

Community Safety Strategy

**Vision: Sustaining Safe and
Resilient Communities Together**
2022 - 2026

Introduction

SaferMK is the statutory Community Safety Partnership for Milton Keynes. It brings agencies together to formulate and implement the strategy for tackling local crime and community safety issues in the area.

No single agency can deliver on the complexities of keeping communities and businesses safe. Therefore, a partnership action plan must also be developed to support the delivery of the strategy.

Purpose



The strategy serves as a commitment by community safety partners to work together to maximise the impact on safety in the agreed areas of priority. The strategy is informed by the Community Safety Partnership's strategic assessment conducted in 2021. The wider partnership has contributed to the priority setting and has agreed the recommendations made by the strategic assessment.

The strategic assessment brings together a broad range of information about crime and disorder in Milton Keynes. It provides an opportunity for the partnership to enrich its understanding of the key issues, the connections between these and the underlying causes. The aim is to enable the partnership to target its activities effectively.

The findings and recommendations from the strategic assessment were subject to a stakeholder and public consultation which incorporated the SaferMK Community Safety survey 2021/22, stakeholder meetings and panels, as well as focus groups with the public and events in the community. The consultation found a significant majority in agreement with the recommendations made within the strategic assessment.

One key finding from the consultation was the widespread impact of substance misuse, namely drugs and alcohol. Multiple groups, both professional and public, highlighted this as a key issue and potential cause of anti-social behaviour and criminality. As a result, substance misuse is a consistent theme that is addressed throughout this strategy.

Vulnerable Communities and Individuals



Priority 1 - Domestic Abuse

What we know

Domestic abuse is a persistent and ongoing concern both nationally and for Milton Keynes. There was an increase in incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police during the national lockdowns, while domestic abuse charity MK Act saw an even bigger increase in the number of contacts they received. This suggests an under-reporting to Police leading us to think that the rise in domestic abuse may be larger than what the data on reported episodes tells us. It is still not clear what the full impact of the pandemic has had on issues such as domestic abuse. Findings from the SaferMK survey showed that although very few stated they had been personally affected by domestic abuse, a higher proportion felt it was an issue they were worried about. This may be reflective of the trends previously mentioned whereby reporting is not reflective of true figures.

What we have done

The Strategic Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is a multi-agency group of senior leaders responsible for overseeing the implementation and review of the Domestic Violence Strategy. A dedicated member of staff supports the delivery of the strategy, ensuring actions are carried out and monitoring the impact of this work through the Domestic Violence operational group.

What we will do next

We will continue to implement the domestic abuse strategy and monitor its success. Ongoing monitoring of trends will support a dynamic and needs led response to domestic abuse. These trends are monitored through the Risk Board and the effectiveness of the strategy is assessed through the Assurance Board.

We will continue to monitor the impact Covid-19 has had on the rates of domestic abuse to assess any long-term changes in trends to ensure responses are effective and reduce the risks for people who have experienced domestic abuse.

We will embed any learnings from Domestic Homicide Reviews, both local and national, aiming to deliver best practice support for victims and survivors, provide evidence-based interventions for perpetrators and prevent fatal domestic abuse.

We will assess the local pathways for identifying and supporting children who witness domestic abuse within the home. We know that witnessing domestic abuse is an Adverse Childhood Experience and that early intervention is key to improving outcomes for these vulnerable children.

Priority 2 - Weapon enabled crime and youth violence

What we know

Despite the impact of multiple lockdowns and periods of restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, we know that there was a slight increase in incidents of serious violence. The results of the community safety survey show that knife crime is still an area of concern for the public, despite very few people having been personally impacted by it. However, fear of knife crime has reduced compared to the previous year possibly suggesting a slight improvement in the perception of knife crime. Drug and alcohol misuse can be contributory factors in serious violence, particularly the impact of County Drug Lines (CDL), and so this is an important connection whereby if substance misuse is understood and addressed at the earliest opportunity, this may positively impact levels of serious violence. Whilst enforcement is a vital part of tackling violent crime linked to the distribution of substances, prevention of the criminal exploitation of children must be a key focus of the partnership.

What we have done

In preparation for the new Serious Violence Bill anticipated in early 2022, we have produced a new Serious Violence Strategy which set out our plans for prevention, diversion, information sharing and enforcement.

We have recruited a Violence Reduction Co-ordinator to support the implementation of the new strategy, working with partners including voluntary and community groups to embed new systems of information sharing and interventions designed to prevent serious violence.

We have made changes to the case management meeting structure for missing and exploited children, ensuring a joined-up approach to identifying and supporting our most at risk children and disrupting perpetrators of exploitation.

We are working with Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit (TV-VRU) to support the Thames Valley Together Project for data sharing to better identify children at risk of exploitation. This will enable us to target resources, including diversionary activities and family support to where they are most needed.

We have funded and supported the implementation of local projects to divert children away from knife crime and prevent criminal exploitation. Over the last three years Milton Keynes Council has invested £350,000 in knife crime prevention activity which has been overseen by the partnership. This has included education provision, specialist posts to work with children who are the most vulnerable, and intervention designed to engage children in meaningful age-appropriate activities.

What we will do next

We will complete a strategic needs assessment into serious violence against and by under 25s to get a better understanding of violent crime and the causal factors.

We will agree a long-term approach to tackling serious violence in line with the new national Serious Violence duty.

We will monitor the progress of ongoing preventative projects to produce an evidence base for what works with young people to divert away from criminal exploitation and serious violence.

Priority 3 - Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

What we know

The survey also highlights both men and women feel less safe in Milton Keynes compared to previous years, especially after dark. Violence against women and girls in open spaces and in the night-time economy is a growing national concern. Drugs and alcohol misuse also impacts negatively on how people behave in establishments such as bars and night clubs, and possibly contributes to the negative perceptions of safety after dark, particularly for women and girls.

What we have done

We have started a strategic needs assessment to improve our understanding of the level of need in relation to violence against women & girls in MK.

Thames Valley Police have secured funding to roll out bystander Intervention training for rape and sexual assault across Thames Valley.

What we will do next

We will engage with stakeholders, including licensed premises and the public to understand how women and girls feel about their safety in open spaces and the night-time economy.

We will raise public awareness of initiatives like White Ribbon Day to ensure women feel safe in Milton Keynes and men feel able to challenge and report harmful behaviour.

Priority 4 - Online Radicalisation

What we know

Online radicalisation of children is a growing concern demonstrated by a national increase in Channel Panel referrals for under 18s. It is possible Covid-19 has contributed to a rise in unsupervised internet use by children allowing them increased access to harmful material and people. As with other issues, we do not know whether this is a short-term consequence of Covid-19 or an emerging theme that requires focused attention to understand and address.

What we have done

We have implemented the new Channel Duty Guidance 2020.

We have and continue to promote the Home Office ActEarly website amongst partners so that people know how to spot the signs of online radicalisation and how to share concerns.

We have introduced a Prevent Champions Programme at Milton Keynes Council which will ensure front line staff can identify and safeguard people vulnerable to radicalisation.

What we will do next

We will support schools to embed Prevent in educational settings.

We will engage with local diverse communities to promote the Prevent Agenda and build trust in the programme to improve referral rates.

Neighbourhoods



Priority 5 - Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

What we know

ASB is a persistent issue which is increasing in severity and complexity. Substance use, cuckooing, and threatening behaviour are key issues which have been highlighted as causing high demand for community safety partners. There has been increased use of enforcement measures such as closure orders to combat the rise in high-risk anti-social behaviour.

Findings of the community safety survey showed speeding/nuisance vehicles was one of the top 5 concerns for members of the public. It was also the issue most reported as personally experienced. Respondents to the survey also raised the use of E-Scooters as an area of concern and for consideration as an area for further work.

We also know that substance misuse can be directly linked to some cases of ASB for example, acting anti-socially whilst under the influence and drug/alcohol associated litter in public spaces. This was highlighted in our consultation as a key area to address.

Milton Keynes has substance misuse services for both adults and young people experiencing problematic drug and alcohol use. Support for people to engage in these services at the earliest opportunity is key to reducing substance related ASB and preventing long term problematic use.

What we have done

We continue to enforce the car cruising PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) and successfully prosecuted one case of non-payment of a fixed penalty notice.

We have extended and varied the alcohol related anti-social behaviour PSPO for a further 3 years and to include Bletchley and Stantonbury parish.

We have developed a pathway for under-18s who are perpetrators of ASB to support engagement with alcohol interventions with the aim of preventing them entering the criminal justice system.

We are utilising the use of temporary CCTV in high-risk areas across the city.

We have streamlined the Community Trigger process making it simpler for residents to use and allowing resources to be focused on high-risk cases.

We have introduced a vulnerable adults' ASB pathway to ensure perpetrators of ASB who have drug and alcohol, or mental health needs are provided with co-ordinated multi-agency support to tackle the causes of their behaviour.

We continue to carry out multi-agency days of action in our top hotspot areas, giving residents the opportunity to raise their concerns and providing support to access the appropriate services and support.

Through our Serious Violence Delivery Group, we have implemented several new projects designed to prevent young people from being criminally exploited. We know that children who engage in anti-social behaviour are also vulnerable to being drawn into serious violence therefore these young people will also be targeted for support through these projects including detached youth work and music making.

What we will do next

We will engage with residents to better understand their experiences of ASB.

We will carry out public awareness raising campaigns showing we do not tolerate ASB and enable people to report incidents.

We will consider the case for extending the car cruising PSPO and assess the nature of nuisance vehicle/speeding offences.

We will work with partners including drug and alcohol services to ensure agencies are utilising the referral pathways to encourage people to access treatment.

We will monitor the impact of the Vulnerable Adults' ASB pathway to ensure multi agency support is provided to vulnerable perpetrators of ASB and prevent escalation to enforcement and community triggers where possible.

Priority areas for monitoring



The following areas of concern will be monitored to assess the scale of issue in Milton Keynes and plan activities to prevent escalation of these risks to the community.

Modern-Day Slavery

What we know

We know that modern-day slavery is an issue across the Thames Valley and nationally. Criminal exploitation is the most common type of modern-day slavery within Milton Keynes and is therefore being tackled by our serious violence work and the disruption of County Drug Lines.

Covid-19 did not appear to influence the number of NRM (National Referral Mechanism) referrals made across the Thames Valley significantly, possibly suggesting that we are still not fully aware of the true extent of the issue locally. The SaferMK survey found that modern-day slavery is an issue that some people are worried about but only a very small proportion had been personally affected by or had experienced of.

What we have done

A scoping exercise has been carried out to assess the level of understanding of modern-day slavery in Milton Keynes and to establish whether the current reactive response is sufficient or if a different approach is needed. Training on modern-day slavery has been made mandatory for all front-line staff at Milton Keynes Council.

Partnership working has been improved for cases of modern-day slavery and professionals' meetings are co-ordinated for adults identified as victims of modern-day slavery.

What we will do next

We will complete the recommendations made from the scoping exercise including ensuring the workforce are

trained to identify and respond to victims of modern-day slavery and information is shared appropriately.

We will also carry out a scoping exercise in Milton Keynes to fully understand the levels of need and the local trends that increase risk.

Hate Crime

What we know

There has been an increase in the reporting of hate crime, specifically offences with racial, disablist, and homophobic indicators over the last two years.

As with other concerns, we do not know whether this is a short-term consequence as a result of the impacts of Covid-19 or Brexit, or an emerging theme that requires focused attention to understand and address. However, our survey results suggest this is an area of growing concern.

What we have done

Thames Valley Police Community and Diversity Officers continued to engage with victims of hate crime throughout the pandemic to ensure they are supported, and to encourage reporting.

We have arranged monthly meetings between Community and Diversity Officers and Community Safety Officers to proactively target resources to prevent hate crime.

Our Prevent action plan includes scoping to further identify risk and impacts of hate crime in Milton Keynes.

We have worked closely with the Independent Advisory Group to receive feedback from represented communities.

What we will do next

We will continue to monitor hate crime in terms of trends, vulnerabilities, and motivating factors.

Cyber-Crime, Fraud and Scamming

What we know

Cyber-crime has increased significantly over a brief period, with the impacts of Covid-19 accelerating the sophistication of online crime. There has been a gradual increase in the number of reports however it is the reported financial loss that has seen a sudden increase, exceeding that of the previous year within the first 6 months of 2021. Concern about cyber-crime does appear to have improved since last year when cyber-crime was in the top 5 concerns for fear of crime. Fraud and scams are on the increase nationally as are people turning to illegal money lenders or “loan sharks”. The aging population within Milton Keynes and the current financial outlook for low-income families means that we must proactively engage with residents to prevent them falling victim to fraud, scams and cyber-crime.

What we have done

We facilitated a loan shark awareness week at community larders and schools to raise awareness of illegal money lenders.

We have delivered training on cyber-crime to professionals across the partnership.

What we will do next

We will work with Trading Standards, Thames Valley Police and external agencies to raise public awareness of online scamming, warning signs and how to report.

We will continue to monitor levels of cyber-crime and financial loss to assess the scale of the issue.

Areas for continued work

We will continue with work in the following areas to build on the progress we have made in the following key areas.

	What we know	Recommendation
Acquisitive crime	Milton Keynes has maintained its low levels of burglary and robbery over the last two years. Effective campaigns and operations have both deterred would be offenders and encouraged people who live, work, and visit Milton Keynes to be vigilant and protect their property.	Continued joint work with partners to provide multi-agency support to repeat offenders who shop lift to fund drug and alcohol. This remains a focus for the partnership to ensure that our systems and practices continue to be effective, and rates of acquisitive crime remain low.
Rural Crime	We know that rural crime is an area of concern in parts of Milton Keynes, however little is known about the scale and extent of the issue.	The partnership continues to support the work of Thames Valley Police's Rural Crime Taskforce. We will build a clearer picture of the extent of the issue.
Reducing reoffending amongst young people	The Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Probation are key partners in reducing reoffending and preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system. The YOT continues to perform well against national targets for reduction of reoffending.	Partnership projects such as the Early Support Programme will continue. We will support a pilot drug diversion scheme which encourages young people to engage with drug treatment when caught in possession of cannabis.
Reducing reoffending amongst adults	The Thames Valley National Probation Service works with partners in Milton Keynes to provide supervision and interventions for adults released from prison or on community orders. Work includes priority drug and alcohol treatment for offenders with drug and alcohol needs and support with housing, employment, and benefits.	We will support the prison leavers project, led by the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC). This pilot project delivered across the Thames Valley aims to bring partners together to provide a more seamless pathway from prison to support services. We will be working closely with the Thames Valley Alliance to monitor the impact it has on re-offending and re-call to prison
Arson	We know that there has been a slight increase in arson.	It is recommended that further work is completed to understand the level of concern and whether there is a problem with under reporting of incidents of arson.