment/have been in treatment. Discrepancies in the DARD data pose challenges in identifying targeted actions to reduce and prevent drug-related deaths. These concerns have been escalated to the relevant organisations, but remain a persistent issue at the local level, limiting the ability to respond effectively.

Public Health commissioned a Behaviour change insights project late last year. The report makes recommendations for reducing problematic substance use among YP (young people) in Medway, including: drug and alcohol focused teaching support for schools (working with the RIVER service and PSHE, personal, social, health and economic, (association); improving support for young people with co-occurring mental health and substance use needs (access to appropriate services) and re-establishing the hidden harms service. The CDP have reviewed the recommendations and started to take actions against these.

Research into serious youth violence in Medway identified connections to trauma, substance misuse, and social disadvantage, with affected young people often facing poor mental health, unstable home lives, and a lack of trusted adults. While services aim to help, they frequently operate in isolation, leading to fragmented support and inconsistent data sharing. Current fear-based or short-term interventions are ineffective and sometimes harmful. Instead, the report calls for a coordinated, trauma-informed approach that strengthens youth services, supports families, fosters community partnerships, and prioritises evidence-based strategies,

clearer leadership, and better data collection — all with young people at the centre of the response.

While initial efforts have been made to better understand the support available for individuals affected by Alcohol Related Damage in Medway, the care pathway remains unclear. This lack of clarity continues to limit the consistency and effectiveness of support offered to this vulnerable cohort, highlighting the need for further development and coordination across services.

The Medway Inpatient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation Insights Project offered valuable understanding of current processes and identified key areas for improvement. One of the primary recommendations was the recruitment of a dedicated Tier 4 worker—a role that has now been successfully filled. Additional recommendations remain under active review, with the provider continuing to work closely with commissioners to implement further improvements.

Recruitment and training of new staff continue to be a significant challenge for treatment services. While there have been successes in attracting new team members, the process of training individuals to meet the required standards for delivering safe and effective substance misuse interventions places considerable strain on existing resources.

Clinical teams are constantly balancing the demands of managing day-to-day clinical risks while also working to build a sustainable service model.

The new NHS 10-Year Plan places a strong emphasis on shifting from acute hospital care to a more integrated community treatment model. This strategic direction reinforces the growing need for a dedicated hospital-based substance misuse worker to support seamless transitions in care. Medway Public Health and the Substance Misuse Provider are in discussions with Medway Maritime Foundation Trust to recruit a substance use liaison nurse in the hepatology team. The aim of this is to improve the continuity of care for people with substance use needs between hospital and community settings.

Short-term funding arrangements (annual allocations) and uncertainties with future funding present challenges for Public Health Commissioners. These issues hinder the ability to plan services effectively, disrupt continuity of care, and place pressure on treatment providers who are struggling to reassure staff concerned about job security.

In addition, changes to Integrated Care Board (ICB) spending and ongoing staff redundancies pose a serious risk to the retention of strategic personnel essential for planning substance misuse services. These developments may also have a direct impact on the delivery of wider health services for the substance misuse cohort.

Medway Public Health is currently in the process of procuring an all-age substance misuse service during a period of local reorganisation. This presents a unique challenge: ensuring the

new service is tailored to meet the needs of the existing Medway population, while also anticipating future demands linked to an expanded geographical footprint and a growing number of residents. The re-commissioning of treatment services carries a risk of destabilisation due to a potential change in service provider and impacting service stability. However, as part of the preparatory work, extensive engagement with service users and stakeholders has been conducted to ensure the new service specification is shaped by lived experience, local needs, and expert insight.

Behaviour Change Insights project: research complete, provided recommendations for reducing problematic substance use among YP in Medway, including - drug and alcohol focused teaching support for schools (working with the RIVER service and PSHE association); improving support for young people with co-occurring mental health and substance use needs (access to appropriate services) and re-establishing the hidden harms service.

Youth Violence project (Serious Violence Prevention Panel): research underway to better understand the strategies, data and interventions being delivered which focus on reducing violence related harms caused to young people associated with drug and alcohol misuse and supply.

The Medway CDP's Strategic Needs Assessment has been updated, ensuring that the CDP priorities are underpinned by evidence of need.

To embed more living and lived experience voices in the CDP, an ambition of 2025/26 is to mobilise a LERO in Medway.

Tackling drug related offending and the disruption to County Lines continues to be a priority led by Kent Police disruption officers and Proactive Investigations officers alongside assets from the Tactical operations command. Kent Police have had significant successes dealing with this crime type in the last year and supporting those vulnerable to exploitation.

Kent Police regularly undertake operations targeting those linked to the supply of Drugs in Medway. Working in partnership with the CSU, Youth Services and CCPT around prevention, focused deterrence work, and safeguarding. Op Checker continues to prove successful in engaging with young people and providing a platform for support and intervention work. This operation is funded utilising problem-solving funding from the Home Office. Operation Abbey is used to support those that are vulnerable to exploitation and home visits are completed by the CCPT and NTF staff to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are supported and safeguarded.

Kent Police's robust targeting of County Lines activity has seen notable success. Joint work with British Transport Police at all the main stations within Medway continues and planned days of action are set throughout the year. Work is currently being planned for October which will see CCPT officers deployed to schools throughout Medway to educate young people on

the dangers of weapons and knife crime and targeted work will take place throughout the week in relation to Serious Violence and Knife crime.

GRIP Funding (this is Home Office funding and is an initiative aimed at cutting violence by giving additional funding to forces to support short-term suppression of levels of serious violence, as well as longer-term problem-solving strategies in hotspot areas) has been utilised for Charlies Promise Charity to attend 2 Medway Schools to provide inputs during October in line with this work. During the rolling year 1,166 drug offences were recorded in Medway compared to 800 last which is an increase of 45.8%. More drug offences were solved. Such offending is only identified and recorded by proactive policing and a targeted focus. The success is due to the continued investment by Kent Police into Neighbourhood Policing and the visible disruption and targeting of repeat locations for drug use and collaboration between teams. Our proactive Investigation Teams continue to target Drug Networks operating in and around Medway. Disruption and enforcement action continues in line with the Kent Police Control Strategy.

Initiatives such as Drugs Intensification weeks are also used to address offending. During one week in 2025, 11 Drugs Warrants were conducted leading to 20 arrests, £35,000 cash and many weapons being seized. Eleven of those arrested were remanded in Prison after being charged with drugs and weapons offences.

Medway CSU is committed to supporting vulnerable people and the Medway Vulnerability Panel continue to support some of the most vulnerable and complex individuals within our community. This panel chaired by Kent Police has seen over 220 referrals to date since its inception.

Priority 4: Reducing Reoffending

The Regional Probation Director has set out her key priorities for the service:

- People Recruitment and Retention; Diversity and Inclusion; Learning and Development; Zero Tolerance to Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation.
- Quality of Practice Appropriate blend of rehabilitation and Public Protection; Delivering the best outcomes; Not hitting the target and missing the point.
- **Partnerships** Developing relationships with internal and external stakeholders; Working Together every role is critical.
- Capacity Working more effectively and efficiently; Creating more capacity.

The Probation Service Business Plan for North Kent for 25/26 will be reflective of these priorities and a plan to how we achieve them.

Over the last 12 months there has been a particular challenge in relation to prison capacity in general and the schemes used to try and improve the situation. End of Custody Supervised Licence (ECSL) has now ended and been replaced with SDS40 - SDS40, or Standard Determinate Sentences 40%, is a temporary UK government policy introduced in September 2024 to alleviate prison overcrowding by allowing eligible prisoners to be released after serving 40% of their sentence, instead of the standard 50%. The policy applies to Standard Determinate Sentences (SDS) but excludes offences related to sexual violence, DA, and national security. It was implemented in two "Tranches," with the first releases occurring on 10 September 2024, for those with sentences under five years, and the second on 22 October 2024, for those with sentences of five years or more.

This is a change from current legislation that released SDS at 50% of sentence. Those SDS will now be released at 40%. With the previous scheme criteria was applied to assess each release but as this is a legislative change, there is no discretionary ability to hold prisoners back if they are eligible in policy. This has brought cases back into the community at an earlier stage which has given an extra challenge.

North Kent North Kent Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) staffing is at approximately 80% but for our qualified Probation Officer grade we are at around 50% of the establishment staffing level. Training is ongoing and we look forward to welcoming newly qualified officers in December 2025.

Looking ahead, the continuation of prison capacity changes could impact upon caseloads and the imminent Sentencing Act review (as of September 2025).

The North Kent PDU is currently working with 1,573 cases (as of September 2025), a mixture of prison licences and Community Orders.

Work continues with Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) Evolution Programme CFO Hub in Medway (previously Interventions Alliance, now The Shaw Trust). CFO Evolution offers tailored support for offenders – particularly those who are considered disadvantaged, are illequipped to effectively engage with the mainstream, face barriers preventing them from successfully reintegrating into their local community, lack the hard and softer life/functional skills required by employers and are not fully supported by existing programmes.

North Kent Probation Service introduced 'See The Way Forward' as part of the national 'Our Future Probation Service' project, aimed at reducing duplication and lean processes to allow more time spent with people on probation at the start of the sentence. Sentence management processes are helping more reflective practice and more positive outcomes for the people worked with, the victims of crime and our communities.

Seetec - There continues to be staff based at prison locations and efforts continue to be made to ensure referrals are made through interfacing with the Resettlement Teams, attendance at pre-release meetings, and use of pre-release lists, identifying potential referrals. This remains a priority area for Personal Wellbeing due to the importance of completing meaningful and impactful one to one work to prepare the participant for release into the community. The invaluable pre-release support is carried on once the participant is in the community.

There are a number of coaches who attend across Medway and other PDU's across Kent, providing support through four interventions Pathways: Social Inclusion, Lifestyle and Associates, Families and Significant others and Emotional Wellbeing. Team members continue to have positive working relationships with Probation Practitioners in all PDU's across Kent.

Medway continues to be the highest referring PDU each month across the Kent, Surrey and Sussex region. Staff consistently achieve effective outcomes for cases and have positive working relationships with Probation Practitioners and within Medway Council. They continue to utilise local landlords to support participants in moving into private rental accommodation. The waiting list has reduced significantly, and this is allowing us to allocate cases quicker to Accommodation Support Officer's for support earlier than we have previously been able to.

In addition to the community referrals from Medway PDU, there has been high referral volumes from Kent custody sites including HMP Elmley and HMP Rochester. Many of these cases are managed by Medway PDU and are being released back into the Medway area with housing on their release. Teams in HMP Elmley and HMP Rochester support referrals in facilitating appointments with the council prior to their release and supporting participants in understanding the process ahead of their release.

Interventions Alliance deliver the following interventions within Medway:

Domestic Abuse – Healthy Relationships (HR)

- > Behavioural change programme for intimate and non-intimate partner abuse.
- Focus on building respectful, safe, and healthy relationships.
- Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) approach.

• CURBB – Challenging Unhelpful Relationships Beliefs and Behaviour

- > Early intervention / out-of-court resolution.
- Motivational, psychoeducational work on DA.
- > Designed to interrupt harmful patterns before escalation.

• COBI – Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Intervention

- For stalking and harassment (intimate, stranger, or professional contexts).
- Insight-led intervention focused on emotional regulation and behavioural control utilising Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT).
- Lower-level intervention available with the high intensity programme (six or 12 sessions).
- We can take referrals for young people as well as adults.
- DBT based intervention.

• Newly Launched: Intervention for Young People – (Healthy emotions and attitudes in relationships for teens) HEART

- ➤ Tailored programme in development for adolescents.
- Age-appropriate content focusing on accountability, empathy, and healthy behaviours.
- ➤ HEART is a programme that looks to positively change the thinking and behaviours of its participants which have caused harm to people they hold a personal relationship with, focusing on adult carers/ parents at this current time.

Referrals from Medway for our intervention's accounts for approximately 8% of all referrals. Whilst we have good partner engagement, there is clearly opportunity for further promotion to increase referral volumes.

Interventions Alliance current Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) funding is due to end in March 2025. To ensure continued delivery stability and to ensure continuity of service we took a decision to make all colleagues subject to fixed term contracts permanent. We are still waiting to understand the Government's approach to implementing the DRIVE programme which they committed £53m to earlier this year, but this does offer opportunities to be part of the model as the perpetrator intervention provider.

The Youth Justice Service and Kent Police have strengthened the diversionary offer to children which has led to the reduction in children entering the criminal justice system

The Turnaround programme has been funded for 2025/26. It is being delivered through a groupwork programme and targeted at children at risk of becoming involved in crime. The programme restarted in June 2025, and the service is confident that 30 children will complete the programme by March 2026.

Medway Youth Justice and the Kent and Medway VRU will begin testing of a Young Futures Prevention Panel in September in Gillingham. The panel will identify children at risk of becoming involved in crime or those at risk of school exclusion and, using a Home Office grant from the PCC, fund support that will engage those children in positive activities.

In terms of the Youth Offending Team, in March 2025 there was a thematic inspection of the diversion and out of court work carried out by KCC and the Police. The two organisations have been given feedback on the strengths and the areas where improvement is required, and a report which collated the findings on 6 thematic inspections will be published in the Autumn. Medway Youth Justice have requested a summary of the relevant findings and to be involved in discussions on how to improve diversion. The feedback from KCC will help inform diversionary work.

The Youth Justice Service are currently developing their plan for the year which will outline diversionary projects. Discussions have begun about how specialist support can be made available to girls in collaboration with the Medway Wraparound Project along with art and music projects based at the Dockyard and Strood Youth Centre respectively.

The Ministry of Justice data for 2024/25 shows a 29% reduction in the numbers of children in Medway entering the criminal justice system for the first time which helps to confirm that there is positive partnership activity taking place to keep children from becoming involved in offending.

Wider work by Community Safety Partners

Prevent

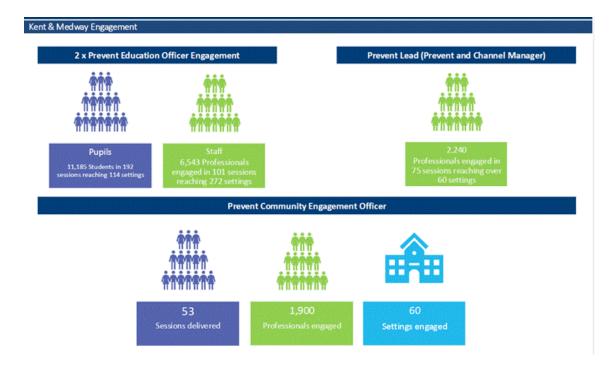
- **Terrorism Threat:** The UK's threat level is "substantial," meaning an attack is likely.
- **Self-Initiated Terrorism (S-IT)** remains the most likely form of terrorist attack in the UK. Such an attack could relate to either Extreme Right-Wing (ERW) Terrorism or Islamist terrorism (IT)
- **Channel Panel** Most referrals in Medway are young males, with many showing no clear ideology but some linked to right-wing, Islamist, or other forms of extremism.
- **Community Involvement:** The Prevent Advisory Group brings together local organizations, charities, faith groups, and public services to help keep Medway safe. More Medway community members are now involved than ever before.
- Training and Awareness: Many Medway staff and partners have taken Prevent training to spot and respond to risks. This training will continue and expand, especially for schools and public services.
- Tackling Extremist Messages: There's been an increase in extremist graffiti and stickers in public places, which can create tension and division. Work continues to address this.
- Safeguarding Young People: The Prevent Team works closely with local safeguarding panels and schools to share information and keep children safe. Over 1,000 students and 1,000 staff have received Prevent training this year.
- Focus for the Future: Some areas, like Rainham and Strood, had referrals but no
 cases needing further action. These areas will get extra attention in upcoming
 training and outreach.
- Data Using specific data sets we have compared the referral data by town to % of Channel cases. This has highlighted that Rainham and Strood did not have any adopted Channel cases compared to the referrals made for this area. Therefore, the Medway Prevent Engagement Officer (PEO) will target secondary settings in these areas as a priority from September 2025.
- Prevent statistics -

<u>Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, April 2024 to March 2025 - GOV.UK</u>

Training Data 2024

Prevent Professional and community engagement

- 4,140 Professionals engaged in 128 sessions reaching over 100 settings
- Prevent Education Engagement
- Pupils 11,185 students in 192 sessions reaching 114 settings.
- Staff 6543 professionals engaged in 101 sessions reaching 272 settings.



Homelessness

Housing Services continue to work closely with the Community Safety Partnership in a multiagency approach and attends weekly meetings in the current focus on Chatham High Street. Weekly high street walk-throughs are carried out jointly with the police. Kent Police have been attending training delivered by Housing Strategy and Partnerships regarding working with those who are rough sleeping and have substance use issues

Housing Options sit on the monthly Pre-Release panel which identifies prisoners that are scheduled for release and enables us to identify if they have accommodation on release and ensure that they are targeted beforehand for housing advice and homeless assessment. It has enabled early referrals to supported accommodation and hopefully mitigate the number that become street homeless.

The Rough Sleeping team started a drop-in clinic at Caring Hands to speak to those reporting to be rough sleeping, as well as attend the Open Road breakfast club. to meet with people and help with any paperwork that needs completing at a more suitable and reasonable time.

There is now a joint approach between the Rough Sleeping Team and the Housing Revenue Account with hard to let properties for our long term. Supported Housing Improvement Programme works to improve supported housing standards which can include dealing with properties where there is ASB through lack of appropriate support.

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation is progressing well; we now have Domestic Abuse Champions to support staff internally. The number of volunteers is growing. The Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy has been updated and is now going through several rounds of reviews before being published.

The Know, See, Speak Out Campaign is gathering in popularity, facilitating many webinars throughout the year.

Partnership working has improved in the past year, for example the Housing Options team works with the provider of dispersed accommodation to develop policies and procedures. There is also co-location of DA services in the Adult Social Care and Turning Point (a substance misuse service).

Tenant services work alongside the care leavers service and other agencies in a personcentred approach. Additionally, there are now have 5 trained mediators within the team, working to improve community cohesion and prevent escalations in respect of ASB.

Kingsley House has partially reopened allowing for more customer interaction and the ability to access advice and guidance. We are looking to expand this to fully open once resources permit it.

Increased in our DA service – need to expand the resources to enable us to be more robust in our support for DA victims.

Data is recorded for those that attend the Winter Shelter from January to April 2025, 33 attendees were recorded to the winter night shelter who were rough sleeping following release from prison. Of these 20 disclosed problematic substance misuses.

In terms of challenges, demand for homelessness and related services continues to outstrip the capacity of services to meet these needs. We are seeing the number of households approaching as homeless through fleeing DA also increasing, as have the numbers of people sleeping rough. Timely duty to refer forms for people being released from prison continues to be a challenge resulting in increased chances of release into homelessness.

There is a more complex mix of people seen rough sleeping with an increase in couples – which are harder to find accommodation for; numbers of people who have been under services for a long time and have exhausted their options; those with arson and VISOR offences; people with no immigration status; increase in those with no connection; lack of sufficient supported accommodation – including those with care needs. This can mean there are simply no suitable accommodation offers available.

Over the past year the MARAC system has changed, and it has been more challenging to navigate, not all partners are updating in accordance to the policies and procedures at present. Additionally, there are a limited number of licences. There is a burden of increased workload on the people who do have licences. There was a statement that the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence Assessment (DASH) tool 'doesn't work' by the safeguarding minister. This may cause confusion from professionals who could think that they should not be using the DASH tool to assess risk.

There can also be a lack of understanding across other agencies on triggers of homelessness leading to clients not being identified until crisis.

Uncertainty around legislative changes e.g. Renters Rights Bill, selective additional licencing, Decent Homes standard reform.

In terms of risk factors, the Renters (Reform) Act provides a ground for mandatory eviction for tenants convicted of an offence which may increase difficulty for people with a criminal justice history to find private rented accommodation. Additionally, the measures within the act may mean fewer private landlords operating overall.

Due to overall pressures on available supported accommodation, and also lack of specialist supported accommodation, there is a risk of vulnerable people being placed in unsuitable accommodation.

There have been no announcements on future funding from Central Government, so potentially the Rough Sleeping Initiative and commissioned Domestic Abuse Services are at risk of reduction or ending. There is an expected an announcement on this (as at September 2025).

Latest homelessness data, ONS rent and house statistics, and findings from the English Housing survey - 169,050 children are homeless living in temporary accommodation. The number of homeless children has increased by 12% in the last year.

Legislative/financial pressure for landlords – leading to a percentage exiting the market and reduction in available properties for clients, in addition those remaining will offset their costs to clients making properties unaffordable and lead to evictions.

With regards to consultations, Medway Council Housing have consulted on a new allocations policy — this re-focusses resources towards the most vulnerable Medway residents. Most responses were in favour of the approach outlined. There has also been extensive interviews with the street population who have identified a lack of daytime places to go as an issue raised by people who may have been excluded from services for prior issues.

Water Safety

As part of KFRS Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) Rural consultation, they are proposing to move the Sheppey Water Safety Unit to Rochester and replacing the rigid boat at Strood with a Personal Watercraft (PWC), as we have seen between 2019 and 2024 a 235% increase in the number of incidents in the River Medway between Maidstone and Chatham. Most incidents requiring a water safety unit now take place in and around the Strood and Rochester stretch of the River Medway.

Road Safety Biker Down

Motorcycles make up only 1% of UK traffic but across the 3 years of 2021, 2022 and 2023 account for 19-20% of fatal casualties in Great Britain. To tackle this disparity, KFRS created the "Biker Down" course in 2010. This initiative has since been adopted by approximately 25 other Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.

The Biker Down course is a free, three to four-hour session that teaches riders how to handle a motorcycle accident. Taught by firefighters or life support instructors, the course covers three key modules through interactive, hands-on activities and discussions. Upon completion, attendees receive a certificate, a handout, and a medical data carrier, or "crash card," to attach to their helmet.

A recent evaluation of the course used pre- and post-course surveys to measure changes in attendees' knowledge, confidence, and intentions. This data will be used to make recommendations for developing the course further. Course attendance across Kent and Medway has been 95 so far in 2025, 91 in 2024, and 148 in 2023.

Fire Safety

With the background of Spring 2025 being the warmest and sunniest on record and England recorded its sixth driest March since 1836, with rainfall levels significantly below average. In addressing the emerging risks of wildfires nationally, KFRS has reviewed and developed a comprehensive wildfire prevention package, including a dedicated website section, enhanced risk mapping, and new content for our prevention plan. KFRS are also contributing to the National Fire Chiefs Council's Wildfire Prevention Toolkit, aligning our efforts with national best practices.

Wildfires are a growing concern, both now and in the future. The spring of 2025 was the warmest and sunniest on record, and England had its sixth-driest March since 1836, with rainfall well below average.

Summer 2025 was the worst on record for wildfires in the European Union, with nearly a million hectares burned. This is four times the area burned in 2024. The hardest-hit countries were Cyprus, France, Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

- Between the 1 of April 2024 and 31 March 2025 Kent Fire and Rescue Service worked with 11 fire setters in Medway.
- Between 1 of April 2024 and 31 March 2025 Kent Fire and Rescue Service have attended 306 incidents which were classified as deliberate which has increased by 18 from 288 the previous year.
- Between 1 of April 2024 and 31 March 2025 1954 safe and well visits were completed in Medway.

There are continuing concerns over the fire risks posed by lithium-ion batteries which are a focus for Lithium-Ion Battery research being carried out by KFRS. As these batteries become ubiquitous in everyday devices, electric vehicles, and renewable energy systems, fire incidents in both workplaces and residential buildings are rising. In terms of consultation, between July – October 2024, the survey was conducted to explore Kent and Medway resident's awareness, attitudes and behaviours around battery charging and disposal; with a particular focus on rechargeable batteries such as lithium-ion. This research has been conducted to help inform our future safety messaging and behaviour change interventions.

This is with the aim of encouraging safe charging and correct battery disposal behaviours, to ultimately reduce the number of battery related fires.

Just over 2,000 fully completed responses to the survey were received. Responses from Medway made up 12% of the total sample. The findings will be published and shared with local councils in due course.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report was published on September 4, 2024. Progress reports to provide an update against each recommendation from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry are published on the Gov.UK website from June 2025 on a quarterly basis.

The Building Regulations etc. (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2025 take effect on October 7, 2025. These rules, which amend the Building Regulations 2010 and related 2024 regulations, primarily focus on project completion documentation and building control handovers.

On 1 April 2025, transfer of Ministerial responsibility for all fire functions from the Home Office to the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG). The change delivers a key recommendation from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 2 report, which advised that fire and building safety should be overseen by a single department.

Other consultations - The smoke alarm campaign, started in January 2025 and will run until March 2026, aims to encourage residents in Kent and Medway to check and replace their smoke alarms if they're out of date. The campaign uses both online and offline content, with its evaluation guided by a logic model that details the intended outcomes.

KFRS CRMP Rural Plan - around a third of the county's residents live in rural communities. These communities - along with farms and businesses - sit within the rural areas of Kent and Medway, which make up some 85% of the county. In July 2025, Kent Fire and Rescue Service launched its rural plan to address the unique fire risks and emergency challenges faced by rural homes and businesses, such as timber-framed buildings, wildfires, and limited water supplies. The plan, which will be implemented over the next four years, is centered on three key pillars: Prepare, Act, and Protect. We intend to achieve this by positioning dedicated wildfire response teams, working with landowners to manage green spaces, and increasing engagement with farming and local community groups to raise fire safety awareness. We also plan to explore ways to recruit more on-call firefighters and enhance business engagement to improve awareness of fire safety legislation, ensuring our support reflects the evolving needs of rural communities. The Rural plan consultation closed on 1 October 2025.

Independent Inspection of KFRS

Following the independent inspection earlier this year by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), KFRS have been rated as one of the top performing fire and rescue services in the country. The inspectors for HMICFRS assessed how effectively and efficiently KFRS prevents, protects the public against, and responds to, fires and other emergencies. KFRS also become one of the first fire and rescue services in the

country to be rated as 'outstanding' for protecting the public through fire regulation. HMICFRS also said they are 'good' at promoting the right values and culture within the workforce and commenting on a "positive working culture".

Road Safety

Medway Council has made significant progress in embedding the Safe System approach to road safety, aligned with the Vision Zero ambition. We have seen rising killed or seriously injured (KSI) trends. Despite overall casualty reductions, the proportion of KSI casualties has increased, particularly among vulnerable users. A particular challenge is in regard to data limitations. Changes in national reporting systems (e.g. 2016 STATS19 revisions) have affected consistency in serious injury data. The reference to data limitations refers to a national issue rather than a local reporting anomaly. Changes in national reporting systems, most notably the 2016 STATS19 revisions, altered how injury severity is classified. Previously, severity was based on officer judgment, whereas the revised system uses injury-based classification supported by hospital data. While this improves accuracy, it has created inconsistencies when comparing serious injury data over time, making trend analysis more complex. This means that some of the increase in recorded serious injuries may reflect changes in classification rather than an actual rise in severity. However, local analysis still shows that vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists) are disproportionately represented in KSI figures, which remains a concern.

We have also seen E-scooter and micro-mobility growth which presents new safety challenges and regulatory gaps. Additionally, there are legislative changes such as the evolving national guidance on 20mph zones and enforcement powers (e.g. moving traffic offences) will require local adaptation.

Key initiatives include:

- **School Streets programme**: Successfully launched seven sites in March 2024 and introduced a second tranche in September 2025, helping to improve safety, reduce congestion, and support active travel around schools.
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP): Approved by Cabinet in March 2025 and now guiding the delivery of active travel infrastructure improvements across Medway, with a focus on safer, more accessible routes for walking and cycling in line with Vision Zero and climate goals.
- Targeted casualty reduction engineering schemes: Delivered through the Local Transport Plan, including pedestrian crossings and passive safety infrastructure.
- Education and awareness campaigns: Our road safety education delivery numbers continue to increase, with 12,299 KS1 and 2, and 1,262 KS3, pupils receiving education during the 2024/25 academic year. This year the team also secured delivery of a Theatre in Education performance to year 7 pupils at 10 schools across Medway, highlighting the risks, responsibilities and consequences that young pedestrians face.

- Campaigns such as "Be Bright, Be Seen" and "Drink/Drug Drive" campaigns, tailored to local casualty data.
- Partnership working: Strengthened collaboration through the Kent and Medway Safer Roads Partnership. The Partnership operates under the Safe System model, this is a best practice approach focusing on the components of the safe system: Safer Behaviours, Safer Roads and Streets, Safer Speeds, Safer Vehicles, and Safer Post Collision Response. The Partnership is aligning road safety efforts within Kent and Medway to pursue the outcome of death and serious injury not being a byproduct of mobility.

Community Safety Partnership Survey 2025

The Community Safety Partnership Survey was launched in Summer of 2025. There was a total of 790 respondents, a considerable increase on previous years. The results of the survey are as follows:

54% feel very safe or fairly safe in Medway during the day however this falls to only 21% who feel very safe/fairly safe in Medway during the evening with 63% reporting that they feel very unsafe/fairly unsafe during the evening.

The top issues that are felt to be a problem in Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (79%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (67%)
- Shoplifting (62%)
- People fly tipping (61%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (60%)

The top five issues that respondents felt should be addressed as a priority in Medway were:

- People using or dealing drugs (69%)
- People driving carelessly or too fast (44%)
- People fly tipping (35%)
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places (34%)
- Shoplifting (32%)

The top three suggestions respondents felt would have the most impact on making people feel safer in Medway were:

- Visible and effective policing (72%)
- Well maintained public spaces and infrastructure (50%)
- CCTV (45%)

Respondents were most likely to feel able to share their concerns about local safety/personal safety issues with:

- Kent Police (61%)
- followed by Medway Council (23%)

37% of respondents were aware of how to raise concerns under Prevent. 31% of respondents were aware of how to raise concerns of racist and extremist graffiti.

It is worth noting that the increase in respondents makes this year's consultation outcomes more statistically relevant. In 2024 there were 103 respondents; in 2023 there were 107 respondents compared to 790 this year.

Conclusion

This assessment has explored the trends and patterns of current community safety concerns within Medway, with a focus on the long-standing issues that impact our community such as VAWG, substance abuse and ASB. The document has also highlighted some of the work and achievements of the CSP in addressing these issues as well as challenges the Partnership may face and recommendations for future offers.

There is concern around the online space and the normalisation of violence and extreme views, particularly amongst young people. Growing inequality and polarisation of communities can damage community resilience. Despite national strategic focus, VAWG, DA, serious violence and ASB continues to harm communities, with particular individuals and groups feeling intensified hardship.

That said, there continues to be many examples of the amount of work being taken by all the agencies that work to keep Medway safe. It continues to highlight the dedication of all agencies to work together to achieve the best outcomes for those living, working or visiting Medway. Whilst progress is made against the four priorities identified in the Community Safety Plan, this document, as in previous years, also highlights the wider work taking place.

Statistics on crime shows an improvement and although there is an increase in ASB it is the contextual information supplied by agencies that gives a better picture of what is happening. Work such as that on the joint approach taken by Kent Police and Medway Council in deploying significant resources to Chatham High Street taking appropriate enforcement action against individuals found to be engaging in ASB, street drinking and aggressive begging along with the pro-active high visibility patrols have been welcomed by local businesses and residents. Not only is this work tackling the issues but also seek to prevent them in the first place. This has also encouraged confidence to report issues to agencies.

Listening to what our consultation told us, the CSP should consider including in the 2026/27 Action Plan some work and targets to address people's concerns with people driving carelessly or too fast.

Whilst there are lots to be positive about, there are some concerns and challenges that many agencies and projects are facing, of note is the challenge in managing several issues associated with derelict buildings. Complex ownership issues, and processes of gaining demolition notices and the complexities of the overall demolition process, which includes planning permission and high costs continue to create significant obstacles in addressing these risks.

The CSP are satisfied that there is a sound understanding of community safety issues within Medway and the endeavours to continue to work to reduce and prevent these harms based on the evidence. It is hoped this document provides reassurance that partners agencies remain committed to keeping Medway a safe place to live, work, visit and socialise.

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 2024-2027 / 2025 -2026 Quarterly Updates
- Interventions Alliance
- Kent and Medway NHS
- Kent and Medway Prevent Team
- 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 2024 March 2025
- 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 Youth Service
- Medway Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Office of National Statistics
- Public Health England <u>Local Health Website</u>
- The Probation Service
- Seetec

Glossary of Terms

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CCPT	Child Centred Policing Team
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDP	Combating Drugs Partnership
СНВ	Clear, Hold, Build
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CSS	Crime Severity Score
COBI	Compulsive and Obsessive Behaviour Intervention
CRMP	Community Risk Management Planning
CPN	Community Protection Notice
CPW	Community Protection Warning
CST	Community Safety Team
CSU	Community Safety Unit
СТР	Counter Terrorism Police
CURBB	Challenging Unhelpful Relationships Beliefs and Behaviour
СҮР	Children and Young People
DA	Domestic Abuse
DAHA	Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence
DASIT	Assessment
DBT	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
DARD	Drugs and Alcohol Related Deaths
DATRIG	Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Recovery and Improvement Grant
DVPO	Domestic Violence Prevention Orders
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
ECSL	End of Custody Supervised Licence
EET	Environmental Enforcement Team
ERW	Extreme Right wing
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notices
HEART	Healthy Emotions and Attitudes in Relationships for Teens
HMICFRS	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
НМР	His Majesty's Prison
HR	Healthy Relationships
ICB	Integrated Care Board
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
IE	Islamist Extremism

KCC	Kent County Council
KIDAS	Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service
KMPT	Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust
KFRS	Kent Fire and Rescue Service
KSI	Killed or Seriously Injured
LCWIP	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
LDIS	Local Drugs Information System
LERO	Lived Experience Recovery Organisation
LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Area
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government
M-PACT	Moving Parents and Children Together
NHS	National Health Service
NDTMS	National Drug Treatment Monitoring System
NTF	Neighbourhood Task Force
OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OSS	One Stop Shop
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PDU	Probation Delivery Unit
PEO	Prevent Engagement Officer
PMP	Problem Management Plan
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic
PSPO	Public Space Protection Order
PWC	Personal Watercraft
S-IT	Self-Initiated Terrorism
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SDS	Standard Determinate Sentences
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VRU	Violence Reduction Unit
YP	Young People

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