

Community Safety Plan

2024 to 2027



Introduction

“Working together in partnership to build stronger communities and ensure Medway is a safe place to live, work, learn and visit”.

I am pleased to introduce Medway Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) Community Safety Plan for 2024 - 2027, the first under a new administration and my first as Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement. The plan supports the CSP's vision to work as partners with communities across Medway. It sets out the priorities that we have identified, as partner agencies, together with those that you have told us about that most affect your quality of life.

Reflecting over the last 12 months we have achieved a great deal. We have carried out some innovative developments to the way we work together enhancing our ability to deliver improved services to the public. As a team comprising statutory partners, including Medway Council, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS), Integrated Care Board (ICB) and The Probation Service alongside Public Health, the voluntary and private sector, we have developed and implemented a number of partnership initiatives utilising funding provided from Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as achieving some excellent results in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour as detailed within our progress so far report.

Much of our success is down to the collaboration of partners working together to instigate pioneering and effective solutions to priorities raised by the public and working within communities across Medway. This desire to improve how we do business has helped us to meet some of our targets and to improve our performance in others.

Our commitment is to deliver the best service possible to the people of Medway. This is by no means a small task as the area boasts 102,000 houses, many businesses and thousands of people who live, work, and visit Medway. This partnership plan is the result of detailed assessment and listening to the public across Medway to identify our priorities for each of the statutory partners within Medway's CSP to deliver over the next three years. The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, and we will consult with the public of Medway to ask you how we are doing and to find out what you would like us to do on your behalf. The CSP looks forward to working with you to ensure Medway remains one of the best places to live, work, learn and visit in the south-east, now and in the future.



Councillor Alex Paterson

Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement

Community Safety Partnerships

The purpose of the CSP is to deliver safer communities as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and relevant legislation. In doing this the partnership co-ordinates community safety activity in Medway at a strategic level; to reduce crime and the fear of crime, to address the risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities, and to facilitate the strengthening of Medway's communities in the delivery of local initiatives.

Legislation requires members of the CSP to do all they "reasonably can to prevent, (a) crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment) and (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and (C) to reduce re-offending in the local area".

Medway CSP is a statutory body bringing together a number of public sector agencies, known as responsible authorities, to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and reducing reoffending. The responsible authorities are;

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

These statutory partners work with other organisations, agencies, and community sector organisations within the framework of the CSP to deal with community safety issues. The CSP and Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) are under a mutual duty to cooperate with each other and to take account of the other's priorities. In addition, the operation of the CSP is subject to annual scrutiny by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Medway Council.

Our approach has always been evidence-based and follows from a **strategic assessment** of crime and disorder issues in Medway. This combines police and partner data with professional knowledge from other stakeholders. The strategic assessment has determined four key priorities where a multi-agency response is required as the issues are complex and require collaboration to make an impact.

The strategic assessment goes into more detail on the activities of the CSP in the last year and the process for identifying the priorities for the next 3 years.

Strategic Drivers

The following values and strategic drivers are key to the CSP:

- We will be responsible for an overarching strategic framework for reducing crime and improving community safety in Medway.
- We will ensure that all partner agencies work together and ensure the work of each agency is "joined up" and that our performance is effectively managed.
- We will ensure that our work is informed by national and county priorities and research, including the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Localism Act 2011 and Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

- We will take an intelligence-led process to our business and ensure problem solving is a tool used to address issues.
- We will engage with the community as a whole, encouraging people to become involved with reporting and tackling crime and disorder in Medway.
- We will also engage with other partnerships on issues that relate to Medway both at the area and citywide level.
- We will allocate funding using transparent procedures and based on available evidence; and
- We will work to ensure that our human and financial resources are used as effectively as possible, by monitoring and evaluating our work.

Public Consultation

The CSP carried out an online public consultation during the Summer of 2023 which asked respondents about how safe they felt and what they felt the partnerships focus should be upon; 80% of respondents felt either very safe or fairly safe in Medway during the day which is a very positive figure with only 2% reporting that they felt very unsafe, perhaps due to perception of crime or having been a victim. When asked how safe they felt in the evening, 36% felt safe or fairly safe with 33% reporting that they felt fairly or very unsafe. This is not uncommon with less people around at night to provide a natural surveillance, there is a greater perception of danger.

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

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

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

These were also the top five issues respondents felt should be addressed as priorities by the CSP in Medway. Respondents were asked to choose three things they felt would have the most impact on making people feel safer in Medway. The most frequently chosen options were:

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

These issues will be reflected across the CSP Action Plan for 2024-25.

We will continue to hold annual consultations with the next online consultation being run in the Summer of 2024.

Our Priorities

CSPs are responsible for developing strategies for reducing crime and offending in their areas, and have a statutory duty to work together to: reduce re-offending; tackle crime and disorder; tackle anti-social behaviour; tackle alcohol and substance misuse; and tackle any other behaviour which has a negative effect on the local environment.

It is important to recognise that the CSP need to focus on the key areas identified by the Strategic Assessment. To ensure there is a coordinated approach in relation to safeguarding, there is a protocol in place between the CSP, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Kent and Medway Adult Safeguarding Board and Medway Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure the sharing of assessments and plans to ensure there is a strategic alignment.

Stemming from our annual review and strategic assessment, and following public consultation, we have identified four themes for 2024-27. It is increasingly important to understand how working together is creating more added value than the individual actions of single organisations. There will be more need to focus on a smaller number of key priorities, and support this with an approach to governance that focuses on providing strategic direction, aligning resources and holding agencies to account for delivery. There are additional key areas that the CSP will ensure are reported into the Strategic Executive Group.

These are our priorities for 2024-27.

- **Violence Against Women and Girls**
- **Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour**
- **Tackle Drugs and Alcohol**
- **Reduce Reoffending**

Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG) has a devastating impact on its victims. VAWG is an umbrella term used to cover a wide variety of abuses against women and girls, including, domestic homicide, domestic abuse, stalking, revenge porn and sexual assault. Crimes such as these and others occur on a daily basis, across the whole country - including Medway. Whilst Medway remains a safe place to live, work learn and visit, crimes against women and girls are all too prevalent, underpinned by appalling and often outdated attitudes and prejudice. All forms of violence have a devastating impact on victims of crime and their families, friends and community. This impact is often even greater when violence occurs within the home or is perpetrated by someone known to the victim, as is often the case with some forms of VAWG. This makes accessing support for victims even more difficult and it is vital we encourage victims not to suffer in silence. Our plan provides a foundation for continued partnership work across stakeholders and the community to challenge gender-based violence for all.

The CSP considers **Anti-Social Behaviour** to cover a broad range of actions that can cause significant harm to the well-being and quality of life of those people who are forced to experience it. These can include drug use, drug dealing, verbal abuse, noise nuisance, vandalism, harassment and the dumping of rubbish. Cases of ASB are often complex, with underlying factors and vulnerabilities impacting on both the victim's threshold to deal with the behaviour and the perpetrator's ability to understand why their behaviour is unacceptable. ASB tends to be persistent and unreasonable.

Kent Police proactively tackle **County Lines** using intelligence and proactive means to disrupt activity and bring offenders to account. It is evident that this is still a predominant issue within Medway. We know that County Lines are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. We will continue to provide support to those at risk of becoming involved as either offenders or victims and raise awareness amongst agencies working across Medway.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (and subsequent amendments) places a **Prevent Duty** on specified authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into extremism and terrorism. Those specified authorities under the Act include the responsible authorities of the CSP. The joint Kent and Medway Channel Panel which challenges the ideology of extremism and provide support to those vulnerable to radicalisation continues to meet monthly with the aim of supporting those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The overall aim of the programme is early intervention and diverting people away from the risk they may face. Medway continues to receive ongoing Prevent training which is delivered to partners across Medway. The Kent and Medway Prevent Duty Delivery Board is made up of a number of partner agencies including those that make up the CSP.

Work to reduce **Serious Crime** also includes serious violence, in particular knife crime. The 'public health duty' requires the CSP, education and other relevant services to work together to share data and intelligence to address the root causes of serious violence. It places an emphasis on early intervention with young people. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduced a new Serious Violence duty. As a result, changes were made to section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requiring CSP's to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. Kent and Medway have agreed a structure for how a multi-agency partnership delivers a strategic approach to preventing serious violence across the County. The Police and Crime Commissioner chairs the relevant meetings that will bring partners together to understand and respond to the causes of serious violence. The CSP is supported as the local partnership model that responds to or supports the prevention of serious violence.

Reduce Re-offending - historically, the cohort of offenders being monitored via the IOM Scheme is associated with Serious Acquisitive Crime offences. The CSP acknowledges that the reduction in Serious Acquisitive Crime across Medway has been achieved through the IOM approach. The IOM is a well-established and long standing delivery group. The IOM has a clearly defined action plan for the existing cohort of offenders and a number of ongoing actions that can be directly transferred into the new plan. The Medway Youth Justice Partnership Board continue to focus on making a lasting impact on crime and victim reduction in Medway by providing comprehensive services to young people who offend or are at risk of offending. The Youth Offending Team (YOT) provide management support and strategic oversight to ensure continuing development of the Medway YOT towards its aim of achieving the status of an 'outstanding and excellent' YOT.

Tackle drug and alcohol abuse - The recent Strategic Assessment has noted drugs and alcohol as significant drivers of crime in Medway. As a result of this, it has been recommended that the Combatting Drugs Partnership takes on a supportive role as part of its remit, in particular through providing data upon request to the strategic group in order for them to achieve their performance targets. The aim of the CDP is to more effectively tackle drug-related crime, and address the harms associated with drug and problematic alcohol use in Medway. The focus of the Medway CDP is to encourage collaboration and remove barriers. This is so organisations can work together collectively to: break drug supply chains; improve treatment and recovery support and engagement; change

attitudes to the acceptability of drug use to reduce the likelihood of people starting to use drugs or alcohol in harmful ways. Both legal and illicit substances are available in Medway with alcohol being the most likely to have a negative impact on the highest number of people. The most used drug, after alcohol, is cannabis and the nitrous oxide for young people and cocaine for adults.

Action Plan

The action plan for each of the priorities of the CSP will be reviewed annually. The action plan will be more focussed and will allow us to give a partners a clear and concise narrative of what work is being done in each priority area.

Kent Police Crime Data Integrity Inspection

Although crime increased in 2019-2020, the level of increase is far lower than the previous year. Increased reporting of crime does not always reflect an increase of incidents. Where previously there may have been one crime report for an incident to cover all elements, these are now broken down into multiple reports. So the actual number of incidents may not have increased but rather the number of reports generated by those incidents. Crimes involving multiple victims are now recorded as separate crimes, and crimes where multiple potential offences are committed in the same incident (such as harassment and malicious communications) are also recorded separately, where before only the more serious offence was recorded. Kent Police received an outstanding grade from HMIC (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) in regard to crime recording data integrity in 2019.

Glossary of terms

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| ASB | Anti-Social Behaviour |
| CSP | Community Safety Partnership |
| HMIC | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary |
| ICB | Integrated Care Board |
| KFRS | Kent Fire and Rescue Service |
| PCC | Police and Crime Commissioner |
| VAWG | Violence Against Woman & Girls |