Community Safety Strategic Assessment
Refresh Assessment Executive Summary

Cannock Chase

2024

Produced on behalf of

STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONER
Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime

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Title	Cannock Chase Community Safety Partnership: Community Safety Strategic Assessment Refresh Assessment Report Executive Summary (2023)
Description	This Community Safety Strategic Assessment provides evidence and intelligence to inform the strategic decision-making process - helping commissioners and partners to determine the priorities that require particular attention in their local area.
Date created	January 2024
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Introduction and Context

Under the Police and Justice Act 2006 (England & Wales) local authorities are duty-bound to 'provide evidence-based data to support Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in their planning and duties'.

Evidence-based data is required to relate to crime and disorder taking place within the local area, which includes Recorded crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Alcohol, Drug and Substance misuse.

It is a statutory obligation for Community CSPs to produce or procure an annual localised Strategic Assessment (SA), providing a strategic evidence base that identifies future priorities for the partnership and evaluates year on year activity. The approach and format of these is not prescribed by legislation.

SAs should be used to underpin a local area Community Safety Plan which his made publicly available through the partnership. In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, agreement has been reached that Community Safety Plans will be produced three yearly and refreshed annually.

This SA (2023) is being produced as a refresh assessment, with a full report for 2024 produced in 2024/25. The previous full assessment was undertaken and published in 2021/22.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the Cost of Living

Previous assessments have either been directly affected by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic or heavily influenced by the unprecedented global and local impact. The 2023 refresh is the first of these assessments to have been undertaking with the country "back to normal". Despite this, the impact of the pandemic can still be seen in the considerable impact lockdowns had on crime and disorder.

With people instructed to stay at home and out of public spaces, levels of public space ASB (such as Rowdy & Inconsiderate behaviour) and Public Order offences fell, as did traditional crime such as Theft and Burglary. However, with more people spending time online and using online shopping and marketplaces, levels of Fraud (and particularly cyber-enabled Fraud) increased considerably. Additionally, there have been increases in reports of Domestic Abuse during the pandemic, with practitioners providing support stating that cases have become increasingly complex and high-risk.

Locally the pandemic has had a negative impact on mental health and well-being for many – with increases in GP diagnoses of depression and anxiety and increases in crimes where mental health was considered to be a factor.

With significant disruption to the global supply chain during the pandemic, and the impact of sanctions placed against Russia as a result of the war in Ukraine, many of the costs of living in the UK (particularly energy and gas, food, and vehicle fuel) have increased considerably over the past 12 months – with Consumer Price Index inflation peaking at 11% in October 2022[1] having increased sharply from June 2022 onwards. (ONS, 2022).

Similarly, to the impact of the pandemic, while everyone has been affected by increases to the cost of living, the level of impact is unlikely to be felt equally across all communities, locally or nationally. While there is speculation from the Bank of England that the UK is likely to enter a period recession, it has yet to do so. Despite this minor positive, it is currently not possible to make reliable predictions about how the impact of the cost-of-living crisis may impact Community Safety over the coming year.

Impact of the pandemic on Strategic Assessments

The accurate identification and assessment of Community Safety challenges and risks relies heavily on the analysis and interpretation of a considerable amount of data, which usually (as a minimum) covers the previous financial year.

In the 2020 refresh of CSSAs, the latest financial year (2019-20) included one week which was spent under full nationwide lockdown restrictions, affecting approximately 2% of all data for the year. This was significantly different for the 2020-21 financial year; by comparison, around 75% of the financial year was spent with some degree of Covid-related measures in place. These measures had an easily observed impact on several types of crime and disorder, which saw drastic reductions in 2020-21.

In practice, this means that comparison of the current year (2022-23) to the previous year (2021-22) is the first refresh document where there are not significant COVID related declines in the previous data set. This means that tracking trends in the data into the current year may show more drastic changes than have been seen in previous reports. As a result, where comparisons are made in this report these differences are often not given significant weight of discussion as they are highly likely the first glimpse of 'honest' data since the pandemic and reflect crime returning to pre-pandemic levels.

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[1]ONS – Consumer Price Inflation - https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/november2022

Overall direction of travel

Change over time

Restrictions imposed as part of the government approach to controlling the Coronavirus pandemic resulted in significant reductions in recorded crime and disorder at the time of the first UK Lockdown in March 2020. Many reductions which were becoming initially evident in the previous (2020) assessment, continued during much of 2021-22 and this has continued into 2022-23.

The data for 2022-2023 is the first time that we can compare two sets of data from the post pandemic era. Whilst this is not a completely 'clean' comparison as the 2021-2022 data clearly still had some shadows of the pandemic hanging over it. Despite this, the data trend between 2021-2023 is highly likely to be a better indication of the direction of travel for crime in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. All data used is drawn from the Home Office Crime in England & Wales, year ending March 2023 - Community CSP tables and as such is only valid for the 2022-23 financial year.

In Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, the slower-than-national increase in recorded crime, observed at the time of the previous (2022) assessment, did not continue into the 2022-23 financial year. As can be seen in Figure 1 below, overall crime in Staffordshire has increased by 24.5% year on year and is now significantly above pre-pandemic levels. However, crime in Staffordshire and Cannock is still significantly below the national trend for England and Wales. The sharp upwards trend in Police Recorded Crime is highly likely partially caused by Staffordshire Constabulary being in under Engaged status with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). It is understood that more robust processes by the Force have been brought into place in order to ensure an enhanced and improved recording of crime.

Figure 1: Rates of Police Recorded Crime (excl. fraud) per 1,000 population (Home Office, 2023)
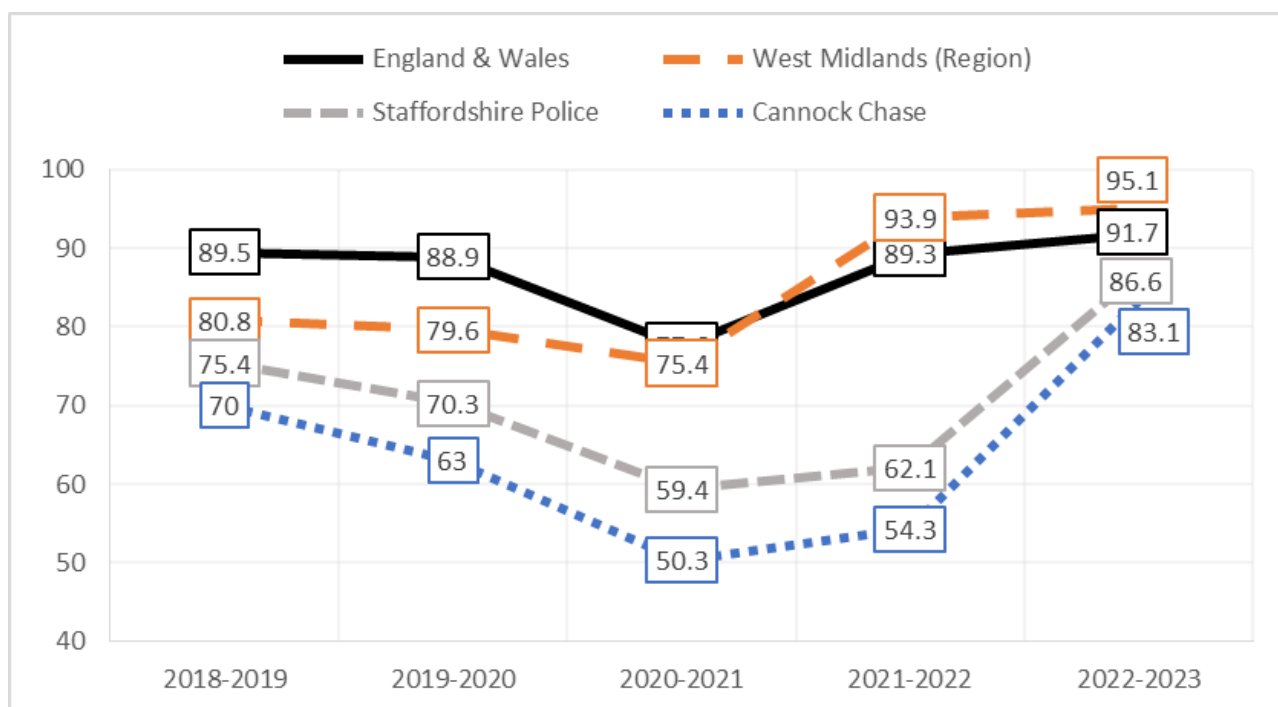
Change in recorded crime in Cannock Chase has mirrored that seen across the force area overall. While rates have continued to increase in 2022-23, this has been at broadly the same pace as that seen across the entirety of Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent – and as a result, rates for the last financial year (2022-23) are below the national average.

There is no CSP area in Staffordshire, except Stoke-on-Trent, which has recorded overall levels of crime which are statistically high and above the national level, but they have climbed at a sharper rate than the national trend which is highly likely driven by the greater focus on recording of crimes that engage status brings.

In addition to rates of recorded crime which are significantly lower than national levels, rates of recorded Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) are lower in Cannock – with a rate of 11 per 1,000 residents, compared 21.2 at a national level and 17.2 per 1,000 population across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Year-to-date recorded crime

The increases in crime in the 2022-23 financial year were faster in Cannock than nationally and faster than the average for the county as a whole. Whilst the overall number of recorded crimes is lower than the national figure the

rate of increase in one year should raise some concerns. As mentioned above, some of this increase may be due to greater scrutiny on how the police are recording crimes in the county but that does not lessen the importance which should be given to the sharpness of the increase.

By the end of October 2023, the volume of crime in Cannock Chase has continued to rise and return to much closer to pre-pandemic levels. Compared to the previous 12 months, at the end of the year (2023) crime had risen in the local area by around a half (+53%) which is faster than the force-wide increase across the same period (+39%).

Staffordshire Commissioner's Office Priorities

It is recommended CSPs consider their approach to community safety challenges in the context of the priorities identified in the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's 2021-24 Police and Crime Plan[2];

A Local and Responsive Service: Understand and deal with what matters to communities, respond promptly to incidents and work with partners to solve problems and prevent them from getting worse. This will mean that crime and ASB reduces, our roads are safer and confidence in Staffordshire Police increases.

Prevent Harm and Protect People: Prevent harm and protect people (particularly children and those that are vulnerable) by ensuring they are appropriately safeguarded and receive the help and support they need.

Support Victims and Witnesses: Ensure victims and witnesses are provided with exceptional specialist support services so they feel able to cope and recover from the impact of crime and ASB.

Reduce Offending and Re-offending: Ensure people are challenged and supported to make life choices that will prevent them from offending and perpetrators don't reoffend. Doing so will mean fewer victims of crime.

A More Effective Criminal Justice System: Ensure Staffordshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, Courts, the National Probation Service and HM Prison Service all work seamlessly so that effective justice is delivered quickly.

The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office recommends that the approach to tackling priorities should be *Community Focussed*, consider *Prevention and Early Intervention*, use partnerships to *Solve Problems Together*, provide *Value for Money* and be *Open and Transparent*.

Staffordshire Police Priorities

Staffordshire Police have their own priorities which should be considered by CSPs in order to ensure that their approach is in-line[3];

Ensure Safe and Confident Communities: Prevent and detect harm and criminality. Improve public confidence and trust within our communities. Invest in and strengthen our focus on vulnerability by building a Public Protection Unit, which will help to provide an outstanding service to victims. Deliver high-quality investigations, improving outcomes and services to victims. Be accessible and responsive.

Develop an Exception Workforce: Commit to the wellbeing of our people. Ensure the highest standards of professional behaviour. Create a diverse and inclusive workplace. Develop engaged, modern and empowered leaders and improve our training capacity and capability. Become an employer of choice. Ensure we develop a capable and confident workforce with the right skills and training to deliver an excellent service.

Develop Active and Productive Partnerships: Maximise the opportunities from collaborations. Work with partners and our communities to problem-solve issues that matter most. Build resilience and preparedness to respond to local emergencies. Develop harm prevention programmes together with our partners through our Harm Reduction Hubs. Embed processes for sharing information.

Build and Outstanding Organisation: Provide the right estate, fleet, equipment, and support services. Improve resource planning to align people, capabilities, and skills. Exploit information and digital capabilities to improve our efficiency and effectiveness. Embed a culture of continuous improvement through audit, assurance, and organisational learning. Deliver efficiency, sustainability, and productivity through new approaches to effective financial and business planning and change.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Priorities

CSPs should also consider the priorities held by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service[4];

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[2] Staffordshire Police and Crime Plan, available at https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/new-document/police-and-crime-plan-2021-2024/
[3] Staffordshire Police (2023), Policing Plan 2023 – available from Staffordshire Police upon request.
[4] Staffordshire fire and Rescue Service Safety Plan 2020-2024 – available from FARS upon request.

Prevention and Early Intervention: to prevent fires and respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies we will work together with our partners across the county to share information and create a more detailed understanding of the risks to our communities and identify the people and properties most at risk. Prioritise these risks to ensure our activities have the most positive impact on community safety. Develop targeted activities to make the most efficient use of our resources and minimise our impact on the environment. Work with partners to educate our communities and share goals to reduce duplication and inefficiencies in the public sector.

Protecting Staffordshire and its People: To protect our people, buildings, the environment and reduce local risk we will continue to modify and develop our activities to embrace the changing needs of the county and use advances in technology and techniques to ensure our response to emergencies is efficient and effective. Contribute to building communities which are fit for the future – resilient, healthy, and sustainable. Contribute to ensuring that buildings in Staffordshire are safe for residents and visitors for generations to come. Ensure that we have the capability to meet new and emerging risks from incidents that may involve flooding, wildfire, terrorism or supporting other emergency services.

Public Confidence: To maintain public confidence and trust in the service we will ensure plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents. Consult with our communities and listen to our people when developing our plans and services. Provide evidence that our activities are based on a recognised need and are targeted where they are needed most. Adopt a transparent and easily understood approach to planning and reporting throughout the service.

Service Reform: To ensure we are effective, efficient, and able to transform the service to meet the challenges ahead we will. Invest in our people by providing them with the right equipment, training, and skills to keep them safe, encourage innovation and inspire our future leaders. Continue to strive to improve the services we provide. Be honest and open, encouraging people to be themselves and treat each other with kindness and respect. Promote a positive and supportive culture committed to improving the health, fitness, and wellbeing of our people. Work with our communities and partners to improve the diversity of our workforce.

Summary of Local Community Safety Priorities

A new assessment of potential priorities and risks has taken place for this report. The assessment of priorities has considered the volume and frequency at which these issues occur, the harm they potentially cause to individuals and communities, and the level of public expectation that these issues will be prioritised and addressed. These have been cross referenced against existing priorities and findings for each locality, as well as through local intelligence, research and insight held by partners (including Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service).

Identified priorities are as follows:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism
- Domestic Abuse
- Drugs & County Lines[5]
- Fraud
- Serious Violence & Violence Against Women and Girls
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons (incl. Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health)

And the following agreed as priorities affecting some specific CSPs significantly more than others:

- Modern Slavery
- Vehicle Crime
- Rural Crime

In addition, there are some challenges which, while not requiring the same direct focus from CSPs as other key priorities (as these can relate to statutory services outside of CSP remits) still require the work of the whole CSP to address. For these, it is important for each CSP to consider how they can contribute to force-wide and partnership approaches and strategies. These challenges are highlighted as:

- Repeat and Persistent Offending
- Fire and Rescue
- Business Crime
- Safer Roads

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[5] County Lines refers to organised drug supply and trafficking routes into and out of 'county' and rural areas from metropolitan areas.

People and Communities at Greatest Risk

Those considered to be particularly vulnerable to experiencing crime, safeguarding concerns or being criminally exploited tend to be consistent over time. There is no change to these groups from the 2019 Strategic Assessment, and in high-risk groups remain as;

- Residents (and offenders) with known drug dependencies or previous drug-related offending
- Children (under 10s) in areas with high levels of Domestic Abuse and/or drug or alcohol-related offending
- Children and young people (aged 10-19) at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Socially isolated adults with mental health needs
- Socially and geographically isolated older and elderly adults
- Socially isolated adults with alcohol and/or drug dependencies

In every CSP area those who belong to the Family Basics Mosaic group (Appendix E) remain disproportionately more likely to experience crime than those in other socio-demographic groups. In several areas, those in the Transient Renters group are also disproportionately present amongst victims of crime.

Older people living in isolation, who are vulnerable to experiencing Fraud offences, are also vulnerable to 'door step' crime, which can involve intimidating and aggressive behaviour or an element of befriending or grooming of the victim.

Overview of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The rate of recorded crime in the Staffordshire Police force-area is well below the national average, as well as sitting below the regional (West Midlands) level and the average rate seen across other similar force areas.

No comparison of ASB or fraud with the West Midlands or England and Wales has been carried out as the figures for these areas for 2022-23 have not yet been published.

Overall rates of crime in Cannock Chase are slightly below force-wide rates and slightly below those seen across England & Wales. Although not statistically amongst the lowest rates across all CSPs nationally for crime overall, rates of Burglary and Violence without injury are significantly below national levels in Cannock Chase.

Rates of Recorded Crime – Staffordshire Police (April 202- March 2023)

	Cannock Chase	Staffordshire (Force Area)	Most Similar Forces (Avg)	West Midlands region	ENGLAND AND WALES
TOTAL CRIME (excl. fraud)	**83.0**	**87**	**87.2**	**95.1**	**91.7**
CRIMINAL DAMAGE AND ARSON	**7**	**8**	**8.2**	**8.1**	**8.6**
ROBBERY	**1**	**1**	**1.0**	**1.8**	**1.3**
SEXUAL OFFENCES	**3**	**3**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**3.2**
THEFT OFFENCES	**24**	**24**	**26.4**	**29.7**	**29.4**
Burglary	3	4	4.4	5.4	4.5
Residential burglary	*2*	*3*	*3.0*	*3.8*	*3.1*
Non-residential burglary	*1*	*1*	*1.4*	*1.5*	*1.4*
Vehicle offences	7	6	5.9	8.7	6.6
Theft from the person	0	0	1.2	0.9	2.0
Bicycle theft	0	1	1.0	0.7	1.2
Shoplifting	6	5	6.5	6.6	6.7
All other theft offences	6	7	7.5	7.4	8.5
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	**38**	**38**	**33.9**	**38.8**	**34.3**
Homicide[1]	0	0	0.010	0.012	0.010
Death or serious injury - unlawful driving[1]	0	0	0.025	0.025	0.020
Violence with injury	11	11	9.4	10.9	9.4
Violence without injury	9	11	13.2	14.7	13.6
Stalking and harassment	18	16	11.2	13.2	11.3
DRUG OFFENCES	**2**	**2**	**2.8**	**2.1**	**3.0**
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS	**1**	**1**	**1.0**	**1.6**	**1.0**
PUBLIC ORDER	**7**	**7**	**8.6**	**8.0**	**9.0**
MISC. CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	**2**	**2**	**2.0**	**1.8**	**2.0**
ASB INCIDENTS (excl. Covid breaches)	**11**	**17**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**
FRAUD OFFENCES (experimental)	**…**	**2**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**

[1] Due to low volume no statistical comparison is given for 'Homicide' or 'Death or Serious Injury - Unlawful driving'

Recommendations

Overall recommendations

Ensure that CSP's maintain links with Staffordshire Police, through the Knowledge Hub and local Policing Commanders, in order to identify emerging risks and priorities in 'real time' as they occur throughout the year –

including making use of available Business Intelligence resources and systems, as well as making us of relevant emerging risk assessments and strategic documents.

CSP's should engage with Police Thematic Leads for each of their identified areas of priority in order to engage with and influence the Police response to priority challenges.

Ensure that CSP's remain engaged with relevant Needs and Risk Assessments developed through the SCO, through Local Authorities, and in other Community CSP areas, so that emerging learning and recommendations can be reflected in ongoing partnership strategy and delivery.

Where services have been commissioned centrally, CSP areas and services should engage with one-another in order to share knowledge and expertise, to ensure that delivery is appropriately meeting local demand, and compliments any existing delivery and services.

CSP's should continue to share best practice with one another and explore and develop opportunities for joint working – particularly where challenges exist in multiple partnership areas or cross borders.

The full CSP should explore approaches which will allow young people to anonymously report concerns around crime, radicalisation or extremist behaviour, and criminal exploitation - which can then be escalated through mechanisms which engage all stakeholders who may be able to have an input. In particular, but not limited to, giving young people an opportunity to communicate concerns that they may have about;

- Potential criminal exploitation of themselves or others (incl. gang-related activity/recruitment)
- Knowledge of weapons possession or 'stashing[6] amongst their peers
- Drug or alcohol misuse (their own, or that of others)
- Potential radicalisation or extremism, or other concerning hate-related behaviour
- Knowledge of other criminal behaviour in the community which is a cause for concern

Following the discontinuation of the 'Feeling the Difference' survey which measured public confidence and perceptions, there is a need for CSP's, and possibly the wider pan-Staffordshire CSP to explore the most effective way that this can be replaced – so that CSP's have a consistent method of gauging what is most important to their communities and individual's perceptions and experiences of community safety in their area.

While budget constraints have made the commissioning and delivery of primary research within communities more challenging, there remains a need to be able to hear and consider the public voice in a broad sense.

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[6] Stashing refers to the practice of hiding knives and other weapons in public places, such as parks or undergrowth, so that they are available for individuals to use in violent offences – without the additional risk of being in possession of the weapon.

Specific recommendations for key priorities

While the analysis behind report has considered all potential priorities from a 'blank page' perspective – where priorities have remained from the previous full assessment, there has been consideration for whether recommendations have needed to change or remain consistent with those already in place.

As a result, many recommendations will be a continuation of those deemed relevant and pertinent from the previous assessment.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

There should be consideration for how partnerships can support and develop a coordinated response to ASB across agencies. This should include work to develop the understanding and use of available tools and powers as part of a joint response to ASB.

Work is needed to better understand where Hate is a factor in ASB and identify if there are communities where Hate-related ASB is of particular concern. Where there are concerns that ASB is hate-related, Partnerships should consider whether circumstances are such that the perpetrator may be vulnerable to radicalisation and require referral into Prevent.

The pan-Staffordshire ASB Strategy group should continue to engage with CSP's and vice versa to help improve our knowledge and understanding of ASB in the force-area. There is a need to continue to develop understanding around risk and protective factors affecting young people and their involvement in ASB.

CSP's should continue to share information on perpetrators and particularly repeat and younger perpetrators (of both public place ASB and Neighbour Disputes) to ensure that individuals receive multi-agency support where appropriate in order to reduce re-offending. [Cross-cutting to Repeat & Persistent Offending recommendations]

As much ASB is public-place Rowdy & Inconsiderate Behaviour, Partnership areas should continue to consider options to limit ASB in hot-spot areas, including the use of provisions such as Public Space Protection Orders.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

CSPs should consider the implications of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) which notably has defined children who witness or experience DA as victims in their own right.

CSPs should remain engaged with the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board (DACDB) as the single pan Staffordshire governance arrangement for this area of activity, with statutory responsibility in relation to safe accommodation and strategic oversight of DA related performance for all those affected by DA, including both adults and children.

There is a continued need for collaborative working across the whole force-area to support the DA agenda, led by established pan-Staffordshire governance arrangements and delivered through the DA Strategy and Action Plan.

There is a continuing need for partners in front-line service to have a strong awareness and understanding of signs of non-physical types of domestic abuse, (e.g. coercive control, financial abuse, psychological abuse including stalking). There is a need to continue to raise public awareness around these types of domestic abuse.

Reaching out to hard to engage cohorts; including men, BME, LGBTQ+, those with Learning Difficulties, Mental Health needs, those in rural areas, as well as those from isolated or marginalised communities is vital in order to give individuals the confidence to come forward and seek support. This should remain linked to other services such as mental health, drug and alcohol misuse and homelessness, as well as education providers from age 14 and up.

CSP's should engage with partners to develop and improve understanding of Stalking and Harassment offences, and continue to improve awareness and understanding of the Stalking Protection Act (2019) and how the Police can apply for Stalking Protection Orders (SPOs) to address offending and protect victims.

Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism

CSP's should engage with the development of Community Cohesion partnership work through the Safer & Stronger Communities Strategic Group, which will link in to existing strategic Hate Crime work and the Prevent board. Partnerships should also strongly consider whether there is a need to work with local partners and stakeholders (such as voluntary sector partners) to develop local Community Cohesion strategy for their local area.

As people spend more time online it should be considered that there is increased risk around online radicalisation. Partnerships should continue to raise awareness of extremism and potential signs of radicalisation within communities, and particularly in those communities at risk of emerging extreme right-wing and far-right extremism. Young people, parents/guardians and community members should have an awareness of prevalent extremist groups and those on the periphery of extremist views.

There should be additional consideration for children who receive home education, including those who started to be home educated during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that they are receiving a well-rounded education in order to prevent any extremist teachings.

All CSP areas must continue with Prevent activity and the work of the Prevent Board; maintaining and building further positive engagement between communities, police, and partners; to enable identification of key individuals who may be radicalising others, and to safeguard any vulnerable persons.

There should be central consideration about whether there may be a need for enhanced mechanisms to allow young people to raise concerns if they feel they or their peers are becoming radicalised or showing extremist behaviour.

There remains a need for the Prevent Board and CSP areas to support partner agencies with low Prevent referral rates, including supporting their understanding of the referral mechanism to improve referral quality.

CSP's and Prevent partners should continue raising partner and community awareness of existing and emerging far-right and extreme right-wing groups – as well as right-wing nationalist groups which operate on the periphery of extremism. Partnerships should encourage reporting of any associated concerns through usual channels such as Prevent.

CSP's should engage with other partners to improve knowledge and understanding of hate crime amongst groups who are less present in recorded incidents, in particular; the LGBTQ+ community, those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, and those with mental health needs.

Drugs and County Lines

Given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on physical health, mental health and well-being, employment, and education – in addition to the emerging Cost of Living Crisis and recession – it should be considered that there are likely to be sharp increases in numbers of people and families considered to be vulnerable over the coming 12-24 months. Partnerships must consider that this will not only increase demand on support services and partners, but also increase numbers of individuals who may be at increased risk of criminal exploitation. It is important that mechanisms to document, share, and escalate concerns around exploitation and vulnerability can cope with increased pressure. [Duplicated within Vulnerable Persons recommendations]

CSP's should continue to develop and enhance partner and community awareness and sharing of concerns linked to County Lines; primarily the signs of criminal exploitation of young people through organised crime and gang activity, and the signs of criminal exploitation of vulnerable adults through cuckooing activity. Partnerships should continue to promote and encourage community use of Crime Stoppers to allow anonymous reporting.

CSPs should continue to develop and embed an approach which primarily treats vulnerable individuals who have been criminally exploited as victims in need of support, and ensure that there are targeted early intervention and prevention opportunities in place for individuals who are being or who have been criminally exploited.

There is an ongoing need to continue education in secondary schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) around risks attached to gang membership and organised crime, including ensuring that the mechanisms exist to allow young people to appropriately and anonymously raise concerns about the criminal exploitation of themselves or their peers. Centrally there is a need to ensure that those working with children in care (LAC) such as Care Homes and Foster Carers are aware of signs of criminal exploitation and feel confident in reporting concerns as appropriate.

Vehicle Crime

There is a need to raise awareness of measures that individuals can take to reduce the risk of becoming victims of such types of crime, particularly in high risk and hot-spot areas, and amongst high-risk groups. This is equally the case for business and small business owners who rely on vehicles as a business asset.

CSPs should continue to engage with Staffordshire Police to identify emerging hot-spot areas and vehicle makes/models which are at particular risk, in order to direct relevant preventative activity as appropriate.

Vulnerable Persons (incl. Alcohol, Drugs, Safeguarding and Mental Health)

Given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on physical health, mental health and well-being, employment, and education – in addition to the emerging Cost of Living Crisis and recession – it should be considered that there are likely to be sharp increases in numbers of people and families considered to be vulnerable over the coming 12-24 months. Partnerships must consider that this will not only increase demand on support services and partners, but also increase numbers of individuals who may be at increased risk of criminal exploitation. It is important that mechanisms to document, share, and escalate concerns around exploitation and vulnerability can cope with increased pressure. [Duplicated within Drug Supply and County Lines recommendations]

Alcohol is a cross-cutting theme across a range of priorities – partners should continue to consider where alcohol may be a factor in offending behaviour or in levels of vulnerability, ensuring support and intervention includes alcohol-related support. Support should be particularly intensive for young people with identified emerging alcohol concerns.

Being under the influence of alcohol remains a factor that disproportionally leads to casualties in dwelling fires, it is vital that those delivering support to individuals around alcohol also assess their residences for fire-related risks.

Centrally there is a need to continue to promote activity to raise awareness of the significant risks attached to drug and substance misuse, including the significant health and psychological risks attached to psychoactive substances previously referred to as 'legal highs'. There is a need to ensure that there is appropriate multi-agency support for young people with drug-related and suspected drug-related offending, in order to deter drug use and provide early treatment where addiction or dependency may be a concern. This should include work with schools, education providers, children's homes and foster carers where appropriate, to ensure that there is a sound understanding of the early signs of substance misuse, so that young people can be supported at the earliest possible opportunity.

There is a need to continue work with appropriate partners, so that workers are able to identify those with drug and substance misuse needs who are at risk of, or may be the victims of, criminal exploitation through activities such as cuckooing or through gang or organised crime activity, and appropriately document, share and escalate concerns.

Stronger knowledge of contextual safeguarding is essential in protecting vulnerable people. Partnerships should help lead the way in moving thinking around safeguarding forwards to address extra-familial risk; including supporting businesses in developing awareness of risks to young people and developing confidence in reporting any concerns.

It is essential that young people are aware of signs of potential criminal exploitation, and that mechanisms exist to allow young people to safely communicate concerns about criminal exploitation of themselves or their peers.

There is an ongoing need to keep prevention and early intervention work at the heart of community safety strategy, particularly focussing on young people who are at risk of either offending or becoming victims of crime. This must include work with looked-after-children (LAC) who are a particularly at-risk group and children in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) who are greater risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system and increased risk of exploitation.

Mental health is a cross-cutting area of need, with many of the most vulnerable victims and offenders (including those under 18) experiencing mental health challenges. It is recommended that partners continue to consider the impact of mental health on individual's levels of vulnerability and on their behaviour, ensuring that there are packages of appropriate multi-agency support for those with appropriate levels of need.

Serious Violence (including Public Place Violence)

While activity in public places (including activity linked to the night-time economy) has increased post-pandemic, this has not been to the extent which was initially anticipated. Although levels are not quite at pre-pandemic levels, it is highly recommended that CSPs continue to anticipate that violent incidents in public places and attached to the night-time economy will increase in line with increases in footfall.

All CSPs should remain engaged with the development and delivery of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Serious Violence Reduction Strategy.

Partnerships should continue work with licensing authorities to identify and tackle heavy drinking in areas with high levels of alcohol-related disorder and public place violence. Authorities should work with licenced premises to support staff in recognising signs of potential violence amongst individuals/groups and take appropriate preventative action.

There remains a need for pubs, clubs and bars to have mechanisms whereby those who feel at risk of harm for any reason, can covertly raise concerns and be supported to safely leave the premises to a place of safety. It is important that mechanisms are well-publicised and available to anyone who feels concerned for their safety for any reason.

There are a number of areas which see repeat instances of public place violence, there may be value in exploring options for expanding the 'Safer Places' scheme to allow younger people who feel at risk of violence or harm to use the scheme to find a place of safety while Police are contacted.

To reduce re-offending, joined-up multi-agency support should exist for first-time violent offenders (including those who do not progress through the criminal justice system) in order to support and address relevant behavioural needs, any needs relating to mental health, and any relevant needs relating to alcohol or substance misuse.

Partnerships should continue to focus on early intervention for young people at risk of gang involvement and should continue to engage in the delivery and development of gang prevention and disruption strategy as appropriate.

There is ongoing need to work with education settings, pupil referral units, care homes, prisons, youth groups, other youth services, and housing associations to raise awareness of the dangers, risks and legal repercussions associated with carrying knives and other weapons. Local evidence suggests a need to focus on those aged 11-18 years.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Recently published strategies from both the UK Government and Staffordshire Police have a renewed focus on tackling and ending Violence Against Women and Girls. Given the role of the wider partnership in achieving this, CSPs should remain engaged with developments in VAWG strategy, and where appropriate and relevant, should contribute to the development of any related delivery plans.

Repeat and Persistent Offending

Continue to engage with partners and Offender Management (as appropriate) to ensure that are appropriate packages of multi-agency support for offenders, particularly those with drug and substance misuse and dependency. Support should be particularly intensive for younger offenders (under 21) who have drug dependencies or drug and substance misuse challenges.

Partnerships should consider that those who commit repeat acquisitive offences in order to sustain drug or alcohol misuse or dependency are at high risk of criminal exploitation and may need additional support and consideration at multi-agency risk assessment meetings.

Partnerships should continue to share information on perpetrators and particularly repeat perpetrators (of both public place ASB and Neighbour Disputes) to ensure that individuals receive multi-agency support where appropriate. It is particularly important that young people who are repeat perpetrators of ASB are identified and supported appropriately to prevent further patterns of offending. [Duplicated within ASB recommendations]

Continue activity with domestic abuse perpetrator programme providers. Approaches should consider additional support needs for offenders around alcohol and drug/substance misuse, mental health, and behavioural and emotional needs and challenges. Support should be particularly intensive for those who are first-time domestic offenders, and domestic offenders who are under 21 years old.

Fraud

In addition to door-step crime and bogus traders, telephone and courier fraud still present a risk to particularly vulnerable and socially isolated groups. As victims are often not connected digitally, it is essential that awareness raising activity includes a focussed element for identified high-risk groups who might be missed by online and digital campaigns.

With growth in online auction/marketplace fraud and crypto-currency/investment scams carried out through social media, those who <u>are</u> connected digitally are also at increasing risk – awareness raising should consider younger age groups who carry out much of their non-essential shopping online, as well as older age groups who are new to using online services for essential shopping, and younger people active on social media.

CSPs should support local services and communities in recognising signs of potential fraud and raising awareness of different types of fraud tactics. It is critical that carers, relatives, friends or neighbours of someone who is vulnerable know how to spot signs of fraud.

It remains beneficial to centrally develop and implement a pan-Staffordshire Fraud strategy; to provide knowledge and tools directed towards residents and businesses, and to create a force-wide structured approach to fraud prevention.

Preventative activity remains essential; it is important to raise awareness of types of fraud, and the action that individuals can take in order to verify legitimacy if they are unsure of whether activity is fraudulent or not.

Awareness raising activity must involve mechanisms for reaching those who live in isolation, those with additional needs and especially those who are not digitally, socially or geographically well-connected.

There is a need to develop a co-ordinated approach to doorstep crime across the range of agencies. There remains a need to raise awareness of the signs of doorstep crime, as well as provide advice and support to carers, relatives, friends or neighbours of those identified as vulnerable. At a central level there is a need to consider how doorstep crime can be addressed with existing and emerging strategy, with CSPs contributing towards ongoing development.

Businesses should be kept aware of links between cyber-security and Fraud risks attached to 'ransom-ware' cyber-attacks, and how to protect themselves.

Modern Slavery

CSPs should continue with co-ordinated partnership activity to tackle modern slavery, including the implementation of consistent training packages to improve awareness and knowledge of the factors which may highlight victims and perpetrators and to increase our understanding of the scale and scope of this threat.

CSPs should contribute to the multi-agency Anti-Slavery Partnership Tactical Group; to assist with early intervention for victims, disruption of offender networks and support a co-ordinated approach to enforcement activity. It is important for partners to remain engaged and in tune with national discussion around Modern Slavery, and developments to make the National Referral Mechanism better tailored for victimised children and young people.

It is important for partners and front-line services to have strong awareness of the range of offending included under Modern Slavery including that many victims and perpetrators of Domestic Servitude and Forced Labour offences in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent are British. CSPs should remain engaged with Staffordshire Police and the Police Knowledge Hub in order to become aware of any shifts or emerging changes in Modern Slavery.

Fire and Rescue

CSPs need to remain closely engaged with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) and consider where the Partnership's activity and planning can support and compliment the Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Safety Plan, and draw on knowledge and insight held by SFRS.

There is a need for CSPs to consider how information is shared with SFRS in order to share key information, in order to help build a more detailed understanding of risks to communities, and to identify those who may be at greatest risk.

There is a need for partnerships to consider how they can support engagement and awareness-raising and activity and campaigns led by SFRS. There is considerable evidence held by the Fire Service around risk-factors associated with serious harm through fire; it is important that CSPs access this and factor this knowledge into their own local planning where relevant.

Safer Roads

The proportion of road user casualties which result in serious or fatal injury has risen in the past 12 months. Continuation of proactive preventative work remains key – particularly with identified vulnerable road users; CSPs should continue to engage with the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) around community engagement and prevention/education activity and ongoing risk assessment activity.

Partnership areas with rural road networks should consider whether there are specific communities which may benefit from being supported to engage with and volunteer as part of the Community Speed Watch scheme.

Where CSPs have concerns about road use in specific locations within their partnership area, they should engage with the SSRP to discuss whether there is a need and opportunity for targeted enforcement activity.

Business Crime

Findings from Staffordshire Commissioner's Office report on Business Crime suggests that there may be a need for greater engagement with smaller businesses in partnership areas, in order to better understand their needs and how they are impacted by crime and disorder.

Although instances of Fraud committed against businesses in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent have reduced slightly there are concerns that (similarly to individuals) businesses do not always report Fraud and Cybercrime offences (such as ransomware attacks). There may be a need to ensure that local businesses are connected with appropriate expertise in order to mitigate the risk of such offences.

Continue to engage with Business Crime Advisors at the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce as appropriate.

Engage with the development and delivery of pan-Staffordshire Business Crime strategy.

Appendix A: Methodology

This current Strategic Assessment is the first refresh document of a new three-year cycle. Another refresh will be due for the financial year 2023-24 and an entirely new SA will be produced in 2025. As such, this year has been completed by refreshing against existing priorities.

Although restrictions relating to the Coronavirus pandemic have been removed for some time at the time of this report (February 2024) there is evidence that all types of crime and risks to community safety have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The prioritisation setting process for 2021-22 included a refreshed assessment of risk, volume, frequency, and harm associated with a broad range of types of crime and community safety challenges. This was completed using the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) approach - with harm scoring and intelligence work led by the Staffordshire Police Knowledge Hub and has not been altered for this refresh.

To identify potential priorities, analysis has looked at each potential priority, considering:

- Levels of physical / psychological / financial harm caused to individuals.
- Levels of harm caused to communities.
- Levels of harm caused to the environment.
- Frequency and volume at which each potential priority occurs.
- Direction of travel in frequency and volume (current trend and forecast).
- Levels of public expectation.

Priority identification and setting has also taken account of existing priorities, analysis, reporting and intelligence, as well as strategic priorities identified by key stakeholders. It has also considered nationally emerging challenges, including those which are likely to be considered a high priority to members of the public. Final priorities set in this report have been validated through discussion with individual CSP leads and relevant stakeholders.