

Dartford Community Safety Partnership

Strategy 2022 - 2025

Refresh 2023

Contents

Foreword	3
Dartford CSP Structure	4
About our partnership	4
Some Key Partner Successes	5
How we have identified our priorities	7
Public Opinion.....	7
Most Important Issue	8
Top 3 issues within this category	8
Priority 1: Serious Violent Crime including Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse	9
Why is this important?.....	9
What is our focus?	9
What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?	10
Priority 2: Persistent Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime 10	
Why is this important?.....	10
What is our focus?	11
What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?	11
Priority 3: Preventing Offending and Reducing Re-offending	11
Why is this important?.....	11
What is our focus?	12
What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?	12
Priority 4: Protecting Vulnerable People and Strengthening Communities	13
Why is this important?.....	13
What is our focus?	13
What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?	14

Foreword

The Dartford Community Safety Partnership (DCSP) has been now been operating for three years after the dissolution of the long established Dartford and Gravesham Community Safety Partnership. The past year has continued to be challenging for all agencies as they have persevered to deliver their services in the face of Covid-19 pandemic and assisting communities through the new cost of living crisis.

The DCSP has continued to work with high aspirations in order to continue serving the communities, businesses and visitors of Dartford. True to our word, when right to do so, we have maintained our relationships with Gravesham in the important areas, such as supporting victims of domestic abuse and tackling the “cross border” criminals that operate within both our respective Town Centres. The step change has been our ability to develop a response more attuned to the individual threads that make up the tapestry that is Dartford. Such focus has allowed for the enrichment of the Town Centre’s safety and rallying support from local services for those that are most at risk of becoming victims or potential offenders. We have also tapped in to the wealth of local facilities and amenities that the Borough has to offer in order to prevent and reduce crime, tackle as anti-social behaviour and working together to challenge the fear and inconvenience such behaviours can cause to individuals and communities alike.

The year 2022 saw the introduction of a new three year Community Safety Strategy. As part of the preparation for the Strategy, the DCSP carried out a detailed analysis of the data held by its different members. It sought to not only find the current crime trends but to better understand some of the underlying causes. In addition to studying the data, we have carried out a public survey in order to capture the feelings, concerns and priorities of our communities. The result is a Community Safety Strategy that sets out four priorities, which deals with the community safety issues that are having the greatest impact on our communities and neighbourhoods.

We are confident that our approach not only captures the priorities contained within the data and the views expressed by local people, but also provides a response, the effectiveness of which will be scrutinised by ourselves and our colleagues on the Community Safety Partnership Executive. We believe this Community Safety Strategy demonstrates how Dartford’s public servants, together with the voluntary and community sector as well as the local residents, will continue to work together to keep the Borough’s people and neighbourhoods safe.

Recent years have seen both national and international events impact on all our lives both at work and at home. These events have also influenced the types of crime and anti-social behaviour that are happening within Dartford and this strategy reflects those changes. One thing that has not changed however is that people need to feel they are safe, both in their homes and when they are out and about, enjoying the wonderful opportunities Dartford has to offer.

Dartford CSP Structure

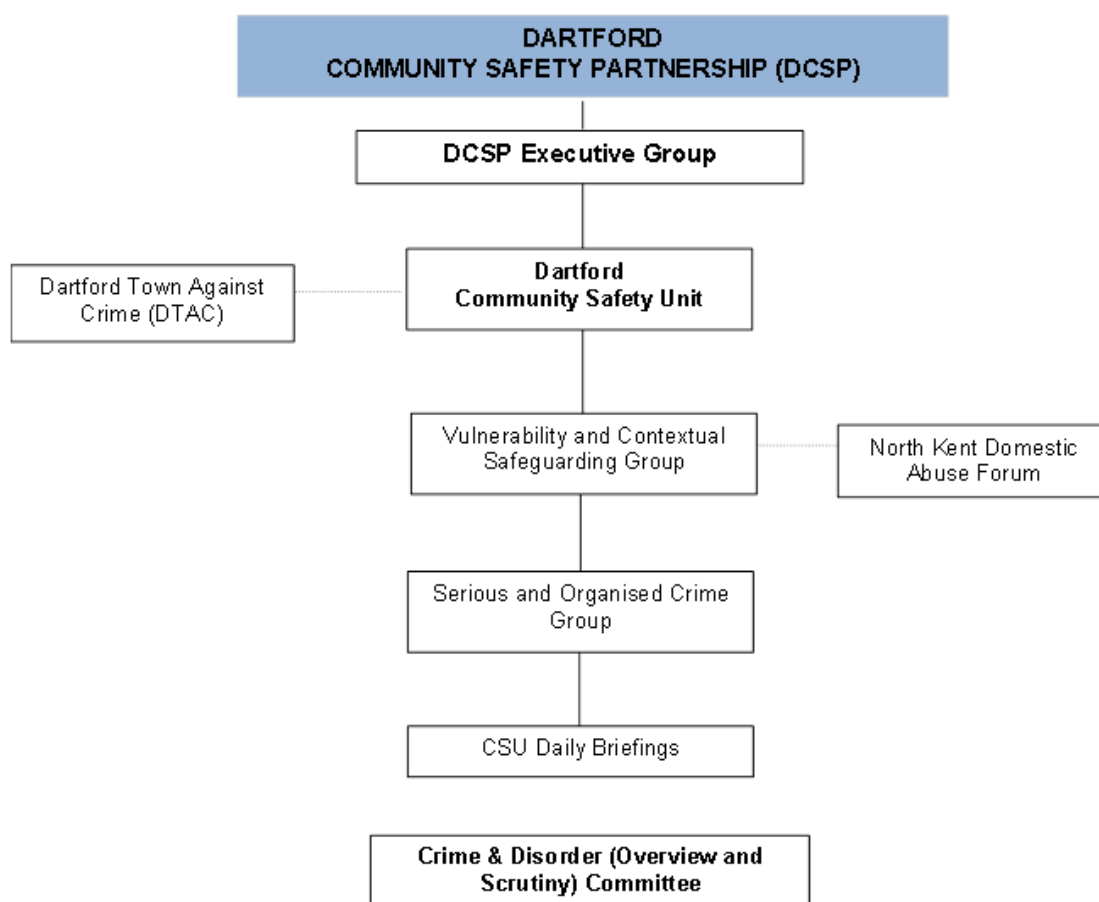


Figure 1 - Community Safety Partnership Structure Chart

About our partnership

The Dartford Community Safety Partnership (DCSP) formed in January 2021 and comprises the following members;

- Kent Police*
- Dartford Borough Council*
- Kent County Council*
- Integrated Care Board (previously known as Clinical Commissioning Groups)*
- Probation Service*
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service*

The partner organisations denoted * all have a statutory duty to work together to tackle crime and disorder however, very significant contributions are made to DCSP activities by a host of voluntary and private sector groups such as the Victim Support and Neighbourhood Watch, charitable organisations and local community groups, without which, our ability to tackle community safety priorities would be much more restricted.

Some Key Partner Successes

The year 2021 was the DCSP's first year as solo community safety partnership after the joint Dartford and Gravesham CSP disbanded in October 2020, despite the formation of this new CSP the DCSP has continued to take positive action in keeping our communities safe. The following highlights some of our most recent key successes throughout 2022;

- In May 2022, following a public consultation, Dartford Borough Council implement a Borough Wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to target Nuisance Vehicles.
- Kent Police carried out a number of operations in relation to nuisance vehicles, in advance of the implantation of the Borough Wide PSPO which saw a range of police powers used to specifically tackle the persistent ASB around the Crossways Boulevard area.
- In October 2022, Dartford Borough Council installed Artificial Intelligence (AI) Cameras at Crossways Boulevard in order to continue to be able to provide a robust response to the PSPO.
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) carried out proactive patrols at Joyce Green Lane (Dartford Gun Club), deterring off-road vehicles. They supplied information to Dartford Council regarding fly-tipping on the road, which resulted in cameras being installed. This captured offences as well as road legal motorbikes using the area as an off-road motorbike track. As a result a number of Section 59 warnings being issued.
- A multiagency operation took place in June targeting delivery drivers that drive through the pedestrianised area of the town centre and congregate outside the fast food outlets in the town centre.
- DBC installed two new upgraded CCTV cameras at the hotspot locations to tackle fly-tipping. The resultant prevention and deterring of offenders continues to be outstanding. The cameras have almost totally eradicated fly tips at the locations and have resulted in a month by month return of nil Fly Tips at these locations.
- June 2022 saw the launch of the Best Bar None scheme in Dartford; this scheme is an accreditation scheme for Night Time Economy Venues to ensure that they are a Safe Place.
- Dartford Community Safety Unit were successful in a bid for funding which was submitted the Violence Reduction Unit. This funding was used to fund Charlton Athletic Community Trust to deliver 2 days per week of 1:1 Mentoring for 36 weeks, along with one 2hr Diversionary Ball Court session per week for 20 weeks. This project was aimed at tackling Serious Youth Violence.

- Kent Fire and Rescue Service supported Ukrainian people staying with UK families by carrying out Home Fire Safety Visits, where smoke and carbon monoxide alarms were fitted where required.
- Between July and October there were 3 'Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Walks' involving PC's, PCSO's and local ward councillors who engaged with members of the public regarding VAWG in the town centre, Swanscombe and Temple Hill areas. This gave the public the opportunity to report and engage with Officers.
- Dartford Youth Hub delivered regular workshops to support young women and girls. There are specific girl groups for support as well as notice boards with sign posting information. The Youth Hub also co-delivered a self-defence / awareness sessions for young people to learn basic protection and self-defence skills – this is in partnership with Olympia boxing.
- Commissioned provider Playplace also delivered a VAWG 12 week workshop via the Bridge youth hub.
- Dartford Borough Council became a White Ribbon Accredited Organisation.
- In response to the extreme weather conditions experienced through the summer and the subsequent Heath fires DBC CSU worked with colleagues in the Parks and Waste team, as well as colleagues from the Kent Fire and Rescue service in running an community engagement day which took place on 8th September at Dartford Heath.
- We Are With You, the commissioned drug and alcohol service for 10-24 year olds in Kent continue to deliver both Specialist Treatment (1:1), Early Intervention group work and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for young people in service in order to support the CSP with their priorities across the borough. This includes but is not limited to, providing support in schools, youth services and the community in regards to substance or alcohol related harms and the delivery of bespoke training to statutory partners including Kent police, teaching staff and mental health professionals.
- Numerous successful multi-agency "day of action" operations, where partners including Kent Police's Rural Task Force, DBC Environment Enforcement and Park Rangers target waste carrying vehicles to ensure they are appropriately licensed and road legal..

How we have identified our priorities

The DCSP is required to produce an annual Strategic Assessment that measures performance against its objectives. The Assessment collates information and data from a broad range of partner agencies. It details levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) which enables the DCSP to understand the current position, identify changing circumstances and predict emerging issues that could necessitate different approaches or interventions.

We have considered information other than recorded figures to help identify those areas of work that now form the priorities contained in the Community Safety Strategy. These considerations include:

- Volume – level of offences as a proportion of total crime;
- Level of harm – impact offences have on victims and communities;
- Community concern – level of priority which local people would attribute to a particular offence;
- DCSP added-value – extent to which multi-agency working can enhance the ability of agencies to tackle a particular strand of offending behaviour;
- Trend analysis – giving due consideration to patterns of increase in an offence type (where it is possible to ascertain).

In addition, existing and emerging national priorities, the DCSP's legal obligations, and the objectives contained within the Kent Police Control Strategy and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Policing and Crime Plan, are also taken into account.

It is important to note that The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 received Royal Assent in April 2022. Part 2 of the Act creates a requirement for specified authorities to collaborate and plan to reduce or prevent serious violence. The 2023 refresh of the Community Safety Strategy has seen the inclusion of Serious Violence under Priority 1. In Kent and Medway it has been agreed that the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) will be responsible for undertaking the required Strategic Needs Assessment for Serious Violence and will create a county wide Strategy which will feed into local CSPs.

Public Opinion

The need for local people to be given an opportunity to voice their views and opinions is recognised as crucial when aiming for long-term change and improved community safety. Whilst statistics can provide a good foundation for identifying priorities, relying on them alone will result in key concerns in local neighbourhoods being missed.

A public opinion survey was conducted between 4th February and 6th March 2022. The survey asked respondents to identify those community safety issues, which they viewed as the greatest concern in their neighbourhood. A total of 136 people responded – 132 (97%) of these either lived or worked in Dartford, 4 people who completed the survey stated that they neither lived nor worked in the Borough.

Respondents were asked to select **the single MOST important issue** in their local area, the vast majority stated that ASB was their main concern – 92 (68% of all respondents).

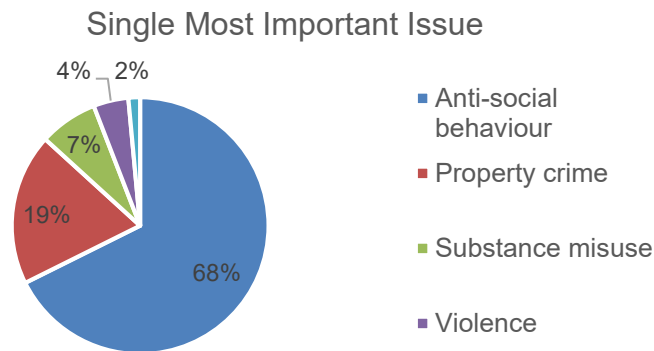


Figure 2 - Single Most Important Issue pie chart

Once people had identified what they felt was the most important issue in their area, they were also asked to choose their top 3 concerns within that category.

Most Important Issue	Top 3 issues within this category
ASB (68%)	<u>Of 92 respondents to this question:</u> Litter and Dog Fouling (15%) Nuisance bikes/vehicles (14%) Parking/irresponsible driving (14%)
Property crime (19%)	<u>Of 26 respondents to this question:</u> Residential burglary (24%) Theft from motor vehicles (22%) Shed/garage breaks (17%) equal with; Theft of motor vehicles (17%)
Substance misuse (7%)	<u>Of 10 respondents to this question:</u> Drug dealing (27%) Recreational drug use (20%) Cannabis use (17%)
Violence (4%)	<u>Of 6 respondents to this question:</u> Gang related youth violence (28%) Alcohol related violence (17%) Domestic Abuse (11%) <i>equal with</i> ; Gun and/or knife crime (11%) <i>and</i> ; Hate crime (11%)
Town centre safety (1%)	<u>Of 2 respondents to this question:</u> Public place violence (33%) Robbery (17%) <i>equal with</i> Violence during evening/night time economy (17%) <i>and</i> ; Feeling unsafe due to lack of people in the area (17%) <i>and</i> ; Poor street lighting (17%)

Priority 1: Serious Violent Crime including Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) and Domestic Abuse

Why is this important?

Protecting people from harm is a priority as the DCSP recognises that personal safety is paramount. This priority focuses on the significant impacts of serious violent crimes on victims, families and the wider community, recognising the links between domestic and sexual abuse, violence against women and girls (VAWG) alongside emerging patterns of knife crime, youth violence and robbery.

Violent crime (offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery) accounts for the greatest proportion of total crime in Dartford, albeit violent crime patterns are not unique to our area and are mirrored across the majority of districts countywide. Although violent crime accounts for the highest proportion of crime, in Dartford it is important to note that most serious violent offences remain rare.

VAWG and domestic abuse have been and remain a local, countywide, and national priority. Work to address these issues includes: the running of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) to deal with the most serious of cases of domestic abuse; the commissioning of victim services and provision of refuge accommodation (led by Kent County Council); as well as collaborative working between frontline service providers and wider partners through the North Kent Domestic Abuse Forum.

Whilst the volumes of all these offences have increased in recent years strong evidence of high levels of under reporting of this type of crime remain. Partners therefore need to continue working collectively to raise awareness of the issues, the support that is available and build trust amongst affected communities.

What is our focus?

- To continue to raise awareness of VAWG in all its forms, to increase victim confidence in reporting and seeking specialist help;
- To work with the Night-Time Economy in order to educate staff on VAWG;
- To work closely with our licensing teams to ensure that all licensed premises are compliant with their license conditions, and that any violence/crime is managed and reduced.
- To educate young people about knife crime and the negative impacts of carrying weapons;
- Raise awareness of gangs and knife crime including an appreciation of the consequences and risks of carrying knives/other weapons amongst young people and their families. The DCSP will also work to increase the understanding of this issue amongst front line professionals.
- To continue to provide outreach/mentoring services to young people at risk of becoming involved in, or victims of, violent crime;
- To safeguard vulnerable adults from the risk of harm;

- To work with the Violence Reduction Unit to improve our understanding of violence occurring in public places;

What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?

- A reduction in violent crime offences occurring in the Borough;
- An increased confidence in victim reporting;
- Increased number of domestic abuse victims accessing support services;
- An increased awareness of the strands of VAWG and support services available;
- Successful monitoring and behaviour change of known offenders through the multi-agency Integrated Offender Management Programme;
- An improved understanding of hot spot locations of violent offences in public places;
- Reduction in violence with injury offences within hotspot locations and night-time economy areas.

Priority 2: Persistent Anti-Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime

Why is this important?

Preventing ASB continues to be a priority as the DCSP understands the detrimental impact that persistent ASB can have on the quality of life of our communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the number of ASB incidents reported both locally and nationally. In Dartford there were 1,810 ASB incidents recorded in the year ending 31 October 2021, a decrease of -29.4% compared with previous 12 months. Covid-19 has continued to have an impact on ASB incidents reported both locally and nationally. Although levels have fallen when compared to the previous 12 months. Police recording systems did not have a 'Covid-19 breach' category within which to record these incidents separately and the most appropriate offence category within which they could be logged was 'anti-social behaviour'. Therefore, the exceptionally large reductions in ASB may be linked to 'COVID-19 breaches no longer being recorded.

Fly-tipping is a key manifestation of ASB and potentially a factor in crime, it raises the fear of crime, which is frequently linked to deliberate fire-setting. It has an adverse effect on the quality of life of local residents as well as affecting economic development and tourism, making areas less attractive to potential investors and visitors. Dartford Borough Council works with a range of agencies in tackling enforcement action against offenders whenever possible through both reactive investigations and proactive operations.

It is important to note that KFRS have experienced an increase in fires across Kent and Medway during the last year October 2021 – September 2022. Throughout this period Dartford saw a total of 421 fires, approximately 18.8% of these occurred in the Heath Ward. The reason for the increase in fires in 2022 is most likely due to the hot dry weather period experienced across the country resulting in an increased number of calls to outdoor fires. Previously during the October 2020 – September 2021 reporting period fires across all areas had reduced from the previous year, which was most likely a result of the lockdown restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

What is our focus?

- To continue to reduce ASB incidents by taking a holistic approach in each case looking at any underlining issues which need to be addressed;
- To utilise the powers and legislation available to councils and other partners to combat ASB;
- To continue to engage and provide targeted outreach services for young people, to understand the behaviours of those groups deemed as ‘nuisance youths’.
- To continue to identify and prosecute individuals that fly-tip in our Borough;
- To reduce the number of deliberate and accidental fires.
- To continue to educate members of the public on fire safety, and the risks posed by wildfires.

What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?

- Reduction in ASB incidents recorded;
- Implementation of a Borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order tackling nuisance vehicles
- Reduction in fly-tipping incidents;
- Reduction in deliberate fires.

Priority 3: Preventing Offending and Reducing Re-offending

Why is this important?

Preventing offending has been identified as a priority because the DCSP understands the significant impact that crime has on victims, their families and local communities. The focus of DCSP activity will aim to disrupt Serious and Organised Crime and criminals that reoffend as well as preventing and reducing youth offending.

Reducing re-offending is a cross-cutting theme and affects all areas of the DCSP’s work, and it is important to understand the underlying issues to offending behaviours if the DCSP wants to achieve long terms changes. It is recognised that substance

misuse can be a significant contributing factor to offending behaviour, so the DCSP will continue to work with agencies to ensure that services are available for both adults and young people whom require support. A problem solving approach is important when looking at the reasons behind reoffending behaviour and although support will always be the first approach to tackling re-offending the DCSP will also continue to support police with enforcement when appropriate.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) is a multi-agency process for identifying those offenders who have or are causing harm to communities through their criminal and/or anti-social behaviour. Multi-agency expertise and resources are pooled to try to identify ways of reducing reoffending.

What is our focus?

- To continue to improve our understanding of Serious and Organised Crime Groups, including gang- related activity in our area;
- To work in partnership with appropriate agencies to address re-offending and take a holistic approach, by addressing the reasons why individuals re-offend;
- Continue to work with police to obtain Criminal Behaviour Orders against persistent/ repeat offenders;
- Continue to work the Dartford Town Against Crime (DTAC) Partnership;
- Continue to enforce the Town Centre and the new Borough Wide Public Spaces Protection Orders;
- To safeguard potential victims of crime;
- Continue to provide outreach/mentoring services to young people at risk of becoming involved in crime.

What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?

- Reduction in the number of crimes committed in the Borough;
- Reduction in the number of young people committing crime;
- An increased awareness by young people of gangs in order to prevent them becoming involved in or targeted by them;
- Improvement in the identification and disruption of organised crime groups;
- Successful monitoring and behaviour change of known offenders through the Integrated Offender Management Programme;
- Sound understanding of the gangs operating in the Borough.

Priority 4: Protecting Vulnerable People and Strengthening Communities

Why is this important?

DCSP members share safeguarding responsibilities to protect people who are vulnerable to harm for a variety of reasons. In addition to those who are susceptible to harm through such factors as their age, disability, gender, religion and belief, or sexual orientation there are those who find themselves in specific circumstances that make them vulnerable to being victimised repeatedly.

Dartford is one of the most diverse districts in the county and given projected levels of growth over the next few years, this is set to continue as new communities move into North Kent. Experience from other parts of the country indicates that such rapid change presents a risk of increased community tension and incidence of hate crime and a threat to community resilience and cohesion which is at an already heightened level. In Dartford there has been a 4.5% increase in Hate related incidents, this increase is less significant than the increase seen the previous year which equated to a rise of 13.3%. It is important to note the increase this year is not unique to Dartford as most districts across the county have, with the exception of 4 districts have also experienced a similar increase.

To assist the DCSP with the Community Safety Strategy Dartford Borough Council has a monthly Vulnerability Panel. The Panel is a multi-agency group which meet regularly and work in partnership to effectively provide support and reassurance to victims and vulnerable individuals / communities by developing and implementing multi-agency plans to support vulnerable individuals in accessing services.

In addition, local authorities have a legal duty to take steps to reduce the threats posed by terrorism and extremism as well as mitigating against security risks. On the 9 February 2022 the UK's national threat level was reduced from 'Severe' to 'Substantial' which is positive, however despite the reduction in threat level the DCSP will continue to work with partners to continue to reduce the threats posed by extremism.

What is our focus?

- To continue to raise awareness of hate crime, in all its forms, and to increase victim confidence to seek support;
- To continue to provide events that are accessible to all and strengthen communities;
- To raise awareness of criminal exploitation amongst children;
- To safeguard vulnerable children who are directly at risk of harm;
- To continue to work with the PREVENT teams to safeguard individuals at risk of being radicalised;
- To protect specific communities who are more vulnerable to particular crimes.

What is our aim for change by the end of this Strategy?

- A better understanding of the changing demographic profile of Dartford, with effective community cohesion between long standing and new communities;
- Increase in confidence of hate crime victims resulting in greater reporting of hate crime and the number of offenders brought to justice;
- Established working practices between us and neighbouring London Boroughs that identify and mitigate risks caused through the safeguarding moves of families whose child/children have been criminally exploited.

DARTFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Keep Dartford Safe
Dartford Community Safety Partnership



**Kent
Police**



Kent Fire &
Rescue Service

**National
Probation
Service**



NHS

Kent and Medway

