

# Safe Durham Partnership Strategy

2024-2029



Better for everyone

**Ambition:** Durham is a county where everyone can feel and be safe.



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# Foreword

It is with pleasure that we introduce the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy for 2024-29. The community safety landscape has seen lots of legislative and guidance changes since Community Safety Partnerships were established more than twenty years ago and we are proud of the well established and emerging partnership groups we have in place in the County.

In developing this strategy, the Safe Durham Partnership has reflected upon its governance role, areas where it provides an assurance mechanism for other statutory groups and areas where it can add most value. We will continue to provide oversight and escalation for the key areas set out in this strategy, whilst focusing on our priorities of anti-social behaviour, hate crime and sexual violence. These priorities have been chosen because they are important to our residents, because of the significant harm they cause to victims, or because of the potential impact of national or international events; and they are areas where the strengths of the Safe Durham Partnership can make a real difference locally.

You will therefore see a sleeker and easier to digest strategy which will concentrate on our approach to tackling the issues and where we as a partnership can influence and direct resources and funding in order to achieve our ambition that:

## **Durham is a county where everyone can feel and be safe.**

It is important to acknowledge that data and insight tell us County Durham is a safe place to live. At the same time, we must be mindful that the increased cost of living can put strain on our relationships and pressures on our budgets, and that escalating global conflict can increase community tensions.

The Safe Durham Partnership is committed to County Durham's Approach to Wellbeing, listening to our communities, tailoring our approaches to their specific needs and utilising their unique assets. We will work together to build resilience so that people are less likely to engage in criminal activity and build confidence so that people are more likely to report it.



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Corporate Director for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change,  
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**Councillor John Shuttleworth**

Vice Chair of the Safe Durham Partnership  
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## Our priorities

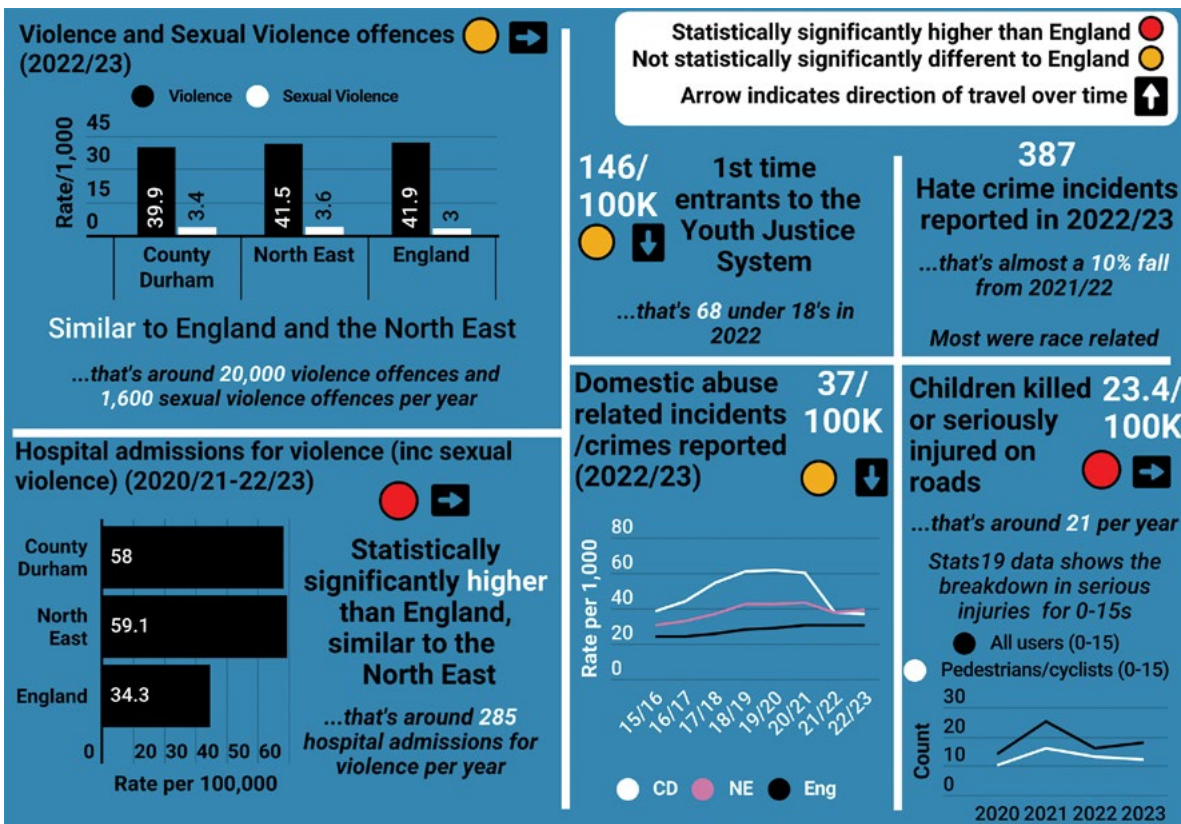
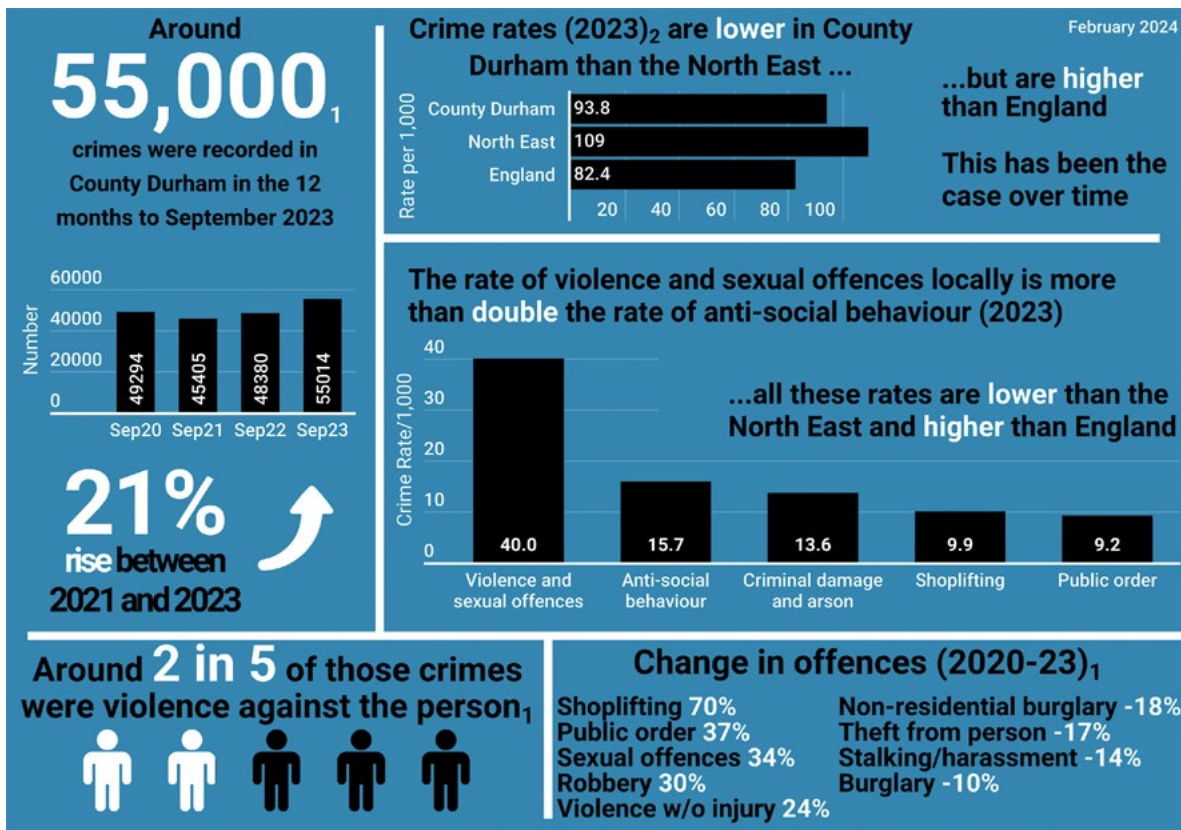
1. Anti-social behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities
2. Hate crime and building community cohesion
3. Sexual violence and other violent crime

## Agreed ways of working

- **Empowering communities**  
Working with communities to help them feel confident in reporting crime and enabling them to feel safe in their local area.
- **Being asset focused**  
Acknowledging the different needs of communities and the potential of their assets to help reduce crime and disorder.
- **Building resilience**  
Helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our communities to build their future resilience and prevent their engagement in criminal activity.
- **Working better together**  
Working better across sectors to help avoid duplication in investment and activities, and ensure impacts are measured to build the evidence-base for what works.
- **Sharing decision making**  
Designing services and initiatives with people who need them to break the intergenerational cycle of criminal activity whilst improving mental and physical health outcomes.
- **Doing with not to**  
Making our interventions empowering and centred around children, adults and older people, and the place where they live.

In producing this strategy, we have considered evidence from Durham Insight (as our Strategic Assessment) alongside, local expertise, insight, horizon scanning, and the voice of our communities captured through various ongoing consultation and feedback mechanisms from all partners. The Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) is committed to ensuring key leads in partner organisations deliver on the commitments they have made in this strategy.

# An overview of crime and community safety in County Durham



**Notes**

1: Crime in England & Wales, year ending September 2023 - Community Safety Partnership tables. ONS.  
2: Data.police.uk via Crime and Community Insight, Durham Insight.

## Role of the Safe Durham Partnership

Local authorities have a statutory duty to form a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment and to reduce reoffending. In County Durham the CSP is the Safe Durham Partnership.

More about the SDP is available on the [County Durham Partnership website](#).

## Changing landscape for Community Safety Partnerships

Community Safety Partnerships provide hyper-localised strategies tailored to the needs of their communities. They work on the principle that no single agency can address all drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour, and that effective partnership working is vital to ensuring safer communities.

The Safe Durham Partnership has a duty to meet our statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and a lot of changes have been made to statutory duties and/or guidance in recent years or are planned in the course of this strategy.

Government guidance and legislation places some other groups on a statutory footing, and they function effectively with oversight from the SDP. For example, the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Strategic Partnership now has statutory responsibilities to deliver on the National Combatting Drugs Outcomes.

With this in mind, the SDP priorities consist of three 'umbrella themes' which cover work done by the whole community safety partnership arena across the County. These themes are then broken down into:

- **Areas of focus:** The SDP will champion the areas that need further focus or development. There may be a specific local need or issue to tackle, potential impact from national or international events or actions, or the SDP may be the key governance arrangement or most appropriate forum. Areas of focus will be agile, flexible, and responsive.
- **Areas of assurance:** The SDP will provide ongoing oversight and receive regular assurance for the existing partnership arrangements already in place for these areas.

**The key consideration for SDP focus is where the SDP can add value, work with the delivery groups to focus efforts and target resources in these areas.**

**The SDP recognises the impact of wider factors on its priority themes and works closely with partners to address the underlying contributing factors including health, substance misuse, housing, employment and poverty.**

**The Partnership gives due consideration to the other plans and strategies in place across the wider [County Durham Partnership](#) and its member organisations.**

# Safe Durham Partnership Strategy - identified priorities 2024

1. **Anti-social behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities**  
 Area of focus: anti-social behaviour  
 Areas of assurance: reducing reoffending, road safety
2. **Hate crime and building community cohesion**  
 Area of focus: hate crime  
 Area of assurance: counter terrorism
3. **Sexual violence and other violent crime**  
 Area of focus: sexual violence  
 Areas of assurance: serious violence, domestic abuse, combatting drugs and alcohol, organised crime

Leadership in each of the three priority areas will be through one of the existing formally established sub-groups, each of which will lead on a high-level delivery plan.



# Priority 1. Anti-social behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities

## Why this is a priority

Being and feeling safe both in our homes and within the wider community impacts on both our emotional and physical wellbeing and enables us to live productive lives. It also directly impacts on our personal resilience as well as the overall resilience, confidence, and cohesion of our communities.

Public perception and understanding of the definition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are varied, but ASB and crimes which disrupt our neighbourhoods and communities is the number one community safety priority for residents across the county. There are multiple reporting routes across the spectrum and the SDP can add value as the strategic forum in which the involved agencies come together.

ASB can have a massive impact on those who are subjected to it, and it is more prevalent in our more deprived areas, where its impact is greatest. ASB can be a precursor to more serious crime and we think that tackling ASB will greatly benefit our prevention work across the community safety landscape.

We want people to have pride in their areas, to feel safe in their own home and have optimism for the future. Victims of anti-social behaviour have told us they want to see improved reporting routes; better communication with them about the progress of investigations; improved criminal justice processes; and for services to undertake victim impact assessments.

## What we want to achieve

- Increased public confidence to report ASB
- A coordinated and efficient multi-agency partnership approach to ASB
- Effective pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators





## Case Study

### Off road motorcycle nuisance in Lancaster Hill and Westmorland Rise, Peterlee

Believe Housing and the Police received a large number of reports of off-road motorbikes churning up large grassed areas and covering homes in mud in Lancaster Hill and Westmorland Rise in Peterlee.

The bikes were accessing the area from a number of points including the A19. The residents in the area were very intimidated by these people wearing masks racing around and tearing up grassed areas, splattering mud all over houses and vehicles.

Door knocks and leaflet drops were carried out in the area by the Police, Local Authority Community Safety Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens as well as local housing officers from Believe. Residents were asked about the issues in order to gather further information and intelligence. Residents were also given contact details and information on Operation Endurance, the partnership approach to tackling off road motorcycle nuisance through patrols, physical defences and enforcement. The residents were encouraged to report information that was useful to identifying the bikes and offenders, such as colour and make of the bike, clothing of rider etc.

Believe Housing was involved as some of its tenants were affected by this type of behaviour. One lady had her bungalow intentionally covered in mud from the bikes.

A site visit was carried out and funding was allocated from the Safer Streets fund to install metal hoop barriers at appropriate key access points.

We returned to the lady in the bungalow to explain what action had been taken, and she was happy with the update.

From the information received from the community, the Police made three motorcycle seizures which were believed to have been involved in these incidents. Subsequently no more incidents were reported due to physical defences and vehicle seizures.



## Priority 2. Hate crime and building community cohesion

### Why this is a priority

Community cohesion is defined by a range of social factors which can vary from one neighbourhood to another. It empowers local people and sustains neighbourhoods. With the pressures on public resources and rapid population change, community cohesion may be affected. We need to closely monitor this and support our communities through these challenges.

There is real strength in our communities, brought to the fore during the recent Covid-19 crisis, storms, flooding and power outages, where we have seen fantastic examples of resilience and cohesion, throughout the county. We must build on this sense of belonging and purpose, to improve community cohesion so that people are safe and free from the fear of crime.

In April 2022 the Government mandated all councils to be involved in the dispersal programme for asylum seekers, which will further influence the diversity of our population and increase the need for us to prioritise community cohesion. Increasing global conflict could potentially change the make up of our communities or increase tensions locally.

Hate crimes have a profound effect on both individuals and communities causing emotional distress, fear and a sense of vulnerability among targeted groups. These incidents can lead to a breakdown in community cohesion and create a climate of intolerance. In addition to the immediate harm experienced by victims, hate crimes contribute to long term social and psychological consequences, increasing the capacity required within our victim services to support those who experience this type of crime.

From reports, hate crime is evident across many areas of County Durham with a concentration in Durham City due to the diverse student population. From local intelligence, we know that the majority of hate crime reports are racial in nature, with the Black and Pakistani communities most commonly targeted. However, we also know that hate crime is under reported, and we must do more to demonstrate how seriously this type of offence is taken and encourage reporting from members of all protected groups such as people with a disability, religion, or those from the LGBTQI+ community.

If hate crime is not tackled and dealt with swiftly in our society then this could lead to an increase in confidence from extremist groups to get a foothold in our communities, being able to spread their ideologies and targeting those who are vulnerable.

### What we want to achieve

- A clear understanding among communities that hate crime will not be tolerated and should be reported
- Cohesive communities which embrace diversity
- Pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators

## Case Study

### Humankind LGBTQI+ services

For young people in County Durham, Humankind LGBTQI+ services offer friendly, practical support around gender identity and/or sexual orientation. The support offer includes one to one sessions, as well as the opportunity to meet other LGBTQI+ young people, engage in fun activities, learn new skills and get relevant advice and guidance on a range of bespoke topics affecting the happiness and mental health of LGBTQI+ young people.

Young people in the last reporting year have mostly been accessing the service to get help, support and advice on barriers and issues relating to coming out. This has included family support sessions, practical health advice, as well as offering young people a range of tools and resources. Other popular services include emotional resilience and wellbeing services as well as the lively peer support groups, offering tailored activity sessions as well as informal get togethers.

There are a number of young people each year who access Humankind for discrimination and bullying support. This could be because of a one-off or repeated incidences. Both are very upsetting and support for the young person and the family is invaluable.

As a result of the discrimination work with the young people involved in Humankind, there have been occasions when staff from Humankind have approached other community groups and venues following a referral from a young person and these groups have responded in a positive way, making practical changes where possible, changing policies and procedures as well as forwarding communications to members about being inclusive and tolerating of everybody.

In this way, the work of Humankind further supports ongoing work to keep young people safe in County Durham and promotes inclusivity, community cohesion and contributes towards reducing hate crimes.



## Priority 3. Sexual violence and other violent crime

### Why this is a priority

Violence and sexual offences are one of our most prevalent crime types. Hospital admissions for violence (including sexual violence) are statistically significantly higher than England (similar to the North East).

Violent crime is among the most serious offending and whilst serious violent crime rates are below the national average in our area the harm caused to victims of violent crime is great, potentially life changing or life threatening.

The Serious Violence Reduction Partnership (SVRP) has developed a local evidence-based strategy to address these issues, the more serious of which are more prevalent in densely populated urban areas such as Durham City Centre, and the SDP will work with the SVRP for assurance and escalation purposes. The Serious Violence Reduction Strategy specifically focusses on four main areas, those under 18 who are involved in or at risk of being drawn into serious violence, violence within the night-time economy, dealing with those aged between 18-35 involved in serious violence, and reducing domestic abuse related violence where a knife or a sharp instrument are involved.

The Government's (refreshed) Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy<sup>1</sup> published in July 2021 sets out the actions the Government will take to increase support for victims/survivors, bring perpetrators to justice, and, ultimately, reduce violence against women and girls. In February 2023 the Home Secretary included VAWG within the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) which recognises VAWG as a national threat alongside terrorism and serious and organised crime. It is acknowledged therefore, that there is a need for greater coordination and collaboration between emergency services and local partners to tackle the threat.

1 in 4 women, 1 in 6 children and 1 in 18 men have experienced sexual violence. The Office of National Statistics have shown that there were 2,267 sexual offences recorded by Durham Constabulary from April to December 2022.

The SDP will focus efforts and target resources as required towards the Sexual Violence aspects of the work led by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG).

### What we want to achieve

- Increased trust and confidence to report sexual offences
- Improved feelings of safety around the nighttime economy, and reductions in violent crime within the nighttime economy
- Pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy)

## Case Study

### Durham City Night Hub

The Durham City Night Hub was operational from February 2022 following a successful application for funding to the Home Office under the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) initiative. Since then, the Hub has been operational every Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday between the hours of 8pm and 3am. The Hub is based at St Nics Church in the marketplace in the city, and has been supported by a number of partners.

The overarching aim of the Hub was to provide a safe refuge, support, and guardianship to women but by the nature of the work of the Safer Streets Officers that work in the hub, it also provides services and support and assistance to anyone in a position of fear, distress and vulnerability. The operation of the Hub was one of four measures included in the VAWG funding application. The other three initiatives included the appointment of a co-ordinator, bystander training to licensed premises, and the creation of a recognisable brand and marketing campaign.

Since the Hub's introduction it has gone from strength-to-strength and has proven to be a valuable addition to ensure the safety of the public in the night-time economy. The staff assist in bringing together a variety of different partners who work in collaboration with local individuals.

A total of 2,441 incidents were logged by the Hub from February 2022 to December 2023, which included numerous safeguarding and welfare issues as well as reports of criminal activity and community safety. In relation to sexual violence there were 29 reports of sexual offences and 53 queries of spiking.

The funding for the VAWG bid was committed to the end of March 2023 and since that time various funding has been received from Safer Streets national funding, the Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, the City Parish Council, Durham University, Durham AAP as well as Durham County Council. Recently a further funding proposal to the Serious Violence Fund of £50,000 has been approved to ensure its continuation for another year, however long-term funding for the project is still being explored.



# How the SDP will take this work forward

The SDP will continue to provide a partnership space for assurance and escalation across the community safety landscape, holding others to account, supporting partners with specific issues, identifying gaps or emerging issues and advocating for our local communities.

The SDP will use its assurance functions to ensure that some key actions and approaches are being applied across the community safety agenda, including:

- Working with, supporting, and listening to feedback from victims of crime and ASB
- Applying prevention and early intervention approaches that reduce the number of people becoming victims in the first place, and prevent escalation of crime and ASB
- Increasing public confidence to encourage people to report crime and ASB, and so that people feel safer in their community
- Improving connectivity and partnership working to include working with others in County Durham and beyond, pooling resources and co-commissioning, and joining up data and intelligence

The SDP will focus on those areas where it can add most value; ASB, hate crime, and sexual violence; shining a light and encouraging joined-up action in those areas and will continue to be agile, flexible and responsive to need.



## Measures of success

We have developed a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress towards achieving our ambition. Leadership in each of the three focus areas will be through one of the existing formally established subgroups, each of which will lead on a high-level delivery plan which will include the development of a performance framework. In addition to this, the SDP will continue to receive assurance and escalation updates from all relevant groups within the priority framework, which will include performance information.

### Safe Durham Partnership areas of focus key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Reports of ASB per 10,000 people
- Deliberate fires per 10,000 population
- Hate incidents reported to police per 10,000 population
- % who feel unsafe to some extent walking in the neighbourhood
- Dealing with local concerns about ASB and crime issues by local council and police
- % victims who reported feeling safer because of support from Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS)
- Hospital admissions for violence (including sexual violence)

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### Safe Durham Partnership areas of assurance key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Crime rate per 1,000 population
- Theft offences per 1,000 population
- Road traffic collisions
- Domestic abuse incidents reported to police
- % Harbour clients who feel optimistic about the future on case closure
- % of offenders reoffending in the last 12 months
- % of offenders reoffending in the last 2 years
- Juvenile first-time entrants to the criminal justice system per 100,000 of 10–17-year-olds
- % of successful completions of treatment programmes
- Violent Crime incidents which were alcohol related



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