

Meeting of the Housing and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee – 24th March 2025

Report of the Director of Housing and Communities

Annual update on the Safe and Sound Partnership priorities and update on improvements to managing neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) and an update on the ongoing work to improve the management of neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the content of the report is noted.

Background

3. Safe and Sound is the name of Dudley's Community Safety Partnership. The partnership is required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, its subsequent amendments and other relevant legislation
4. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 17 (amended June 2010) states that "without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour, reduce re-offending, prevent behaviour adversely affecting the environment, and prevent the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area."

5. The Responsible Authorities are: -
 - Dudley MBC
 - West Midlands Police
 - West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
 - National Probation Service
 - Integrated Care Board
6. There is a duty to cooperate with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Responsible Authorities also have a statutory duty to ensure that key agencies come together to work in partnership in a Community Safety Partnership.
7. The Community Safety Partnership's statutory requirements include: -
 - to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour
 - produce an annual strategic assessment
 - reduce re-offending
 - prevent behaviour adversely affecting the environment
 - prevent the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances in its area
 - take responsibility for the domestic homicide review process
 - Hold at least one public meeting per year so that members of the public can meet senior decision makers

Local Governance

8. The work of the Dudley Community Safety Partnership is directed by the Safe and Sound Strategic Board. The Board is co-chaired by Chief Superintendent Anthony Tagg and by Hayley Rowley, DMBC Head of Safer Communities.

The Board also acts as Dudley's Local Police and Crime Board.

9. The Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services are members of the Community Safety Partnership Board together with representatives from the Responsible Authorities and Community, Voluntary and Faith Sectors.
10. The work of Safe and Sound is carried out by number of sub-groups that relate to the Board's priorities, as set out in sections 13 and 14 below. See structure chart in appendix 1.

Safe and Sound – Priorities

11. Priorities are identified through Dudley Borough's Strategic Assessment, and through engagement with our communities through the 'Dudley: Have Your Say' survey, an annual public meeting and through online consultation. The

last Dudley Have Your Say survey responses in 23/24 told us that residents consider anti-social behaviour, house burglaries and dangerous driving to be the main concerns of our communities across the borough.

Within the anti-social behaviour category, litter, criminal damage/graffiti, and young people 'hanging around' were identified as the main concerns.

12. At the time of writing the latest survey for 2024 / 2025 is due to close imminently and has been available online for completion by those that live and work within the borough.

Views collected from the survey will help the partnership to identify the communities' priorities and will be considered in the annual strategic assessment.

The 2024 / 2025 Have your Say public meeting will be taking place on March 12th at Dudley College. Further details can be found at: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/have-your-say>

13. Using the data we gather, and the views of our communities, the current Safe and Sound priorities were identified to be as follows:

- Tackling neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), including town centre safety
- Domestic abuse and violence against women and girls: safeguarding victims and tackling perpetrators
- Reducing re-offending and tackling the causes of crime;
- Reducing violence and exploitation: safeguarding those at risk of violence and exploitation;
- Tackling hate crime, community tensions and extremism;
- Contributing to the wellbeing & inequalities strategy;
- Improving the trust and confidence of all of the communities of Dudley

Safe and Sound Strategic Board

14. The work of the board is delivered through its subgroups. The Safe & Sound board hold its subgroups to account for their contributions to its aims and purpose and for their performance.

The responsible sub-groups are:

- Dudley domestic abuse local partnership board (and its Subgroups which include the MARAC Governance Group (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference for High-risk victims of DA), Domestic Homicide Review Governance Group and the Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Forum)

- Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategic Group
 - Violence Prevention Group
 - Dudley Combatting Drug and Alcohol Misuse Partnership
 - Modern Slavery Group
 - Rogue Landlord Operational Group
 - CONTEST Board
 - Prevent Delivery Group
 - Multiagency Protect and Prepare Partnership (MAPP)
 - Channel Panel
 - Hate and Cohesion Multiagency Partnership (HCMAP)
 - Road Safety Group – newly developed
 - Safer Places
 - Youth Justice Services (YJS) Management Board
15. Each Sub-group lead provides a written quarterly update on activity and progress to the Safe & Sound Board and is required to attend the quarterly Board meeting.

The Safe & Sound Board reports as necessary on the activities that impact upon the Dudley Borough Vision's aspirations.

16. Subgroup reports are expected to include information, such as that detailed below, to evidence outcomes and the direct impact of the groups:
- Examples of the impact of the work of the sub-group on practice and/or outcomes for those or live in work in or visit the Borough of Dudley
 - Data and details pertaining to work completed
 - Issues arising – including information about any barriers to progressing the sub-groups work, and any matters relevant for the work of other Board sub-groups.
 - Examples of outcomes that contribute to 'Forging A Future for All'
 - Good news to celebrate
 - Any decisions or actions required by the Board

Online Harms, Reducing Re-offending and Serious Organised Crime remain priorities that run as a 'golden thread' across all groups within the CSP.

Other Arrangements

17. There are formal links to work that takes place at a regional level; for example, with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, the West Midlands Wide CSP, and the Regional Reducing Reoffending Delivery Group.

Crime data overview

- 18 At the time of writing data West Midlands Police Data was available for the Quarter Three period of 2024 / 2025:

The most recent iQuanta data shows that for the 12 months ending October 2024, Dudley was reported as the third safest CSP amongst its Most Similar Groups and retained the top position as the **safest CSP** within the WMP force area with the lowest crime rate per 1,000 population. This is supported by the control chart on page six which shows that Total Recorded Crime (TRC) in Dudley over the past 12 months has remained **under control** and recorded a downward step-change in the monthly average which **decreased** from 2,209 down to 2,136 offences.

- 19 Table One presents the top five offence class contributors in Dudley which collectively accounted for 83.3% of TRC during this reporting quarter (October to December 2024) and shows the comparison to the same period last year. The same five offence classes accounted for 81.8% of TRC across WMP.

Table 1: Top Five Offence Class Contributors Dudley – Quarter Three October to December

Offence Class	2023/24	2022/23
Violence Against the Person	39.7	42.5
Theft	20.5	16.5
Vehicle Offences	8.5	8.5
Arson & Criminal Damage	8.4	8.0
Burglary	6.4	7.8

- 20 Total Recorded Crime (TRC) during quarter three this performance year (24/25) compared to last year (23/24) saw a **decrease** of 581 offences (8.6%). This is reflected in the Year-to-Date figures which show a **decrease** of 1,570 offences (7.5%). West Midlands Police (WMP) recorded a 5.7% **decrease** in TRC Year to Date.

Dudley accounted for 8.2% of TRC in WMP during quarter three, and 8.1% Year to Date. Dudley East Policing Sector accounted for almost two thirds of TRC (62%) in the borough.

- 21 Violence without Injury accounted for the majority of VAP offences (44%) followed by Stalking and Harassment (31%). Violence with Injury accounted for 25%. **Decreases** were recorded in all categories of VAP. Violence without Injury **decreased** by 9.6% (114), Stalking and Harassment **decreased** by 14.9% (133), Violence with Injury **decreased** by 22% (170) and Death or Serious Injury **decreased** by a single offence (33%).

- 22 Vehicle Crime **decreased** by 50 offences (9.6%) in quarter three compared to the same period last year. Theft Of Motor Vehicle was unchanged, Theft From Motor Vehicle **decreased** by 26 offences (16.3%) and Vehicle Interference/ Tampering with a Vehicle **decreased** by 24 offences (23.5%). Year to date vehicle offences have **decreased** by 86 offences (4.5%).

iQuanta data at the end of October 2024 showed that Dudley was the safest CSP for Vehicle Crime per 1,000 population within the WMP force area.

23 **Anti-Social Behaviour**

West Midlands Police Demand logs with a final classification of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or Public Safety and Welfare (PSW) decreased by 8.6% in Q3 (October to December) compared to Q3 last year.

Analysis of this data indicates increases in each classification of ASB with ASB Nuisance recording the highest percentage increase. Within PSW, Hoax Calls saw the biggest percentage increase.

West Midlands Police demand logs of these closure-types decreased by 3.3% in the same time frame.

Hate Crime is determined by the addition of a Keyword to a recorded criminal offence. Between April to December 2024 a 5.8% reduction was recorded compared to the same period in 2023.

- 24 Modern Slavery offences have also **increased** by more than double year to date. Analysis of the data shows that Arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation accounted for 80% of the total with Halesowen North the most affected having recorded five offences. Local Authority referrals accounted for 37 offences (75%) of all Modern Slavery offences.

Ages of the victims ranged from 11 through to 50 years old. Thirty-eight offences (76%) involved children aged 17 years or younger with 14-year olds a key age accounting for 16 offences (25% of the total number of offences). The child offences are broken down as:

- Arrange or facilitate travel of another person with a view to exploitation – 34 offences,
- Hold person in slavery or servitude – One offence (17 year old),
- Require person to perform forced or compulsory labour – Three Offences (17-year old and two 14-year olds).

- 25 iQuanta data for Shoplifting for the 12 months ending October 2024, shows that Dudley had the second lowest crime rate amongst the seven Community Safety Partnerships making up WMP.

In relation to Shoplifting outcomes, at the time of writing Positive Outcomes accounted for 190 offences (23%), an **increase** of two percentage points compared to quarter three last year.

A number of key individuals were identified and subsequently arrested for multiple offences. The data shows that despite arrest and court appearances, there are key prolific offenders who avoided imprisonment, and have continued to offend (some at the same premises).

- 26 A number of prolific TFSS offenders who previously received a custodial sentence, are due for release in January 2025. The Seasonality Planner shows that TFSS in Dudley is **highly likely** to be above trend during January and February.

- 27 Vehicle Crime **decreased** by 50 offences (9.6%) in quarter three compared to the same period last year. Theft Of Motor Vehicle was unchanged, Theft From Motor Vehicle **decreased** by 26 offences (16.3%) and Vehicle Interference/ Tampering with a Vehicle **decreased** by 24 offences (23.5%). Year to date vehicle offences have **decreased** by 86 offences (4.5%).

iQuanta data at the end of October 2024 showed that Dudley was the safest CSP for Vehicle Crime per 1,000 population within the WMP force area.

- 28 A new Modus Operandi (MO) for Theft Of Motor Vehicle (TOMV) emerged this quarter. This involved a team(s) of offenders arriving in a vehicle and approaching a target vehicle (often parked on the driveway of a residential property).

An offender would walk around the perimeter of the property holding-up a relay device to trace the vehicle signal, whilst another offender would wait by the vehicle for it to unlock, gain entry, and start the engine whilst another offender would remain in the vehicle the group arrived in to drive it away.

- 29 This pattern was spotted in Dudley and was seen to spread across the force area. Between October and December 2024 Dudley accounted for 33% of the offences across WMP with Kingswinford North & Wall Heath the top affected neighbourhood (four offences) followed by Wordsley (three offences). Of note, Faraday pouches were identified by a number of victims as **almost certainly** preventing the vehicle from being stolen.

A Faraday bag is a specialised bag, pouch or box designed to block the electromagnetic signals emitted by a car key stored within it.

- 30 Residential Burglary of a Home **decreased** by 90 offences (24.5%) in quarter three this year (24/25) compared to last (23/24). It is **highly likely** that the new MO for TOMV was a contributing factor to this. In terms of location, all neighbourhoods recorded Residential Burglary of a Home with Upper Gornal and Woodsetton the most affected with 23 offences and Cradley & Wollescote was second with 17 offences.

Kingswinford South and Wollaston & Stourbridge Town were the least affected neighbourhoods both recording four offences each. Two thirds (66%) of all Residential Burglary of a Home were recorded in Dudley East policing sector. Gaining entry by lock snapping and locating vehicle keys in order to steal the vehicle from the location has remained a preferred method of entry.

- 31 At the time of writing, quarter three Dudley offences entered with a Positive Outcome stood at 8.3% of TRC and was the same rate as WMP.

Sub-group Progress and Highlights over the last 12 months

32 Dudley Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DDALPB)

The Dudley Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DDALPB) is a statutory board in its own right. Its purpose is to ensure oversight of the duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

The DDALPB continues to oversee the progress of the action plan developed as a result of Domestic Abuse Strategy. The action plan also includes recommendations and learning from Domestic Homicide / Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews to ensure that practice improves / changes as a result of these reviews

- 33 The group has oversight of the Domestic Abuse New Burdens fund, arising from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the work commissioned as a result of the needs assessment; for example support in safe accommodation and a comprehensive training offer across sectors.

Reports are received from service providers on a quarterly basis to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered to our residents and that any new and emerging trends/issues/challenges are identified and acted upon if required.

- 34 A separate local MARAC (Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference) governance group sits under the DDALPB to ensure oversight and effectiveness of the process, with updates being received as a standing agenda item at DDALPB meetings. MARAC Coordination continues at a regional level and feeds into the local governance group.

- 35 The DHR (Domestic Homicide Review) Governance Group also sits under the DDALPB which not only forms the core panel for any new reviews but also has

oversight of all DHR action plans. The group work together to monitor and identify themes arising across reviews.

36 The Annual conference was held in December 2024, with a focus on learning from DHRs / DARDRs (Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews) and Domestic abuse and suicide due to the number of reviews that involve suicide.

37 The partnership also link with Dudley's Suicide Prevention Group to ensure that learning and actions are fed into this group as appropriate.

38 The Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) forum is a meeting for front line practitioners to share best practice and escalate any barriers that may arise. This forum feeds back into the DDALPB and the VAWG group to ensure two-way communication.

39 **Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategic Group**

The VAWG strategic group links with the DDALPB and acts as a forum to share data and intelligence on sexual assault and abuse, stalking, forced marriage and honour based abuse, agreeing any appropriate actions as necessary. This is intended to avoid such matters being lost within the wider partnership arrangements.

The groups action plan includes work around creating a positive culture within and across our organisations, Safer Spaces (Night Time Economy, Generic safety across the borough – safer spaces 24 hours a day, online) and Early Intervention / preventing offending and reducing reoffending/ targeting perpetrators.

The group also links to the wider regional VAWG work taking place.

40 **Violence Prevention Group**

This group has been progressing work in relation to the Serious Violence Duty.

An agreement was made on 5th June between the Safe and Sound Board Chairs and the Dudley Violence Prevention Strategy Group Chair to leave the Dudley Serious Violence strategy in draft and utilise the regional strategy.

A delivery plan has been developed, and work continues to take place against this, however since 1st January 2025 there is no identified lead in Public Health and Wellbeing for this work due to capacity in the team following staff leaving and DMBC recruitment freeze. As a result of this the last Dudley Violence Prevention Strategic group in January 2025 was cancelled. Public Health are working to increase capacity to resume full resource.

Regional planning through the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) has continued to take place. Workforce development opportunities have also been facilitated however there has been poor uptake locally.

Summer 2024 & winter 2025 mitigation activities have been put in place, with Dudley Council for Voluntary Services administrating a VRP fund through local authority and activities have been delivered by community, voluntary and faith sector organisations to reduce violence.

41 Dudley Combatting Drug and Alcohol Misuse Partnership (CDAP)

Dudley CDAP's work aims to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of some of the more vulnerable residents in Dudley. Helping to build resilience within individuals and communities to aid recovery after the misuse of substances. It also aims to understand and reduce the impact of substance misuse on the community.

42 Additional investment in drug and alcohol treatment services has been provided to Local Authorities from the Department of Health & Social Care since April 2022, with Dudley receiving an extra £1.2 million in 2024-2025. This funding was provided with expectations to increase the number of adults and young people in treatment and improve the quality of services. These expectations have been achieved or exceeded. A similar amount of additional funding is expected in 2025-2026 to maintain the increased treatment capacity and further improve treatment outcomes.

43 In response to data indicating that many people with alcohol dependence are not in treatment, and an increasing rate of alcohol-related deaths, Dudley CDAP supported the completion of the Alcohol CLear self-assessment tool developed by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). The tool is designed to help local partnerships to identify focus areas and inform an improvement plan in relation to alcohol. Activity undertaken to date includes improved collaboration between partners on referral pathways and communication plans to increase awareness of risky drinking behaviour.

44 The Council has carried out work with landlords to voluntarily terminate leases based on the business owner using the premises to carry out criminal activity related to alcohol, tobacco and vape offences. This is proving successful and can be quicker (within 1 month) than obtaining closure orders (around 3-6 months).

45 Modern Slavery Group

The Modern Slavery Group is a reactive group that will be stood up should a multi-agency response be required to specific issues arising that cannot to addressed through existing pathways.

Safe and Sound have strong links to the work of Dudley's Safeguarding People Partnership exploitation subgroups and have supported the development of the all-age exploitation tool and pathways (<https://dudleysafeguarding.org.uk/blog/2024/11/25/dspp-launch-the-all-age-exploitation-screening-tool/>), in addition to having continued involvement in the development of an all-age exploitation strategy, which will include modern slavery.

The partnership continue to be represented at the regional Modern Slavery Board.

46 **Rogue Landlord Operational Group**

The role of the group is to provide a multi agency approach for tackling rogue landlords.

A landlord may be regarded as rogue where “a landlord knowingly flouts their obligations by renting out unsafe and substandard accommodation to tenants, many of whom may be vulnerable.” They may also condone the immoral or illegal behaviour of their tenants through acts or omissions.

The group works together to highlight cases and to ensure a lead partner is identified to support the completion of any actions associated with each case, ensuring the right agency, with the appropriate powers, achieves the required outcome.

47. The Group now works to a RAG rating for Rogue Landlords, this supports the focus and the attention of the Group to assign and complete work in an effective manner.

Below is an overview of the differing bands:

Rating	Conditions for rating
Emergency case meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate risk to health & safety • Urgent multi-agency action required • Involving large numbers of people • High profile • Requested by a member of the group
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property is in a condition that may harm the occupants • Protecting vulnerable or hard-to-reach tenants or occupants, including safeguarding concerns & referrals, harassment of occupants, subjected to modern slavery and exploitation • A fire or fire safety concerns • Illegal / retaliatory evictions • Anti-social behaviour by the landlord or occupants • Part of a Police operation or use of property for serious criminal activities • Repeat offenders or multiple cases by a specific landlord – including previous offences / enforcement action, several complaints about them from tenants and neighbours, on the Government's Rogue Landlords Database • Non-compliance with enforcement action
Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor housing conditions or maintenance • Poor management • Overcrowding • Property has pests, waste piled up outside or subjected to fly tipping • Use of property for illegal activities • Within Police impact areas of high crime or hotspots of rogue landlord activity • Planning breaches • Suspected unlicensed HMO • HMO licensing contraventions • Infringement of Building Regulations
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep on the radar / monitoring • Need a multi-agency approach to overcoming barriers to potential case resolution or benefit from shared intelligence

48 Prevent Multi-Agency Partnership

The Prevent Duty says:

- Local authorities are required to have multi-Agency arrangements in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of Prevent work and provide strategic governance.
- Local authorities should make use of their local multi-agency group(s) to agree risk, co-ordinate Prevent activity and offer support and advice.

49 Dudley's Prevent Multi-Agency Partnership (PMAP) has clearly defined priorities and actions, which are refreshed annually after the Counterterrorism Local Profile (CTLP) is launched in February every year. The CTLP is shared with the LA based upon information provided by Multi Agency Partners and West Midlands CTU Police.

50 During each meeting the LA Prevent Lead provides a Situational Assessment, so that all partners can understand the current threat and risk position, be cognisant of emerging threats that may need mitigating action and review/agree the partnership priorities which are also refreshed to remain in line with current threat/risks.

51 The Home Office draft Benchmarking Exercise received at the beginning of the year demonstrates the progress made by the partnership, the highlights include;

1. Dudley are consistent with national best practice by adopting the National Referral pathway for Prevent

2. Another key strength is that Dudley have developed a framework for identification and prioritisation of Prevent training and development needs. This has enhanced the training offer and delivery to educational settings and Council services.
3. Prevent Communications activity is strong in Dudley, with accessible information about Prevent on the Council's community safety website and commissioning a Borough wide new Prevent booklet called "Prevent in Dudley".

Benchmarking outcomes for 2023/4*:

*2024/5 not yet published /shared with DMBC

Multi-agency Partnership – Met
Local Risk Assessment – Met
Partnership Plan – Met
Referral Pathway – Met
Channel Panel – No longer reviewed in this process
Training Programme – Exceeding
Reducing Permissive Environments – Met
Communications and Engagement – Met

52 PMAP now has in excess of around 30 attendees every meeting, made up of NHS, Education, Prison and Probation and Local Authority attendees. Home Office are satisfied with progress made within the Partnership.

53 **Channel Panel**

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Channel refers to panels operating in England and Wales.

The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

- identifying individuals at risk
- assessing the nature and extent of that risk
- developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

54 Sections 36 to 41 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015 set out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism.

55 The channel process adopts a multi-agency approach to identifying and providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity or background.

56 The CTSA is intended to secure effective local cooperation and delivery of Channel in all areas. In practice, this means:

- local authorities will have a Channel panel in their area
- the local authority will provide the panel chair and deputy chair
- the panel will develop a support plan for individuals adopted as Channel cases
- where Channel is not appropriate, the panel will consider alternative forms of support, including health care and social care services
- the panel will ensure accurate records are kept detailing the support plan, agreed actions and decision-making, and outcomes
- all partners of a panel, as far as is appropriate and reasonably practicable, will cooperate with the police and the panel in the carrying out of their function

57 Dudley Channel Panel meets every month throughout the year. The Chair of the Panel is the Director of Housing and Communities at DMBC, and the Deputy Chair is the Head of Safer Communities at DMBC, in line with the requirements of the CTSA.

58 Due to significant workflows within the Home Office in late 2024/early 2025, Channel Assurances were suspended. However, Dudley was assured on the day of suspension. This means we have feedback from the assurance review, but we will not get a formal letter as in previous years.

Feedback given was:

- Home Office were happy with our channel on the whole, they were impressed with the number of partners who turned up to each case.
- They noted that we were using the Home Office Channel Minutes templates and following best practice.
- Only one issue highlighted was that a VAF (Vulnerability Assessment Framework) for one case had exceeded its 3-month validity. This was an operational oversight from CTU colleagues and rectified same day.

No other major issues or problems identified. Assurance reviews will start again in late 2025/early 2026.

59 Referrals into prevent jumped 88% in 2023/4 - with 62 Referrals, which puts Dudley in third place in the West Midlands conurbation, behind Birmingham (247), and Coventry (71). This led to 9 cases being processed to channel.

This equated to 14.5% of cases, referred in, being adopted at channel. Nationally, the average figure of cases adopted is 13%.

60 Hate and Cohesion Multi-agency Partnership (HCMAP)

The priorities of HCMAP are:

- Build an in-depth understanding of community cohesion and hate related issues in our borough by working with key stakeholders and all communities.
- Develop an effective means of promoting the value of community cohesion, allowing communities to report issues and share concerns around hate and prejudice within the borough.
- Develop a distinctive community led approach to challenging all forms of hate from wherever it comes from including a local reporting mechanism.

61 Cohesion reporting within the borough has really taken off with the launch of our online cohesion reporting mechanism. We had 44 reports in 2023 and 198 in 2024. Some of this in part was due to the Civil disorder that played out nationally and the concerns from the community that were reported in during the disorder.

62 During the civil disorder we stepped up our Cohesion Incident Monitoring Partnership (CIMP) to ensure that we communicated daily with Dudley LPA, and we were cognisant of the risks and threats that Dudley borough faced.

We worked in partnership with colleagues within the different directorates to ensure that communications went out daily to residents and communities across the borough to ensure that our communities were calmed and that we reduced the risk of an incident occurring in the borough, which would have most likely be fuelled by disinformation/misinformation.

63 Hate reporting in Dudley remains very low across the borough with around 30 reported in 2023, and around 66 reported during 2024. Post covid we have seen a drop of reports coming in via third party reporting centres across the borough.

To try and counter this drop in reporting we are launching a new hate reporting portal in early 2025 for the borough, which will be accessible via Knowhate.org.uk – which will allow members of the public to report in hate incidents anywhere across the borough with ease.

64 As part of the work of HCMAP we have consulted with the public and key stakeholders around the design and implement of the new website, and we are now delivering on phase 2 of the workflow which is the creation of the Dudley Together network to cross promote cohesion and reduce the incidents of hate across the borough.

As part of this work, we are working with community and voluntary organisations to develop the following networks across Dudley.

- Dudley Together Youth Network
- Dudley Together LGBT Network
- Dudley Together Faith Network
- Dudley Together Disability Network
- Dudley Together Race Network

65 Phase 3 will be a Dudley Together pledge – where people can pledge to bring Dudley Together and be an upstander against hate and extremism across the borough.

66 Phase 4 is a campaign and programme to develop community resilience against hate and extremism by creation of resources to upskill the community, voluntary and education about hate, cohesion and extremism. Part of this work also includes creation of upstander resources that are specific to the borough, taking into account the issues that have occurred.

67 **Safer Places**

Safer Places is a forum for partners to discuss cases that arise from public places or other locations where there have been high demand for service from police or other partners.

Cases that are suitable for safer places are those which the referring agency find too complex or challenging to resolve within their own problem-solving capability and/or has been unable to garner a multi-agency approach.

The Operating Procedure for Safer Places has been revised recently in an attempt to make the forum more action driven and outcome focused. The remit for cases has been widened.

68 **Youth Justice Services (YJS) Management Board**

There is a strong commitment to ensuring the YJS has a role in the overall improvement journey and to the provision of high-quality services to the children of Dudley. We recognise the overlap between the YJS and other teams in Children's Services and understand that the improvement journey for social care also contributes to improved outcomes for the children open to the YJS.

Children's Services are underpinned by a restorative practice approach which is very much aligned to the YJS Child First tenets. In 2023 Children's Services completed a redesign to implement the Family Safeguarding model which is now operational.

69 The link to the safeguarding people's partnership is provided by the Head of Safeguarding, Practice and Quality Assurance. Learning from audits, practice

and reviews is shared via the Centre for Professional Practice (CPP), who are supporting the YJS to refresh its audit cycles.

The YJS is actively engaged in critical reviews as appropriate, and preparations for joint thematic inspections. In 2023/24 the Service Manager for YJS led on an LCSPR which has been recently published. The YJS also contributes to joint learning and sharing good practice via the newly established stocktake and showcase events.

Adolescent safeguarding has been a focus of activity in 2023/24 within the service redesign.

- 70 The Youth Justice Service Management Board is also a Statutory Board in its own right.

The Priorities agreed for the YJS for 2024/25 at a strategic level are:

- Prevention and Diversion
- Serious Violence
- Inclusion
- Think Family

- 71 The work of the YJS continues to contribute to positive outcomes for children by diverting them from the formal system wherever is possible and appropriate, and by offering interventions to reduce reoffending.

One of these interventions is the Turnaround programme. This programme enables us to work with children and families before issues they may be facing becomes entrenched, by offering them support with parenting and family matters, as well as the attempts being made to engage the individual child in positive activities.

- 72 The YJS have also continued to engage in the educational landscape of Dudley, by attending schools and colleges across the borough, to educate children on areas of concern to us and our partners, such as anti-social behaviour, exploitation & knife crime.

The board ensure that feedback is obtained from pupils and professionals, with a view to using this to shape our offer going forward.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

73. The Community Safety Partnership also has a statutory duty in respect of undertaking Domestic Homicide Reviews / Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.

Since this duty began in April 2011, 18 notifications have been received by the partnership with 16 of these reaching the threshold for a review

14 notifications have been received since 2020

10 of the reviews that have proceeded have involved a suicide.

Training

74. A range of training linked to the partnership priorities is available. Details can be found in the professional's section of the safe and sound website: <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/professionals>

Communications

75. The partnership share communications around our priority areas of work, including information about local services, how to access advice and regional and national campaigns throughout the year.

The communications plan includes the 'Working Together' and 'Report It' campaigns to promote the work of the partnership and provides for increased messaging at specific times of the year around certain topics (for example Hate Crime Week, Modern Slavery Day, Lighter Nights, Darker Nights, Christmas, sports tournaments, valentines day, Day of Remembrance etc)

76. The Partnership launched their refreshed website in 2024. The site's popular 'help hub' of community safety topics has been improved providing useful and relevant links and information on a range of community safety issues (including modern slavery), allowing quick access to advice and information on how to report.

As well as an upgraded help-hub the website features improved navigation and a new resource centre for professionals including education and training materials. It now also allows partners to sign up and access information specifically relevant to professionals.

77. The partnership continues to encourage professionals from all sectors across the borough, including those who work with our communities to sign up [here](#)

This refreshed website reflects a commitment to partnership working and providing advice and information to the public as well as essential resources and support to partners. We encourage people to explore the [website and utilise the available resources](#).

78. Translated Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery and Hate Crime posters and leaflets are available in the resources page in the professional's section of the website, increasing accessibility of these materials.

Funding

79. The Partnership hold the 'Community Safety Fund' received from The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) each year.

The amount for 2024 / 2025 was £125,426.

The Community Safety Fund is used to progress work around the partnership priorities across a range of projects and quarterly returns are required by the OPCC on the use of this fund.

- 80 Projects funded in 2024 / 2025 include:

- The Sanctuary Service for those residents experiencing domestic abuse, allowing them to stay safely in their own home where appropriate.
- Life in Lye – a community cohesion project empowering local people to be leaders of positive change.
- Dedicated CAPA support for the partnership to ensure relevant and timely communications are shared across the borough in line with the communications plan as outlined above, but also where a reactive response is required. In addition, the upkeep and development of the partnership website and development of new campaigns
- Purchase of CCTV cameras for use by the partnership
- Funding of Virtual Reality Head Sets to enable community safety related films (Knife Crime, County Lines Gangs and Sexual Exploitation) and accompanying lessons to be delivered in secondary schools with the aim of enhancing the young persons ability to recognise risky situations and make the right decisions at the earliest opportunity
- The development of easy read and translated help and advice resources for victims of Domestic Abuse
- Mentoring for under 25's
- Restorative work with ASB Perpetrators
- Follow up support / outreach for individuals who have been detained under S136 of the Mental Health Act

- 81 The Partnership have an allocation of £20,000 (plus 50% of anything over this) from the OPCC per year to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews / Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews. The community safety fund has allocated an additional £30,000 towards any additional costs of reviews to mitigate the risk of any shortfall.

- 82 The Domestic Abuse 'New Burdens Fund' is allocated to each Local Authority by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, in order to support Local Authorities with their duties in respect of the Act.

This funding is strictly ringfenced to expenditure relating to the functions set out in Part 4 of the Act on Tier 1 Local Authorities relating to the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.

This fund is overseen by Dudley Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and is being used to fund specialist support in refuge, dedicated posts within the housing directorate, a specialist children's support service and training packages.

- 83 Funding is also received via the Violence Reduction Partnership in respect of the Serious Violence Duty / Violence Prevention.

In 2024/2025 this is £44,580.79 and has been used to fund a range of projects in relation to reducing and preventing Youth Violence. In addition to this local funding, £35,000 was provided by the VRP to support the delivery of projects aimed at mitigating the risk of violence spikes during school holidays.

£250,000 of funding was provided regionally to support the ongoing implementation of the Serious Violence Duty, which funded a regional campaign and workforce development programme, both of which Dudley engaged with.

Anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes

84. In 2023/24, the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team successfully transitioned from the Community Housing area of the Directorate to Safer Communities. This broader service area includes homelessness services, the housing register, traveller incursions and site management, enforcement work, resettlement and inclusion, and community safety.

This transition has improved collaboration across the overlapping service areas, fostering stronger relationships between services and enabling more effective information sharing with key partners.

The team are now smaller, more highly skilled and focused with the autonomy to make decisions more quickly resulting in a quicker resolution to complex cases.

- 85 This year has seen changes in service from the newly formed Street Officer Team. The team, consisting of three officers, is dedicated to patrolling and addressing ASB in Dudley's hotspot areas through prevention strategies. In collaboration with the Police, work is underway to equip the team with enhanced enforcement powers through the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS). This will allow them to take a more proactive role in tackling ASB, particularly in PSPO-designated areas where enforcement could be enhanced.

- 86 A new case management system has now been sourced, and the ASB team is in the process of implementing the system. This development is expected to free up time for ASB staff, allowing them to focus more on community engagement and prevention efforts, which will, in turn, enhance satisfaction scores.
- 87 The 23/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) for satisfaction with the landlord's approach to ASB are 65.3% ranking Dudley MBC 1st of the 7 local authorities and 4th of the CIPFA nearest neighbours.

There has also been a significant improvement in the length of time cases are open to the team:

Cases over 6 months old.

22/23 - 83

23/24 - 22

88. **ASB Case reviews (Previously known as the Community Trigger)**

Work was undertaken during 2023 to streamline and create a more robust process for handling of ASB Case Reviews. The move to the My Dudley Portal has ensured effective processes are in place to handle ASB Case Review complaints within allocated time frames.

During 2024 we had 52 ASB Case Reviews raised by the public, and 47 of them were not met. The actual number of ASB Case Reviews progressed was 5, the same number as in 2023.

The high volume in 2024 relates to a change in process and how people report anti-social behaviour to us, rather than reflecting true case reviews requests. Work has taken place to reduce the confusion that customers may have had, where they incorrectly filled in the ASB Case Review form rather than their ASB Case update form.

Finance

89. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Law

90. Safe and Sound (Dudley's Community Safety Partnership) must meet the requirements set out by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its subsequent amendments.

Other legislation that applies to Safe and Sound includes:

- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 (Section 9 Domestic Homicide Reviews)
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Risk Management

91. There are no material risks arising directly from this report. Any risks identified relating to the subject areas falling under the remit of Safe and Sound are recorded, managed and reported upon through the relevant directorate and/or partners risk register.

Equality Impact

92. There are no equality impact implications arising directly from this report. However, there are differential impacts on individuals, families, and communities in respect of issues that Safe and Sound seeks to address. This needs to be borne in mind when planning and delivering work and services
93. Communities, including young people, have been consulted with to inform the priorities of the Safe and Sound Community Safety Partnership
94. Work undertaken by Safe and Sound will have a positive effect on children and young people who may be affected by the issues that the Partnership seeks to address

Human Resources/Organisational Development

95. Whilst this report does not have any immediate organisational development/HR or transformational implications, it is important to build the confidence and knowledge of the workforce in respect of a range of issues covered in this report relating to the community safety agenda.

Commercial/Procurement

96 There are no commercial or procurement implications arising directly from this report.

Environment/Climate Change

97 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Council Priorities and Projects

98 The work of the Safe and Sound Community Safety Partnership supports the following key priority areas with the Council Plan:

- Governance and control
- Leadership and culture
- Delivering for our customers, residents and communities

K. Jones

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Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Safe and Sound Structure Chart September 2024

Safe & Sound: Dudley's Community Safety Partnership Strategic Board

Illustrated below are the partnerships priority areas of work and corresponding sub-groups of the Strategic Board
Improving Trust and Confidence, Online Harms, Preventing Offending and Re-offending and Serious Organised Crime remain
Priorities that run as a 'golden thread' across all groups.

