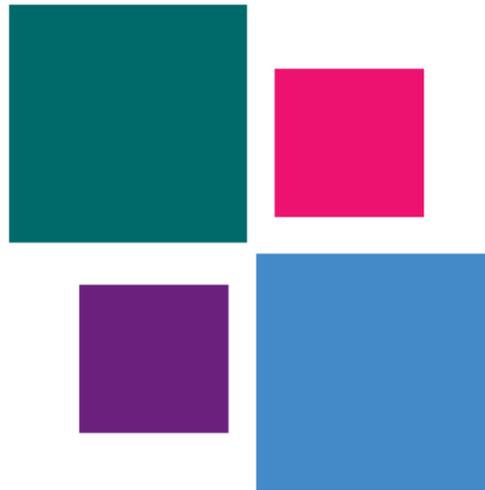


Maidstone
Borough Council

Safer
Maidstone
Partnership

Strategic Assessment

2022-23



Executive Summary

The Maidstone Community Safety Partnership, known locally as the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP), have worked for over a decade to embed collaborative working into their day-to-day work. A unique combination of statutory and non-statutory agencies works routinely to deliver joint problem solving, shared action plans for complex cases and awareness raising against agreed priorities. Those priorities are identified by analysing the thoughts and concerns of residents, alongside the assessment of local community safety data. The input of professionals provides deeper analysis and narrative to support the development of meaningful priorities and objectives. The priority setting process is described in Appendix 1.

In more recent years, the Partnership has moved to prioritising those things that cause the most harm, have impacted the most vulnerable or pose the highest risk. These complex issues have required some investigation in order to further understand the complex issues, some exploration of options within new legal powers and for creating opportunity for innovative practice. The next steps from this are the learning from what has or hasn't worked, the sharing more widely of this learning and integrating ways of working across the wider community safety partnership.

The information collated for this Strategic Assessment, identifies the need for four Core Priorities:

- Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)
- Provide a Safe Town Centre

The information within the report, including the legislative changes and the available data, supports the retention of three of the previous priority areas. A fourth should also be added around the Town Centre.

There are some areas of concern which themselves are intrinsically linked to the delivery of the Core Priorities. Our priorities should therefore be underpinned by the following cross-cutting themes:

- Tackling ASB in Our Communities
- Improving Public Perception /Confidence
- Taking a public health approach
- Reducing the impact of substance misuse on our community
- Safeguarding people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

The Safer Maidstone Partnership, through its various subgroups, will develop action plans for each core priority. Each action plan will not only develop and deliver initiatives that will meet their overarching objective of that priority but will also ensure that each cross-cutting theme is incorporated into any delivery plans.

At a time of recovery from the greatest challenge in a generation, the Partnership must continue to adapt to deliver services in a way that supports victims. We must listen and understand what makes people feel unsafe, particularly at night and in the town centre. We must ensure that people are reassured that the partnership is making a difference. Above all, the partnership, must ensure that, where appropriate, we make Maidstone as hostile as possible to those who threaten whether people feel safe or are safe.

The Aim of this Strategic Assessment

This is the Strategic Assessment produced for Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) for the period 2021-22. It looks at the efforts of the partnership in relation to the final year of the current Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-2022. It also informs the priorities and planned activities for the 2022-23 Partnership Plan.

The purpose of this Strategic Assessment is to provide knowledge and understanding of community safety problems to members of the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP). This is achieved through intelligence analysis and identifies emerging priorities by considering the patterns, trends and shifts relating to crime, ASB and wider determinants of Community Safety, such as substance misuse and mental health. Additionally, the Strategic Assessment includes a performance assessment of how far the partnership has achieved its previous priorities.

The Background of Strategic Assessments

In 2006, a review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002, led to a series of recommendations to strengthen and extend existing requirements further, through the experience gained from partnership working. This resulted in a new set of national minimum standards which came into force in August 2007.

The 1998 Act included the requirement to undertake a detailed crime and disorder audit, through consultation with key agencies and the wider community with the findings used to identify strategic priorities and set targets and performance measures. The new national standards placed a legal obligation on responsible authorities to comply with the specified requirements, one of which was the creation of a strategic assessment in place of the previous 3 yearly audit.

Methodology

Data for this year's Strategic Assessment has been sourced by the Kent Community Safety Unit from a variety of statutory partners including Police, Health, Probation and KCC Services. They are available in the partnership data sets section on the Kent Safer Communities portal. Several different data display tools have been included in this year's assessment for the purpose of putting the context of crime data into more perspective, over a longer period.

Maidstone Borough Council and other authorities in Kent have again incorporated the MoRiLE (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement) scoring matrix methodology of ranking offences based on threat, risk, and harm within this year's Strategic Assessment (see Appendix 1).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a considerable and unprecedented impact on the lives of everyone in the UK, including those in Maidstone borough.

At the time of this report, latest data shows that over 496 people in Maidstone lost their lives as a result of COVID-19.

The virus and measures to control rates of infection (such as the national lockdowns, systems to limit social contact, and the temporary closure of education settings) have had a significant impact on many, directly affecting individuals' physical health, mental health and well-being, education, and employment.

A Residents' Covid survey undertaken in 2020 received 1453 responses. Survey respondents were asked about the impact of the pandemic on their mental health and around 50% responded that they have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. They were also asked to select their top 3 concerns and around 14% selected mental health as one of their top three concerns.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on how front-line services have operated. Reduced face to face contact, access to services disrupted by the pandemic, restrictions on travel and social contact has seen almost all services report unprecedented shifts in demand. This is reflected in much of the data since 2020, with that year in particular considered highly irregular. However, there are clear indications that the pandemic will continue to have social and economic importance. Many of the long-term impacts of the pandemic remain hidden, on an individual, community and societal level and the partnership must remain agile to the threat this poses.

Rather than focus on Covid-19 within this assessment as a single specific priority or risk to community safety, the impact of the pandemic has been considered and discussed as a factor in each individual priority theme, wherever it is relevant.

Delivery of the Priorities

Strategic subgroups, operational groups and specialist teams work collectively to develop, co-ordinate and deliver activities. For each priority, the partnership has:

- Produced an action plan containing measurable activities and indicators
- Ensured that there are resources available to deliver these plans
- Submitted funding applications to obtain additional resources where required
- Ensuring cross-cutting themes are integrated into the action plans

As these are active action plans, designed to evolve over the life of the Community Safety Plan, some of the actions are ongoing and will be carried forward in the new Community Safety Plan where relevant to either a priority or a cross cutting theme.

Details of what has been delivered to date in each area is summarised in the tables in [Appendix 1](#):

- [Protecting our communities against serious, violent, and organised crime \(including modern-day slavery\)-Delivered through the Serious & Organised Crime Panel](#)
- [Keeping children and young people safe- Delivered through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting](#)
- [Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse \(including stalking\): Delivered through the Domestic Abuse Forum](#)
- [Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community](#)
- [Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community](#)

Community Safety and Youth Safety Surveys

Undertaking surveys enables us to capture individual's perceptions or feelings of safety and how they feel the partnership are tackling issues in their area and the borough as a whole. Surveys provided a representative response and can allow us to understand whether there are any areas of particular concern, as well as ensuring that the Partnership's priorities are aligned with those of the residents of Maidstone.

In 2021 we undertook two surveys to help inform our 2022-25 priorities. A public and a youth survey. For the public survey used some similar questions to those asked in 2019 so comparisons could be drawn.

The **public** survey was undertaken in the Autumn and received 1241 responses. The key findings were as follows:

- 84% of respondents felt safe in their local area in the daytime, increasing from 77% in 2019.
- 38% of respondents felt safe in their local area at night, decreasing from 41% in 2019.
- People feel most unsafe in the Town Centre- Brenchley Gardens and North Week Street highlighted as areas of concern
- 74% of respondents said they don't feel safe in the Town Centre at night
- 80% of respondents felt that crime has increased to some degree in the last three years.
- 52% did not feel that public services were successfully dealing with ASB and Crime, with 48% of respondents feeling that ASB was not being dealt with in their local area.
- 27% of responders have experienced a crime in the last 3 years. The crime experienced the most was vandalism/graffiti/other. Of those experiencing a crime, 31% (100) people did not report it.
- 77% who stated they had witnessed a crime, witnessed fly tipping, littering or dog fouling
- Of the 2019-2022 CSP Plan priorities, "Keeping children and young people safe" was given the highest level of importance
- Of the top three issues that most need tackling in Maidstone, responders chose anti-social behaviour (653), drugs and substance abuse (598), and people carrying weapons (448).

The **youth** survey was distributed via schools in their spring term and received over 2000 responses. 80% of respondents were female. The key findings were as follows:

- Almost one in six respondents said they worried about their safety on a regular basis (daily or a few times a week).
- Just under a third said they felt unsafe in town centres, while a quarter said they feel unsafe on public transport.
- More than one in five respondents said that verbal bullying and racist and homophobic comments were a problem at their school
- Respondents from minority groups considered negative behaviours in their local area to be a bigger problem than white group respondents - specifically underage drinking, verbal bullying, racists or homophobic comments and knife crime.
- Young year groups (years 6 and 7) perceived those negative behaviours at their schools were bigger problems than the other year groups – both these groups had significantly greater proportions saying that drug dealing, fighting, knife crime and gangs are a problem at their school.
- Almost two in five respondents said they felt unsafe in their local area during the night.
- One in five respondents said they had been cyber-bullied and almost two thirds of respondents said they had been asked to send a picture or video of themselves or show themselves on webcam.
- Attitudes to the police were mixed with almost two thirds agreeing that they think they would be treated with respect if they came into contact with the local police however less than half agreed that the local police listen to the concerns of young people or that the police are dealing with the issues that matter most to young people.

Analysis of survey results

Both surveys indicated increased fear and perception of crime, with the Town Centre itself being highlighted as an area of concern. Perception of crime and safety can be influenced by a number of factors. The pandemic, society and the media can all significantly influence perceptions and may or may not relate to whether someone has been a victim of crime. For example, whilst 77% of respondents stated that they had witnessed a crime, the majority of those crimes were environmental crimes, such as littering. Whilst criminal offences, they are not regarded as "harmful" crimes, albeit they do have a cumulative impact on a community.

Anti-social behaviour and the perceived lack of action by the partnership is an area of great concern, indicating both a need to improve the way in which certain behaviours are challenged and a need to publicise the work of the partnership, which, as is explained in this report, is amongst the most proactive in the county. Drugs and substance abuse, and people carrying weapons were also highlighted as areas of concern. As detailed in the data within this report, neither of these crimes are as prevalent as people seem to think, but it is recognised that isolated incidents of violence in particular can have significant impacts on people's perceptions.

The way media and social media works has been highlighted as a particular challenge when it comes to community safety. It is well documented that during times of crisis we are more drawn to news/information. This enables us to make decisions that keep us and our loved ones safe. To support this, we have an inherent negativity bias, which is used to trigger our flight, fight, fear, faint responses. But in the absence of physical threats, our biological responses are more readily triggered by perceived rather than actual threats, which can reduce our cognitive functions. To compound this, repeated exposure can create cognitive distortions, deeper rooted negative perceptions- such as violent crime being more prevalent than reality.

There have been a small number of isolated issues, particularly in parts of the town, but how they have been reported in the media and on social media in particular, creates a narrative that is difficult to challenge. Actual and alleged violent incidents are more readily reported than 10-20 years ago, therefore creating a perception of increased violence. However, the nature of some of the incidents themselves will also be a factor, particularly where weapons are used.

Overall, the surveys show more work is needed to reduce ASB and certain crime types, whilst improving public perception and confidence.

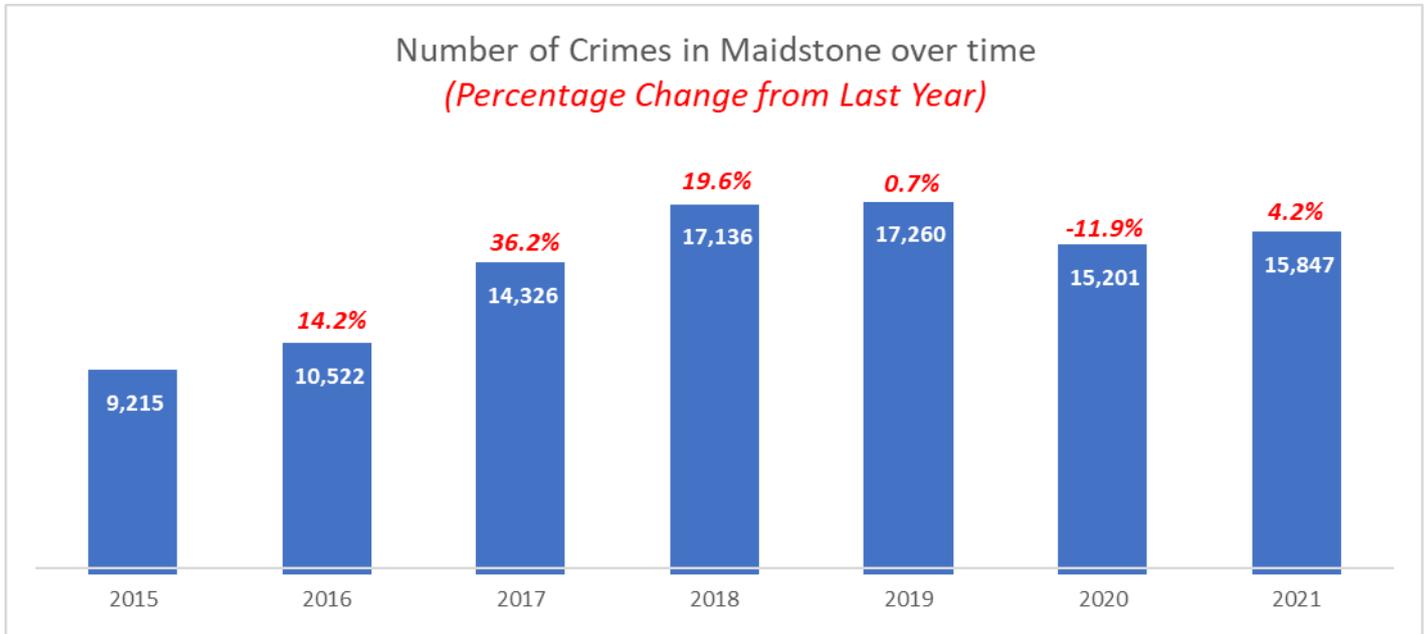
Analysis of Partnership Data

Crime Data and Analysis

Police Crime Data

Total crimes

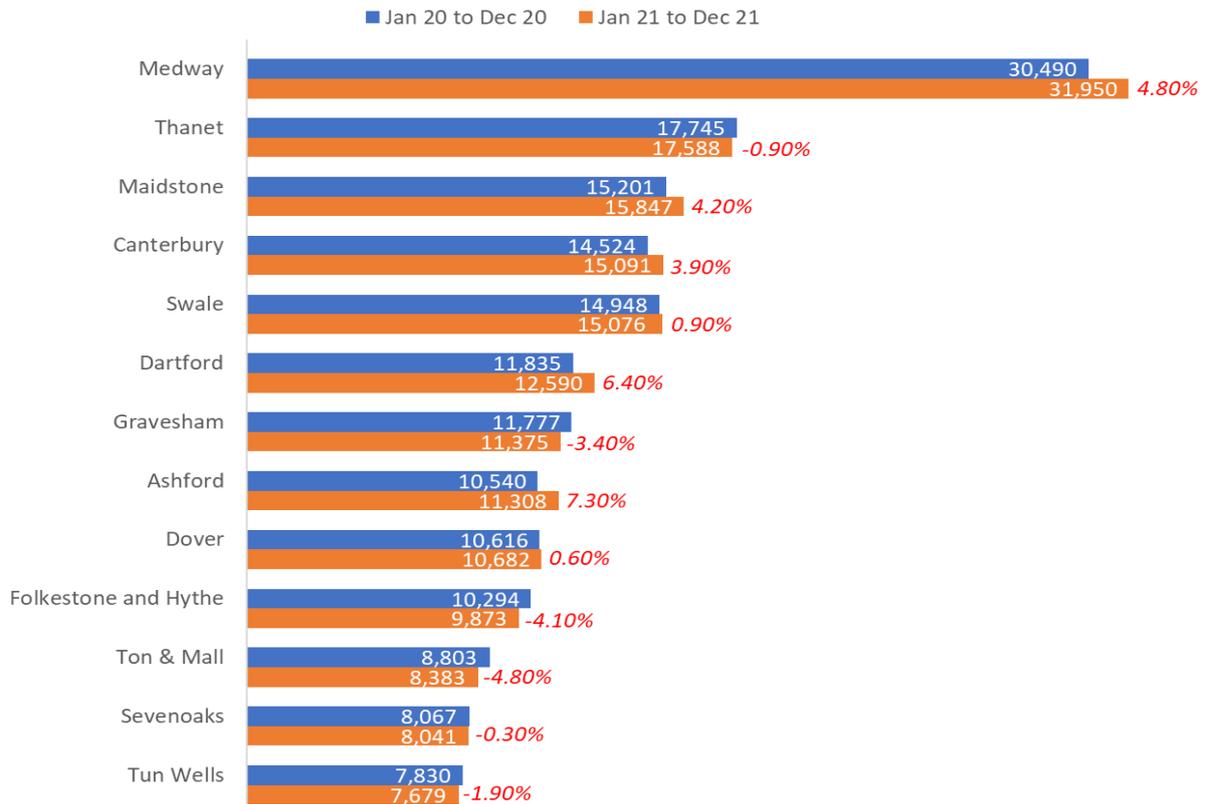
Overall reported crimes in Maidstone borough saw a growth by **4.2%** in 2021 compared with 2020, from a total of **15,201** crimes to **15,847** crimes. The graph here shows how crimes in the Borough have changed over the last seven years.



The increase in the number of crimes in 2021 is in line with the overall Kent increase of **1.6%**, which is believed to be as a direct result of lockdown restrictions last year, which shut down night-time economies, restricted movement without reasonable excuse and saw more people spending time at home.

The graph below shows how the Borough compares to other Kent districts.

Crimes by District
(Percentage Change from last year)

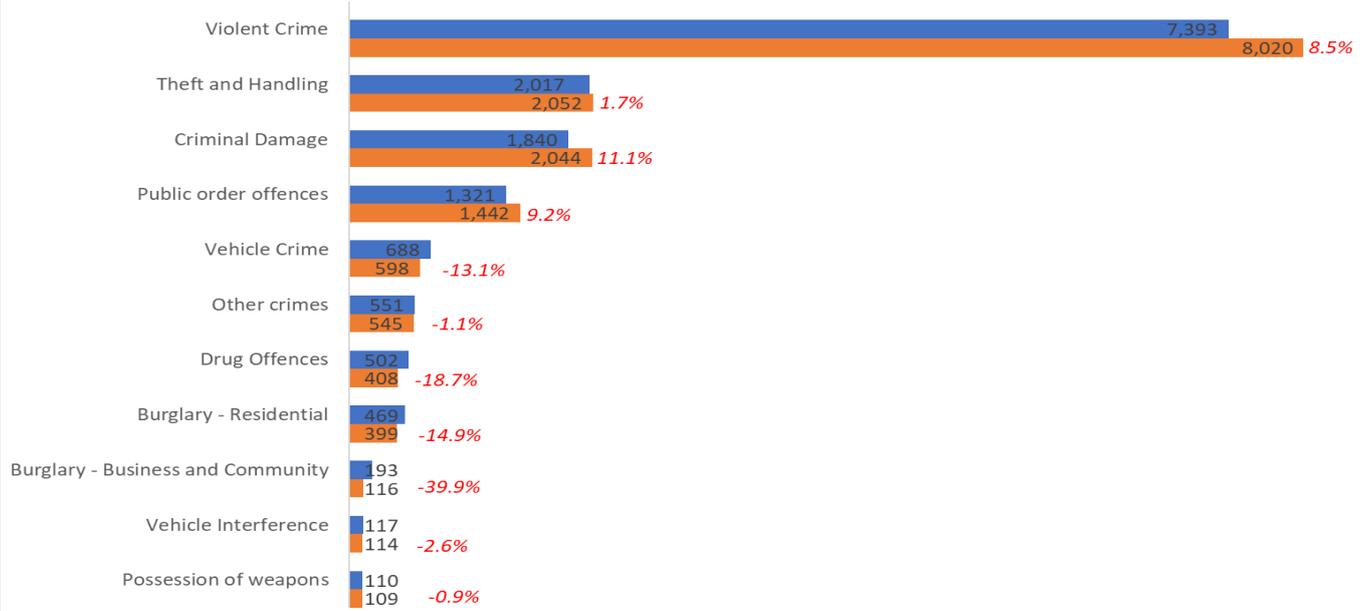


The chart below shows how different crime types have changed in 2021 (current period) compared with 2020 (previous period). Burglary – Business and Community have seen the biggest drop of 39.90% although numbers were already relatively low.

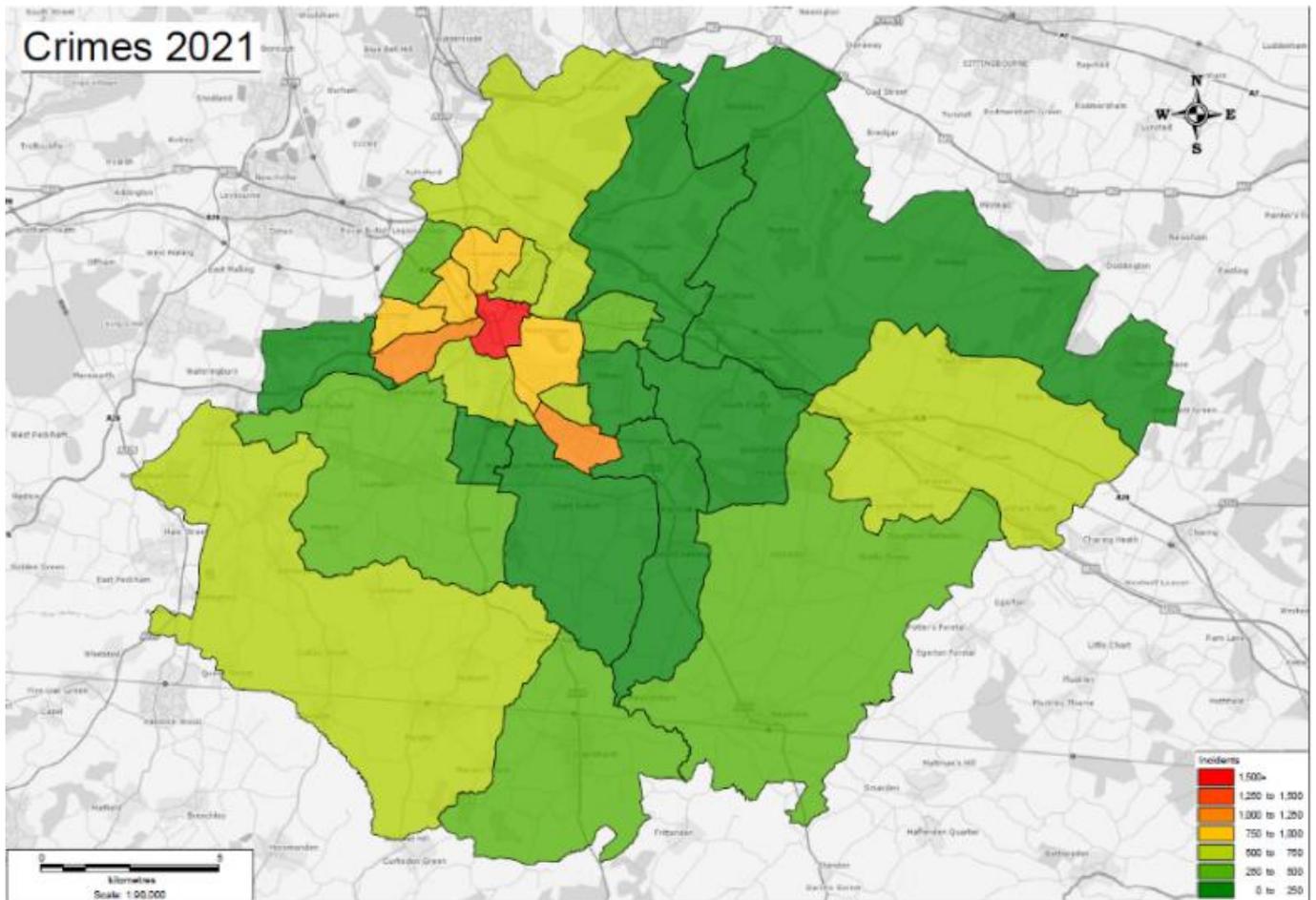
Whilst we have seen a decrease year-on-year in all of the crime categories listed here, public order offences, criminal damage and theft and handling have seen an increase.

Change In The Number of Crimes by Crime Type
(Percentage Change from last year)

■ Jan 20 to Dec 20 ■ Jan 21 to Dec 21



The following map and table shows the distribution of all crime reported to the Police across the borough and how that changed between 2020 and 2021

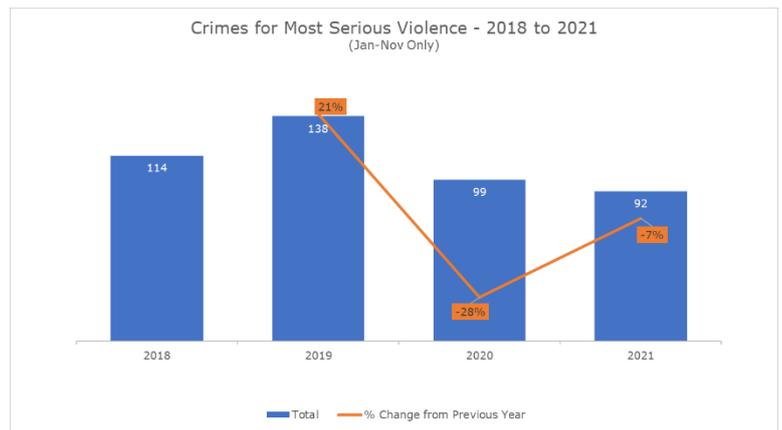


Ward-Offence	Apr-Dec 20	Apr-Dec 21	Change in Crimes	% Change	Ward-Offence	Apr-Dec 20	Apr-Dec 21	Change in Crimes	% Change
Allington	196	205	9	5%	High Street	2370	2795	425	18%
Barming	65	60	-5	-8%	Leeds	91	131	40	44%
Bearsted	189	203	14	7%	Loose	113	86	-27	-24%
BM&CS*	71	115	44	62%	Marden and Yalding	458	447	-11	-2%
Boxley	436	463	27	6%	North	635	592	-43	-7%
Bridge	497	592	95	19%	North Downs	166	166	0	0%
Coxheath and Hunton	304	305	1	0%	Park Wood	887	935	48	5%
Detling and Thurnham	134	108	-26	-19%	Shepway North	554	673	119	21%
Downswood and Otham	139	131	-8	-6%	Shepway South	497	429	-68	-14%
East	543	567	24	4%	South	377	505	128	34%
Fant	707	912	205	29%	Staplehurst	221	329	108	49%
Harrietsham and Lenham	309	431	122	39%	Sutton Valence and Langley	177	118	-59	-33%
Headcorn	277	337	60	22%	Misc	137	147	10	7%
Heath	699	608	-91	-13%					

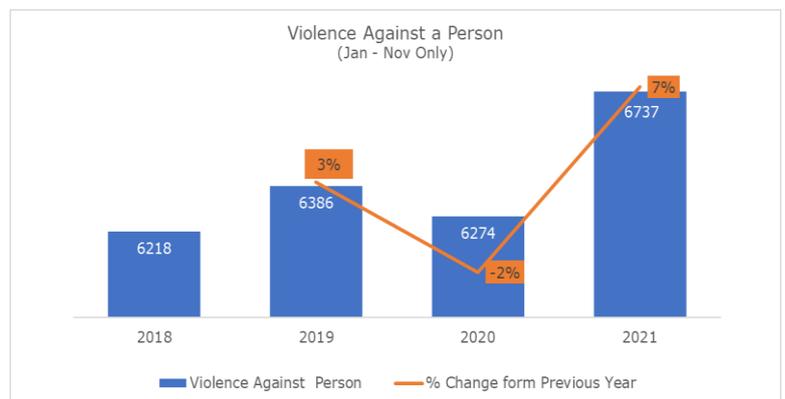
*Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton

Serious, Organised and Violent Crime

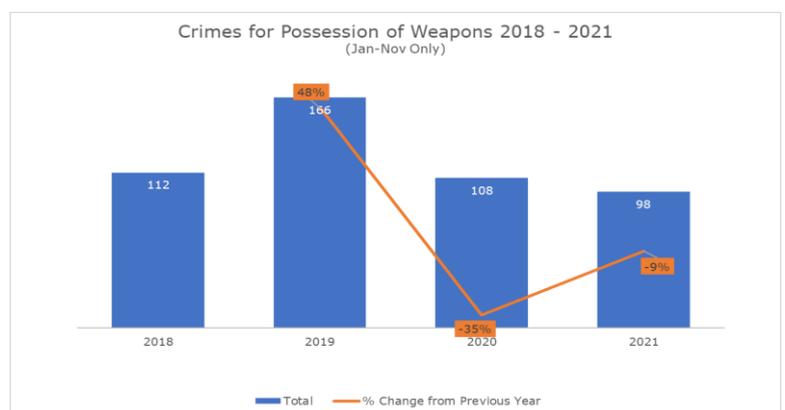
Crimes of most serious violence, which includes Murder, Attempted Murders, Death or serious injury by dangerous driving, Death by careless, inconsiderate driving and Wounding (Grievous Bodily Harm) are shown in this chart. In each year, GBH makes up a significant proportion of the crimes in this category. This was reflected in 2020, where we saw a significant reduction due to the lockdown on the NTE.



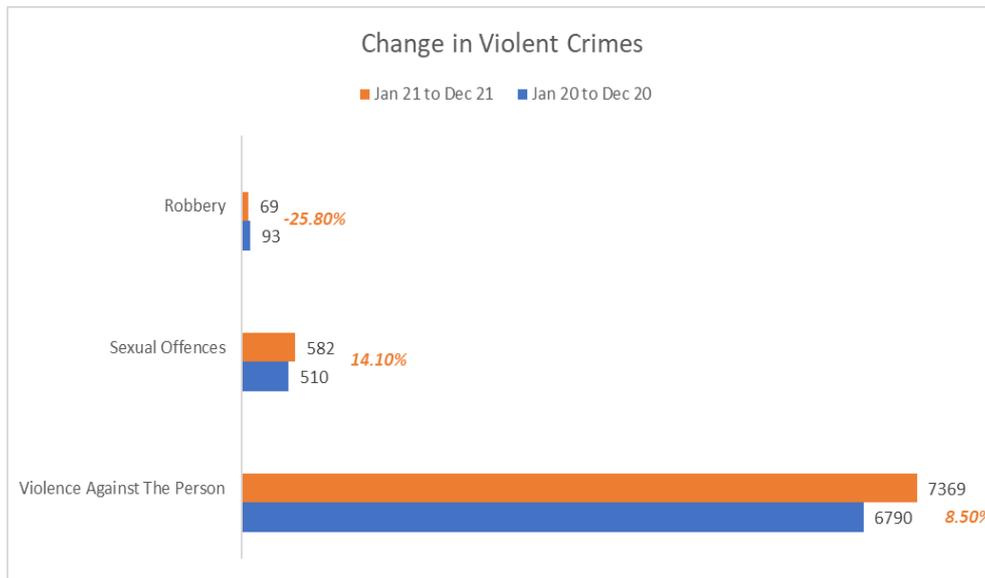
Violence against a person, which includes common assault, actual bodily harm and domestic abuse has not increased significantly across the district.



Offences relating to possession of a weapon remain a relatively low proportion of all crime in Maidstone. In this regard, weapons are not restricted to knives or other blade articles. It can include any item which is or could be used to cause harm. It should though be noted that these offences are often indicative of the number of stop searches undertaken by police officers as part of their preventative work around weapons and drugs.



The chart below shows how Maidstone’s violent crime has changed in 2021 compared to 2020. We have seen an overall **8.5%** growth in violent crimes which is mainly driven by ‘Violence against the person’ as it accounts for 92% of the overall violent crimes. However, there is a significant increase of **14.1%** and **8.9%** in sexual offences and most serious violence compared to the previous period, and whilst the 2020 data was significantly impacted by the pandemic there is a longer-term increase.



Violent crimes, including sexual offences, are largely committed by males. There is now a significant body of evidence to suggest that a public health approach is needed to address a number of factors which disproportionately impact on boys and can lead to increase violent tendencies. A trauma informed approach, alongside awareness raising programmes, such as “Bystander” training will help professionals to understand the push/pull factors for boys in regard to relationships, social pressures, and violence.

Organised Crime Groups

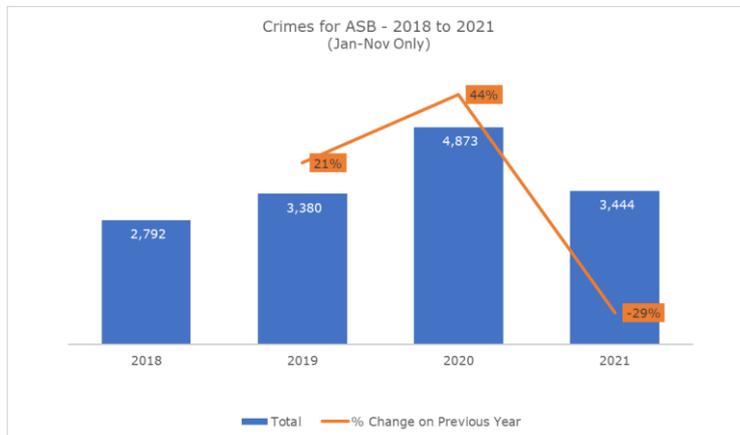
The Serious Organised Crime Panel is still actively working to disrupt the activity of one OCG in the borough. In the last three years, four OCGs have been successfully disrupted and as a result archived.

Anti-social behaviour

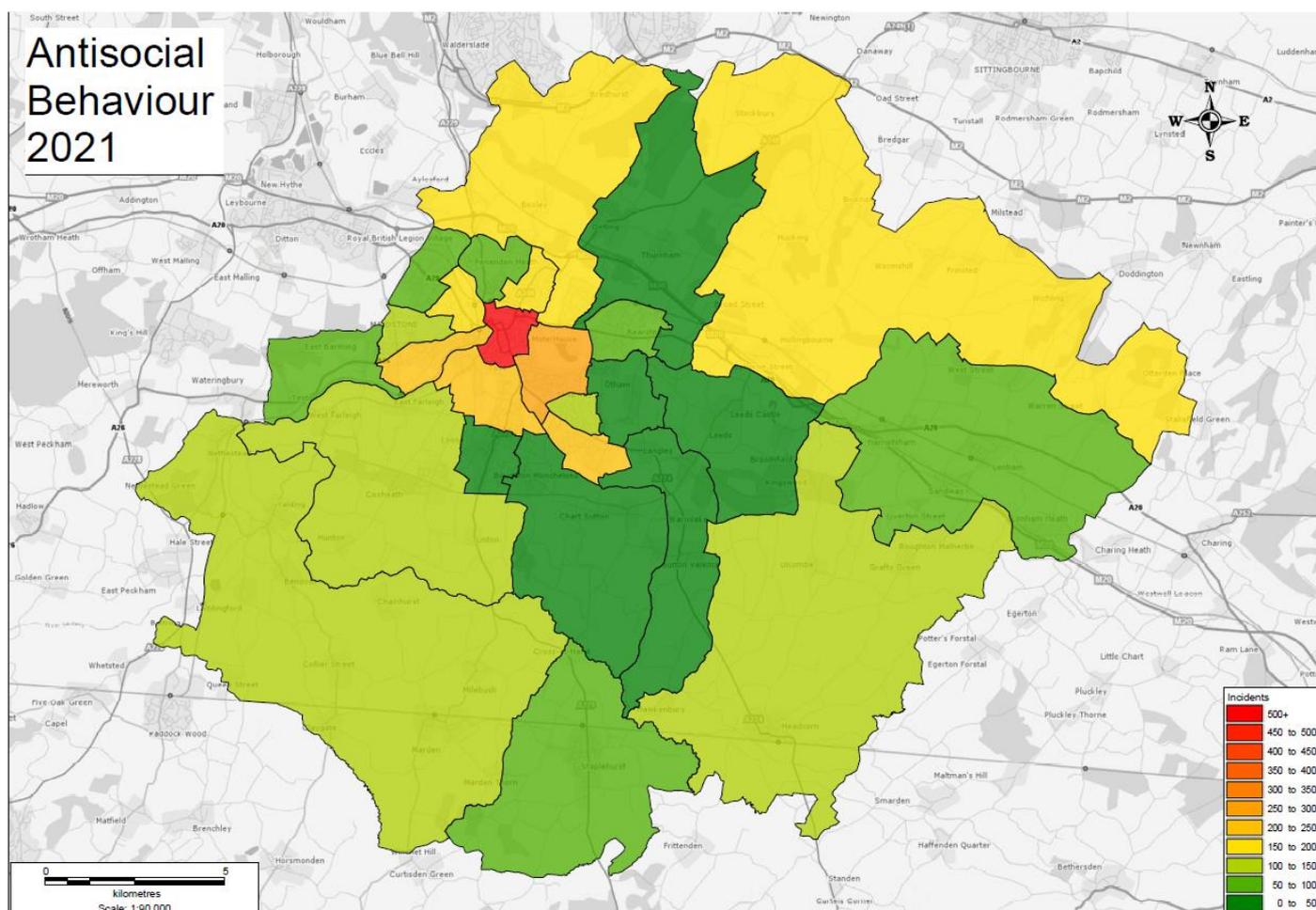
Tackling ASB is one of the biggest challenges we face as a partnership. Resident perceptions and reports to agencies identify a vast range of behaviours considered as anti-social. This can vary considerably depending on location. In the Town Centre this could include drunk and rowdy behaviour in public places, and in rural areas this includes people littering or fly tipping their waste. Reports of ASB to the police and other agencies have increased significantly compared to previous years and can be linked to a variety of factors

Although not recorded as a specific crime, incidents of ASB are recorded by Kent Police, as shown in the chart to the right. ASB has slowly increased over the last 3-4 years peaking in 2020.

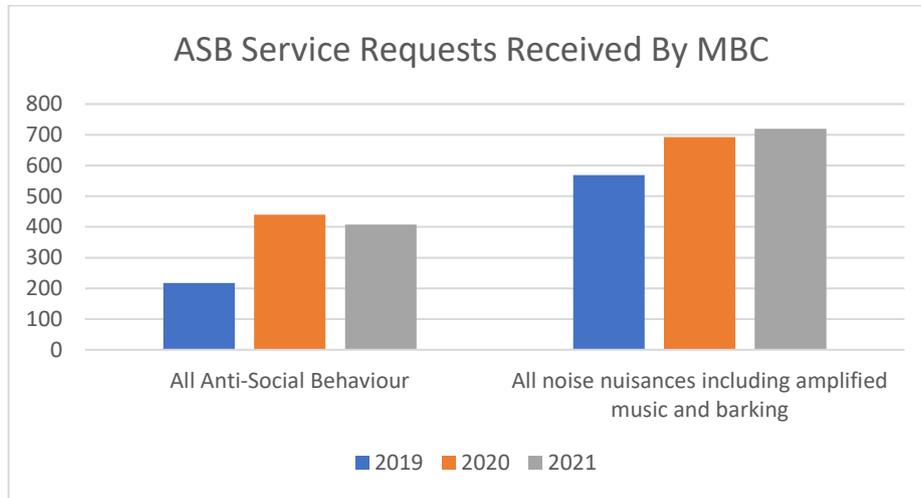
During 2020, ASB incidents increased due to a number of factors attributed to the pandemic. No clubs, no hobbies, just lots of time! 2021 figures are more comparable with the previous years.



The following map shows the distribution of ASB reported to the Police across the borough.



The ASB reported to the Council, as with many partners such as Housing Providers, continues to hold at a level higher than pre-pandemic, in line with police figures. Many other reports are directed straight to police colleagues due to their serious nature. Amplified music (146) and barking dogs (118) remain the most reported area of concern. There has also been an increase in complaints about licensed establishments (109), but most relate to less than 3 reports about an individual premise, therefore not a sustained issue, and have been dealt with informally.

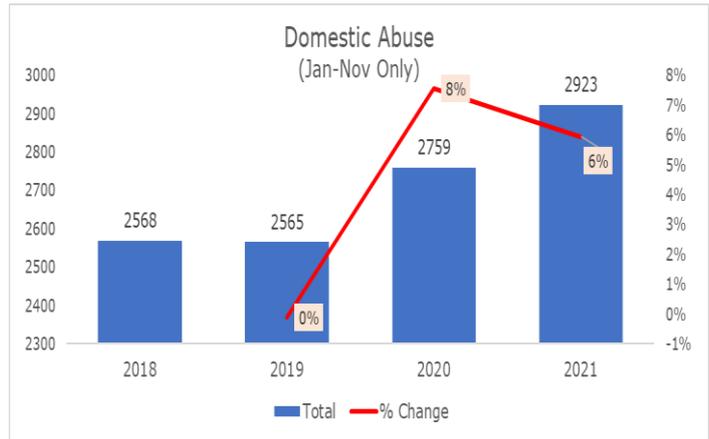


Neighbourhood crime and disorder, including many forms of ASB, has a significant impact on a community. It can lead to significant increases in fear of crime and can become gateway crimes to more serious issues including criminal damage, arson, and burglary. Increases in reported incidents to agencies and increased concern indicated through the public survey strongly suggest the need for a greater focus on challenging certain behaviour and greater awareness of what can and cannot be dealt with as ASB.

Domestic Abuse Data and Analysis

Crime data

Domestic Abuse is often regarded as an under reported crime. Unlike other crimes, a positive trend is often more indicative of more victims feeling able to report incidents. National coverage around domestic abuse, supported by the introduction of new legislation has led to an increased level of awareness and the availability of services to support victims.

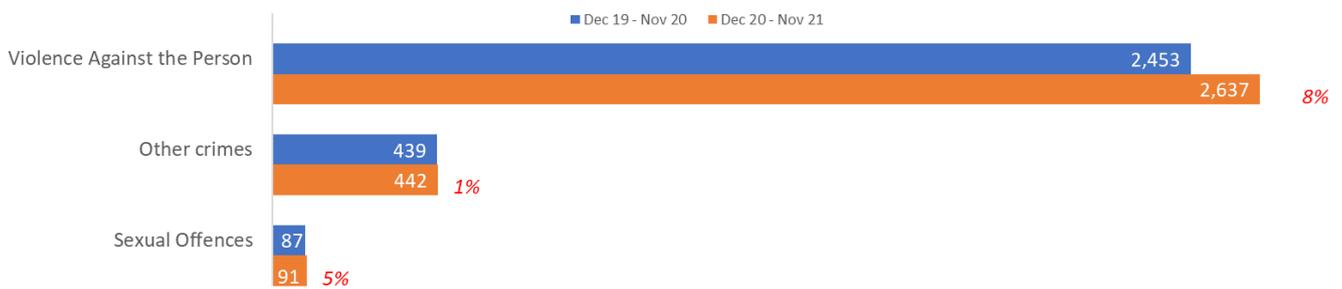


Whilst there have been increases in reports about Violence against the Person, the most significant increase, in relation to crime types, is the increase around control and coercive offences. After being clarified by legislation as a crime in its own right, recording measures introduced by the home office has seen this crime more readily recognised and recorded.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Violence Against the Person	2,031	2,043	2,275	2,419
- Stalking/Harassment	540	573	623	678
- Coercion and Control	67	78	295	355
Sexual Offences	104	79	84	82
- Rape	66	60	56	44
Other crimes	433	443	400	422
Total	2,568	2,565	2,759	2,923

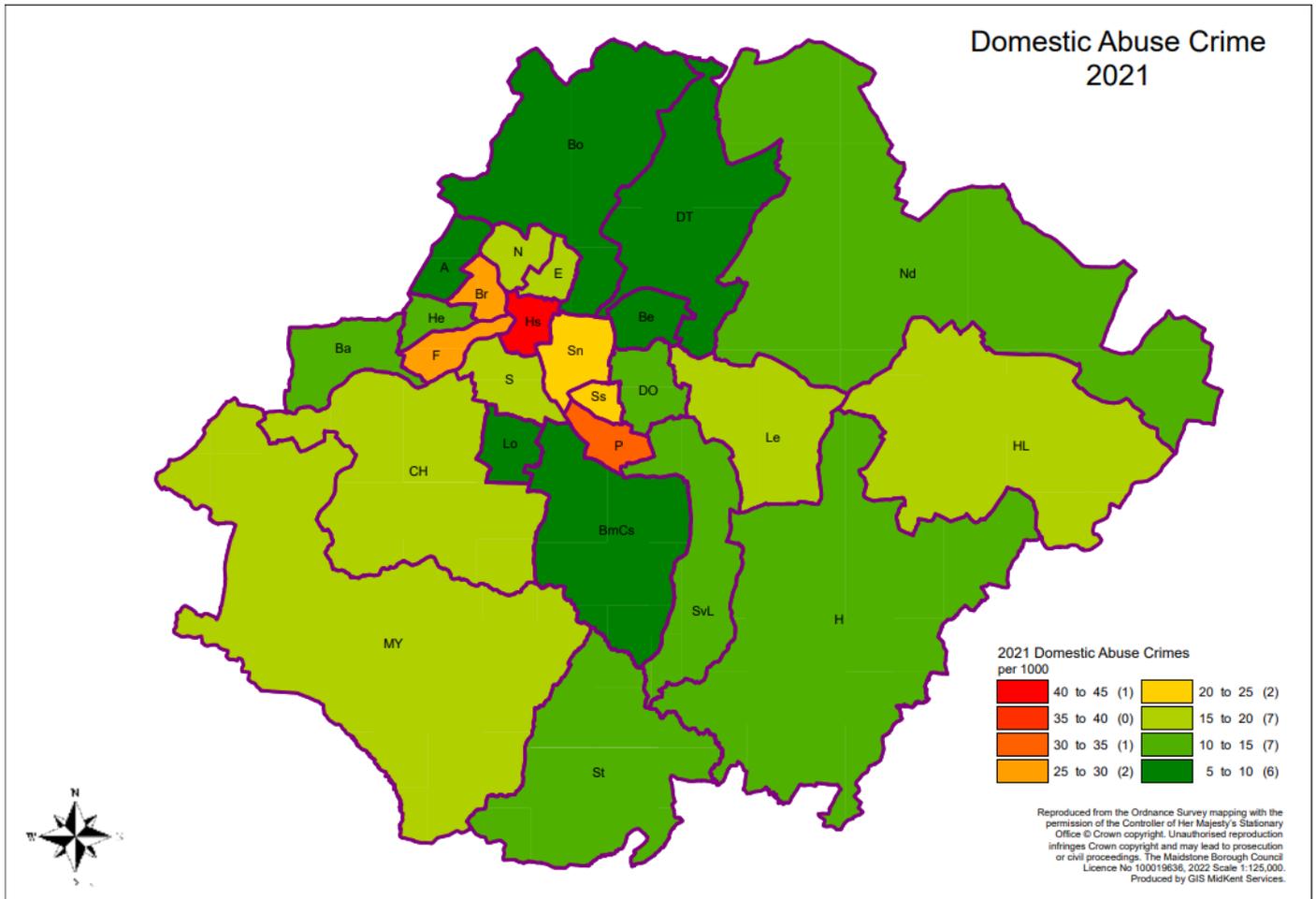
Currently, **31%** of all crime in Maidstone Borough is related to Domestic Abuse and this equates to **61%** of all violent crime.

Change In The Number of Domestic Abuse Crimes
(Percentage Change from Last Year)

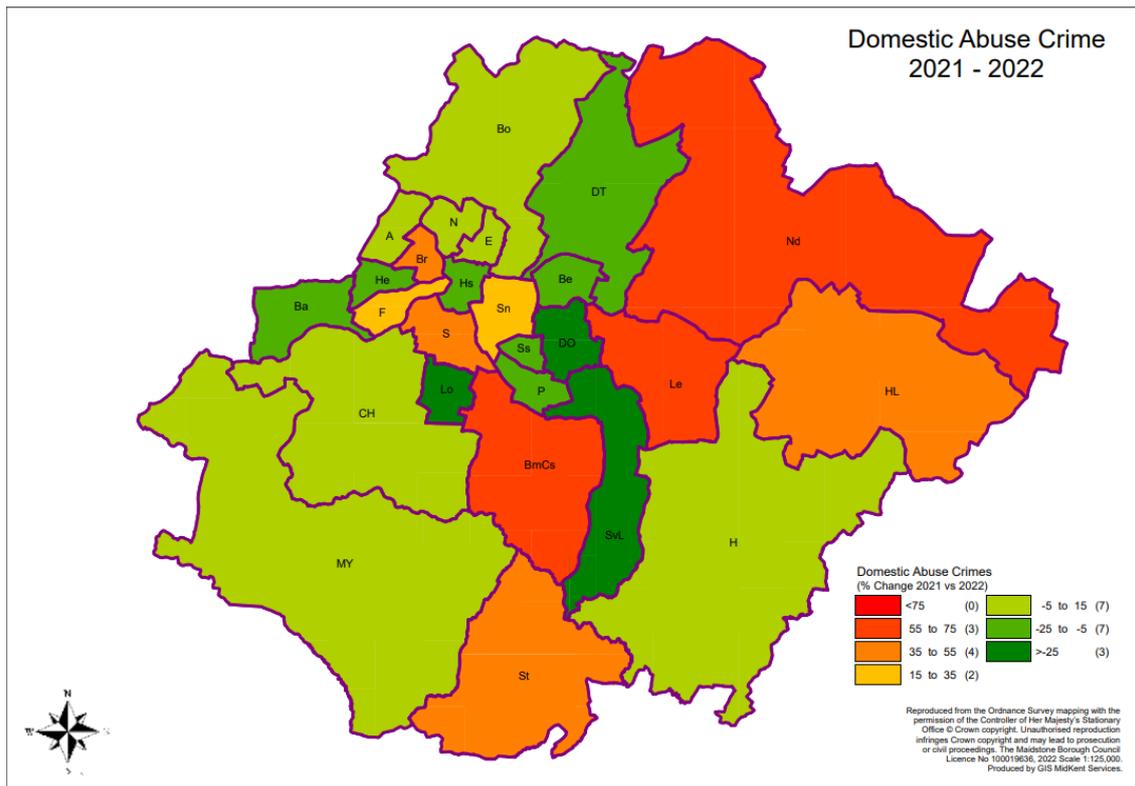


Recorded domestic abuse has gone up by 2.8% and this is mainly driven by 'Violence Against the Person' with an increase of 8% which accounts for 54.7% of all domestic abuse crimes. Sexual offences increased by 4.4% and other domestic abuse crimes increased by 0.7%.

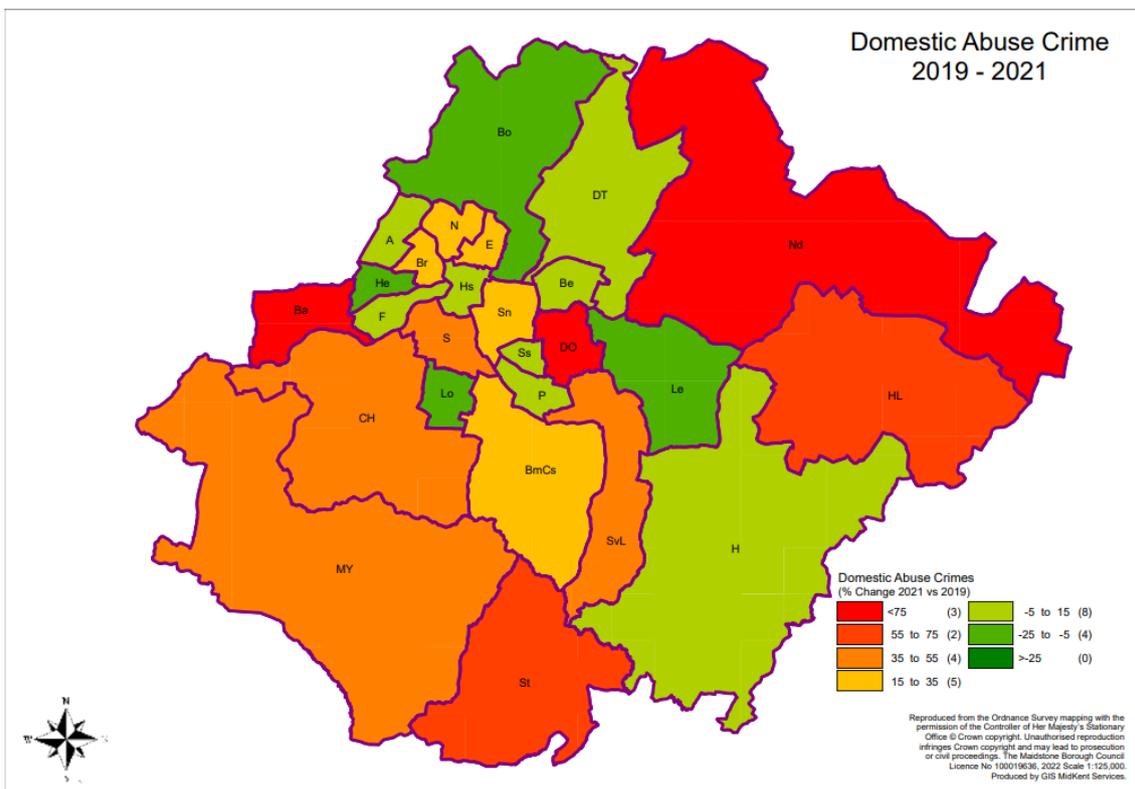
Ward based analysis of the domestic abuse crimes showed that the High Street Ward remained the ward with the highest amount recorded domestic abuse. The heat map below shows the amount of Domestic Abuse Crimes per ward per 1000 people in the population.



The heat map below provides an indication of how domestic abuse crimes have changed in comparison to 2021.

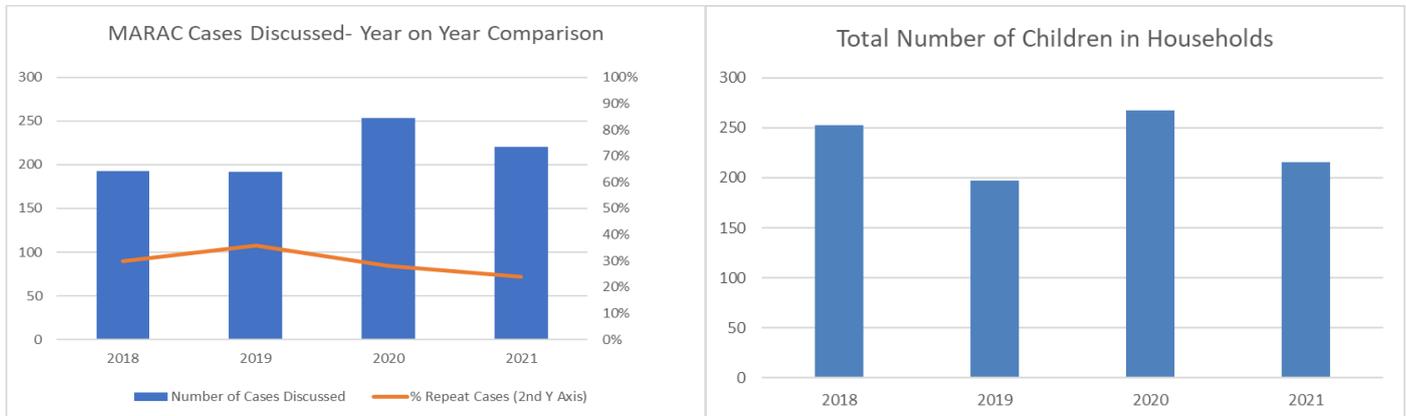


However, we know Domestic Abuse crimes were impacted by lockdowns in 2020, so comparison with 2019, below, shows how Domestic Abuse Crimes are disproportionately increasing in more rural areas, with Barming Ward (167%), Downswood and Otham (94%) and North Downs (74%) increasing the most. Boxley (-25%) and Heath (15%), showed the largest decreases, per 1000 people.



Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARACs)

MARACs are meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, a risk-focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn together to support the victim. MARACs now cover all victims aged 16 years and over. In 2021 the meetings moved from being monthly to fortnightly to allow more case to be heard in a more effective way.

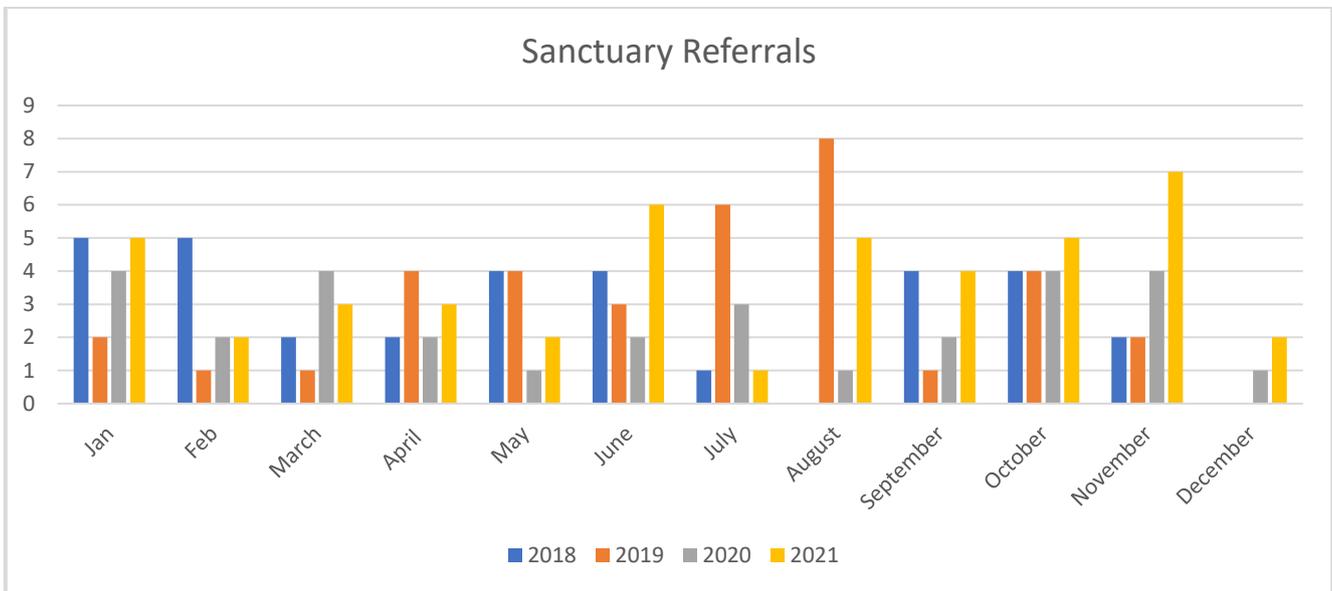


Maidstone has had 220 MARAC cases in 2021, down from 267 in 2020, but still higher than pre-pandemic. 24 % (53) were repeat cases, which continues to be on a negative trend since 2019. There were 216 children living in these households. Under the new DA Act, outlined below, all children in these circumstances are to be considered victims. The voice of the child is considered in all MARAC cases.

Sanctuary Data

Sanctuary assessments are undertaken by the Community Protection team, usually on referral from MARAC or the IDVA service, where a victim of domestic abuse expresses a desire to stay in their family home but requires assistance to do so. Where it is deemed proportionate to do so, officers attend the victim's property and undertake an assessment. The assessment determines what works need to be undertaken in order to safeguard the victim against their abuser. This can include a variety of property alterations, including changing locks and installing PIR lights, which are undertaken by the handy man service provided in partnership with Involve Kent.

Sanctuary referrals has an increase in 2021 of 36.4% against 2020. That increase is mainly resulted by increase in the numbers in July and August.



One Stop Shop data

Domestic Abuse 'One Stop Shops' offer free advice, information and support from a range of agencies under one roof to help victims of domestic abuse. Whilst Maidstone's one stop shop was ordinarily hosted as a face-to-face service, the pandemic meant this was not possible. During the last two years a virtual One Stop Shop has been offered. Uptake of the service has not been as high as would have been expected. In November 2021 efforts were made to reopen a face-to-face offer at the Community Hub in Marsham Street. In order to draw more support from partners and housing services, the new Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Co-ordinator at MBC is now overseeing the delivery of this service.

Domestic Abuse is everybody's business

The Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021 and places new duties on local authorities to help tackle domestic abuse. New legislation will drive changes that will:

- promote awareness
- protect and support victims
- transform the justice response
- improve performance of Domestic Abuse Services
- Recognise children as victims in their own right- not witnesses to abuse

Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council officers are taking an active role on the Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the Maidstone Domestic Abuse Forum to help shape the new Kent-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy and develop services for people experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, staff have been updated on changes made to the homelessness legislation brought about by the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act, which will be reflected in the review of the Council's new Housing Strategy due to be adopted in the Summer of 2022.

Youth Services

Youth Justice

Age of Offenders	Count
Age 12	1
Age 13	1
Age 14	1
Age 15	10
Age 16	5
Age 17 +	12

Looking at the latest period, April 2020 to March 2021, youth offences have decreased from **87 to 74**, a decrease of **13 (15%)**. There has been a decrease in the number of individuals committing crime, from **39 to 30 (23.1%)**. The breakdown of these offenders' age groups is shown in the table on the left.

Around **0.2%** of the youth population have been convicted of an offence. The table below shows that the total number of youth offences has continued to decrease in the last six years.

Period	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Count	184	132	97	110	87	74

Partnership approach to protecting young people

The Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020 saw the closure of many activities which provide natural diversions. Schools closed and later moved to virtual learning. Sports clubs and leisure activities were suspended for large parts of the year. For our young people, who are biologically programmed to explore the freedoms that come with maturity and to engage in risk taking behaviour, the world became very small. A generation, often referred to as "entitled" faced restrictions that no generation has faced since the world wars. Lockdown created unique challenges for some, such as access to IT equipment for online learning. Some taught their parents and grandparents how to socialize, virtually.

Two years on and the impact of the pandemic is still a considerable factor when assessing the health of our young people as a cohort. Absenteeism in schools continues to rise, not only as a result of the continuing spread of the virus, but schools are also reporting increasingly worrying reports of young people whose mental health or fear is presenting them with challenges when trying to return to school. In some cases, parents are also not allowing their children to leave home to attend schools. Similar concerns can be seen in regard exclusions. Current levels are lower when compared to 2016, 2017 and 2018 but exclusions are increasing again despite known anxiety issues and the impact the pandemic has had on wellbeing and safeguarding of our YP.

Safeguarding concerns are also increasing now that children are able to attend school and issues like their safety, care and Domestic Abuse are being highlighted in the safe space the school provides. In general, there are concerns about not only the educational but also the emotional development of young people. The following table demonstrates how our children's education and emotional development has been impacted by the pandemic.

Their current age	Their School Year Now	Their Last Normal School Year
15-16 years old	Year 11	Year 8
14-15 years old	Year 10	Year 7
13-14 years old	Year 9	Year 6
12-13 years old	Year 8	Year 5
11-12 years old	Year 7	Year 4
10-11 years old	Year 6	Year 3
9-10 years old	Year 5	Year 2
8-9 years old	Year 4	Year 1
7-8 years old	Year 3	Reception
6-7 years old	Year 2	Never
5-6 years old	Year 1	Never
4-5 years old	Reception	Never

Although less prevalent than earlier in the pandemic, there is still evidence of increased risk taking, some of which escalates to anti-social behaviour and criminal acts. This was often associated with tribal confidence, which occurs naturally as group sizes grow. Comments and reports are still, incorrectly, referring to "gangs of youths". It remains imperative that when referring to groups of young people that the term 'gang' is not assigned without evidence, thought or research; to assume that a group of young people are a gang would not serve the priorities of the SMP and reduces the effectiveness of work on confirmed gang members. Halls worth and Young (2006) defined the following:

- Peer Group - A small, unorganised, transient grouping occupying the same space with a common history. Crime is not integral to their self-definition.
- Street Group - A relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.
- An Organised Criminal Network/Gang - A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain. The gain is mostly measured in financial terms. Crime is their 'occupation'.

These definitions are important in order to focus resources and priorities where required. There are currently no identified youth gangs in Maidstone. Peer Groups who are identified to professionals are work with through the DCSM or Task Force to minimise their risk taking and to improve their behaviour.

Social Distancing and Plan B restrictions on agencies have continued to present challenges for professionals. It restricted their ability to engage and safeguard young people. Group work has been restitched and face to face work with individuals has been limited to those most vulnerable. Feedback through partner agencies has identified that young people are craving the opportunity to get support in face to face and in a safe environment. Youth workers themselves need time and the right opportunities to build meaningful relationships to help make sustainable changes.

When necessary, plans were put in place around certain individuals and their families to disrupt behaviour and to support parents and carers. In some cases, for older young people, enforcement action was taken which included restrictions on who they could associate with and where they could go and when. However, a High Court appeal decision in 2020, that a council had no power to issue a Community Protection Notice in the name of a parent concerning the conduct of their child, does create challenges around the use of powers to require parents and guardians to take responsibility for their children’s behaviour. When used they are issued in relation to things that parents can control, such as curfews, access to motorbikes, etc.

The DCSM has continued to develop and evolve with engagement of a wider range of professionals in keeping young people safe. In 2021 the group discussed 18 young people who had been specifically referred to the group due to concerns over their behaviour. This included young people who were at risk of exploitation (sexual, financial, etc.). Many of the young people identified are at risk of exclusion from school or are already undertaking a managed school move. Often their behaviour demonstrates higher levels of risk taking and as a result they have come to the attention of Kent Police, Youth Justice and Youth Services, including Mental Health services. We have seen examples of young people who have been exposed to violence and abuse in the home and have identified their ACEs in order to ensure better support. Referrals into support services, such as Infozone, St Giles Trust, Switch, Oasis, etc. has seen many of the young people make positive changes and reduce their risks and the harm they were causing.

Alongside work with individuals, the DCSM has also worked to identify and assess locations of concern. These locations have included Brenchley Gardens, North Week Street, Whatman Park as well as businesses that have been suspected of exploiting young people. Contextual Safeguarding Location Assessments are undertaken by the partnership in ASB “hot spots” or locations of concern. As developed by the University of Bedfordshire, the surveys utilise a Neighbourhood Assessment Triangle (fig.1), focussing on three key factors:

- Understanding the needs of children and young people (including groups of young people) who spend time in the location
- Finding out about who has (or could have) guardianship capacity in the location (i.e. who are the people invested in the location being safe for everyone)
- Any relevant Community and Environmental factors linked to the location

The assessments can be used to focus partnership resources, improve local youth provision, or support changes to the locations.

Any trends identified by way of repeat suspects/victims and locations are raised at the Protecting Vulnerable People Panel (PVP) for strategic oversight and additional taskings to be identified which may support existing operations. Vice versa, any intelligence raised at PVP will be relayed at DCSM to inform our discussions and planning.

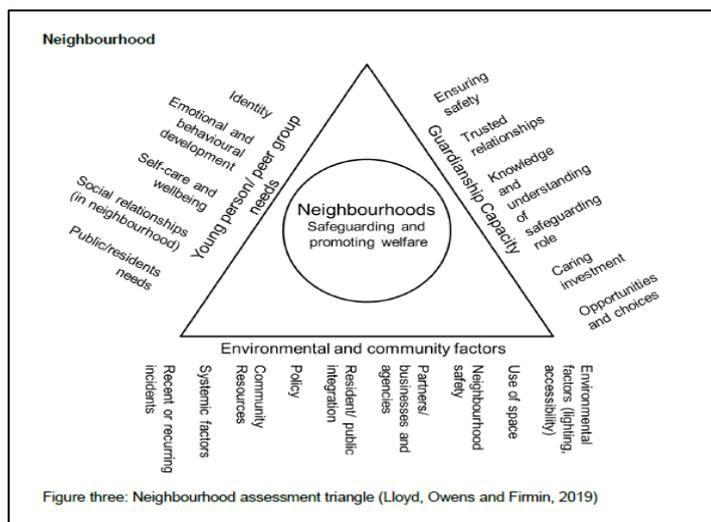


Fig1. Neighbourhood Assessment Triangle for Location Assessments

Each meeting benefits from the following inputs:

- VRU Co-ordinator- intelligence and trends in the area in relation to violence in U25s. Young People identified at risk of exploitation/involvement in County Lines from the Prevent, Prepare Protect Board (PPP) in order to determine the appropriate interventions are required to support and divert. Update on any commissioned services.
- Police Missing and Child Exploitation Team (MCET)- intelligence and trends relating missing and exploited children.
- Children & Young People's Mental Health Service- Updates on young people open to support services
- Outreach- Monthly updates in relation to the Outreach undertaken by Switch, Salus and KCC youth services at hot spot locations.
- Training inputs- frequent inputs from services, charities and initiatives that support young people.

Through the DCSM and other working practices the Youth Offender Teams at KCC and Kent Police continue work with the partnership to implement alternatives, such as behaviour agreements and voluntary Buddi Tags, a relatively new initiative where young offenders voluntarily wear a GPS tag to encourage them to not to undertake anti-social or criminal behaviour. The risk presented by County Lines Gangs, Gangs from other areas and Gang Culture remains a threat in Maidstone but these are proactively policed. The local RAPTOR team actively shuts down Gangs trying to establish themselves in Maidstone. The addition of a safeguarding officer to the RAPTOR team, alongside the introduction of "Schools Officers" and the Hidden Harm and Repeat Problem Solving (HHARP) team by Kent Police will provide even more opportunity to incorporate contextual safeguarding and the voice of the child into everyday police and partnership work.

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Substance Misuse

Substance misuse relates to the use of drugs, alcohol and includes New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) previously known as 'legal highs'.

Kent police's recorded drug offences include both offences of drug supply and possession. Under this category of crime Maidstone has seen a **(-18.7%)**

decrease in drug offences in 2021 compared to 2020. This is a decrease from **502** offences to **408** offences (**94** crimes less this year). Overall, Kent saw a decrease of (-4.8%) of drug offences for the rolling year January 2021 to December 2021 with 216 crimes less than last year.

Drug offences are primarily identified and detected through proactive policing. The increase in recorded offences has been attributed to Maidstone Police's successful use of stop search powers and the use of intelligence reports to build successful warrant packages that have enabled warrants to be obtained, resulting in seizure of substantial amounts of money and illegal substances. Substance Misuse is also a consideration at the weekly partnership meeting known as the Community Safety Vulnerability Group (CSVG) where vulnerable individuals with complex needs are supported by members of the SMP.



-18.7%

**Decrease in
Drug offences**

Needle Finds



55.5%↓

Needles Found/retrieved

The following table shows the official annual figures for needle finds in the borough removed by the council's waste management service for the period December 2018 to November 2021. These figures include the contents of external needle bins that are strategically placed in the town to try to reduce discarded needles. Needles were 1117 found/retrieved in the current period, which is a 55.5% decrease from 2511.

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
2018/2019	196	143	164	84	205	87	85	85	203	120	136	113	1,621
2019/2020	97	59	54	138	1,542	117	27	104	128	107	121	17	2,511
2020/2021	74	135	55	38	0	14	539	34	42	23	120	43	1117

This significant decrease has been linked largely to the work of the Outreach team within the Council's Housing Team. The dedicated work of the team, supported by colleagues who specialise in Mental Health and Substance Misuse, has seen a number of problematic individuals supported and their behaviour modified so as to reduce the risk of needles being deposited. Within the borough the top five locations for needle finds are as follows:

Dec-19 to Nov-20		Dec-20 to Nov-21	
Location	Count	Location	Count
Alexander Street	1500	Sutton Rd Cemei	500
River Steps	231	Ampitheatre	102
Amphitheatre	222	River Steps	59
Rose Garden	110	Whatman Park	38
Wallis Avenue	52	Rose Garden	28

Significant reductions have been seen in the top 5 locations. The 500 found in Sutton Road Cemetery was the deposit of one secure box of needles by someone unknown.

Mental Health

Under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act the police have the power to remove a person from a public place, when they appear to be suffering from a mental disorder to a place of safety. It cannot be used to remove people from their own home, or someone else's home. Figures for Section 136 use in the borough (where an individual is sectioned for their own or others safety) have decreased, in 2021 it was used **89** times, as opposed to **114** in 2020 a **22% (-25)** decrease.



22%
**Decrease in
the use of
Section 136**

Last year in Maidstone, mental health referrals into younger adult (18-64) services (including acute/community recovery services) saw a decrease of **4.1%** to **1247** cases compared to **1298** the previous year. In older adults (65+) there was a decrease of **2.9%** to **866** cases compared to **892** the previous year.

Mental Health still matters

One of the largest concerns associated with the pandemic has been the impact of Mental Health. The Public Health England report, Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing surveillance report, as updated in February 2021*, identified that mental health has been impacted by the national lockdowns. Anxiety, depression, loneliness, and poor life satisfaction were notably significantly higher, in relation to the 1st lockdown. A survey undertaken by MBC in 2020, in relation to the first pandemic lockdown, showed that 52% of the 1245 respondents' felt they had experienced at least a fairly negative impact on their mental health as a result of the pandemic. The ongoing nature of the pandemic means that the full extent of the mental health impact has not yet been assessed. It is also too early to determine whether suicide has increased as a result of the pandemic. Mental Health remains a factor in most cases brought to the CSVG. It has also been a factor in complex ASB cases. In one case, the mental health of one individual resulted in over 80 crime reports in relation to his behaviour in a rural community and led to significant levels of anxiety and tension within the community. Once the offender was identified, intensified work programs were put in place to support their needs and a civil injunction put in place to reinforce the need for this individual to take steps to get support and modify their behaviour.

MBC's Outreach Service has continued to actively work with individuals who present as homeless/vulnerable. This service has an integrated Mental Health service for clients and this continues to provide tailored support for the service for people with complex needs.

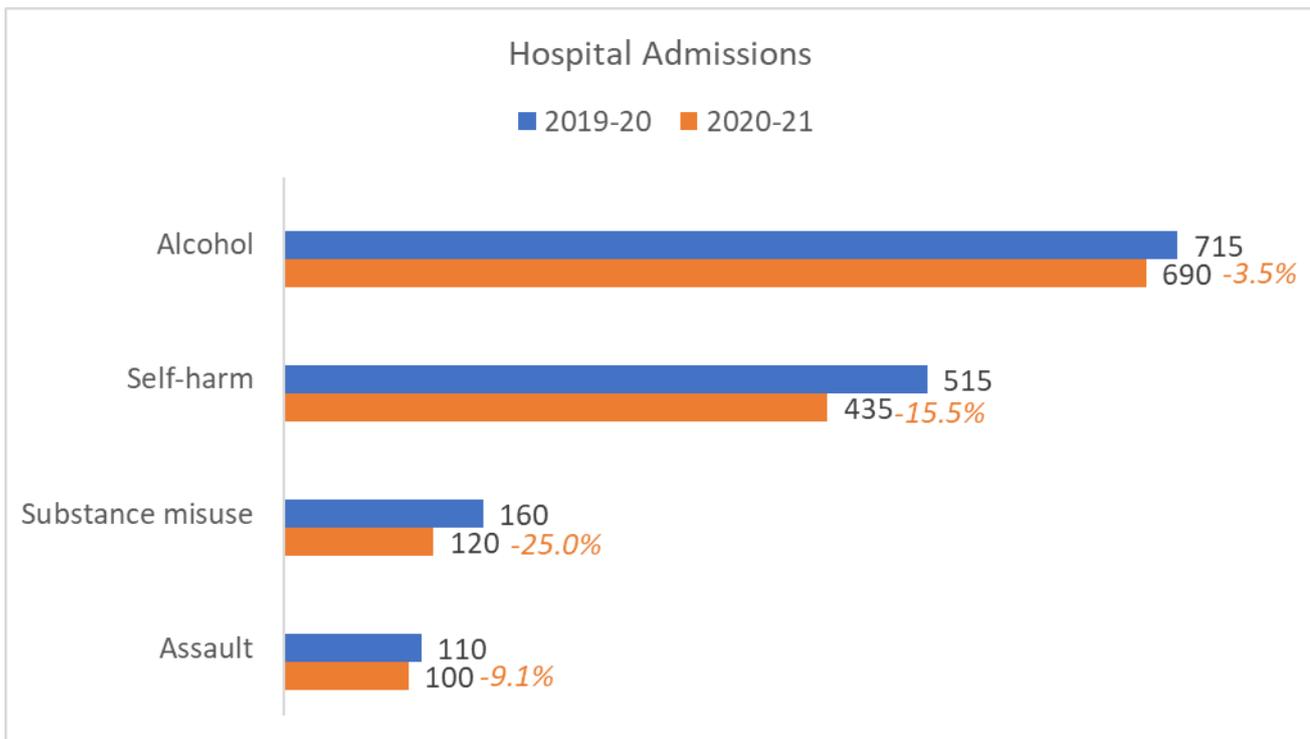
* [COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report)

Update from the Community Safety and Vulnerability Group.

The CSVG has continued to evolve in the last year, in format, personnel and location. The Pandemic and lockdown forced the meeting to move to a virtual platform, but this seems to have improved participation from a wider range of partners who had struggled to attend meetings previously. The meeting regularly hosts 15-17 attendees representing more than 10 partnership agencies and service providers including Kent Police, MBC Community Protection, Mental health, Social Services, Housing (MBC, Goldings Homes, and other providers) KFRS, KCC Wardens, Maidstone Mediation, CGL and MBC Outreach services. Each attendee contributes to the management of the most vulnerable in our district.

Other Relevant Data

Hospital Admissions



The data in regard to Hospital Admissions, which covers the financial year, shows an overall decrease in admissions to hospital. It is likely that this is as a result of the pandemic, where less people were willing to attend hospitals due to the pandemic. Admissions for Alcohol and Substance Misuse account for 60% of admissions, with self-harm accounting for 33%. This supports the need to continue to work to reduce the impact of both substance misuse and support those with mental health needs.

Hate Crime

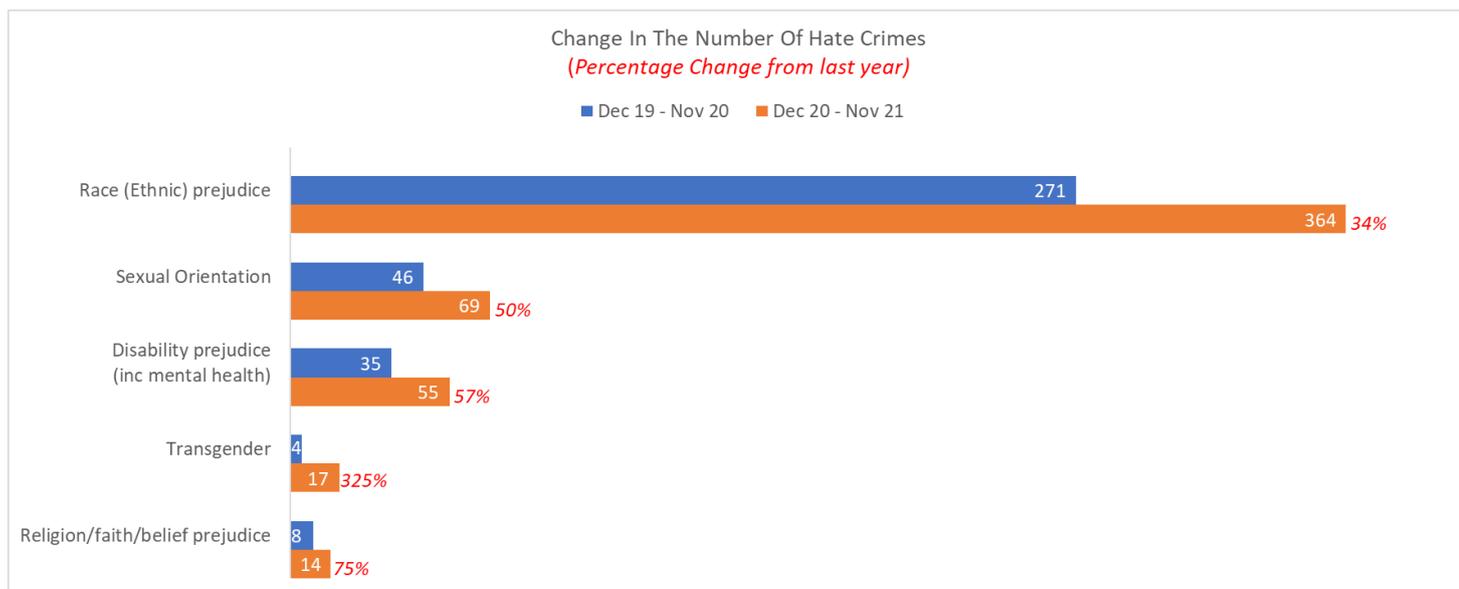
37.1%

**Increase in
Hate Crimes**



The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or transgender identity.

Over the last reporting period (Dec 20 to Nov 21) there have been **521** reported hate crimes this is compared to **380** the previous year a decrease of **141** cases. Race prejudice accounts for **70%** of all hate crimes, followed by Sexual Orientation hate related crimes which accounts for 13% of all hate crimes. The table below shows a breakdown of the hate crimes.



Within the police Community Safety Unit (CSU) a specialist role of Community Liaison Officer works with victims of hate crime and liaises directly with community groups to address any community fears.

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Data

The IOM process is a multi-agency approach to manage individuals, both young and adult, who are at risk of causing the most harm to their communities. The emphasis has moved away from solely Serious and Acquisitive Crime (SAC) to a more Threat, Risk and Harm approach which includes not only SAC, but Domestic Abuse (DA), Serious Violence, Gang activity, Organised Crime Groups (OCG), Troubled Families, Terrorism, Trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

As of 27/10/2021, the current IOM combined cohort sits at **108** individuals, which is a - **36.5% decrease (-62 individuals)** compared to the cohort in August which saw **170** individuals. Of the 108 individuals, West Division represents **28%** of the cohort followed by East Division (**44%**) and North (**29%**). There were **228** arrests made of **57** individuals whilst on IOM. Maidstone accounts for **29% (66 offences)** of the offences committed on IOM.



As one of the largest districts in Kent, it was recognised that some areas in Maidstone have disproportionate levels of crime, social/economic deprivation, and health inequality. Taking the learning from other Kent Task Forces and Public Health led approaches both nationally and internationally, it was decided to implement the Maidstone Task Force, launching in September 2020.

The Task Force's objective is to seek to redress these imbalances, to work with communities to provide resilience and long-term/permanent improvement to not only crime levels, but also health and well-being. The taskforce built on the existing strengths of the Safer Maidstone Partnership and the multi-agency team is now well established and working to provide enhanced joined up solutions to complex multi factorial problems.

Based in a collaborative workspace within Maidstone House, the MTF has been focussed on the combined wards of Shepway South and Shepway North. Analysis of the available crime data revealed high levels of ASB, particularly around the shops and in housing blocks, and Domestic Abuse in both Wards. Analysis of the health data revealed that residents in the wards:

- had a lower life expectancy and fewer healthy years lived than the national average and other parts of the borough (Male and Female)
- were more likely to die prematurely (Coronary Heart Disease, Cardiovascular disease, Cancer)
- experienced higher rates of mental illness
- represented greater proportion of residents claiming benefits than the national average
- had the highest A&E attendance and admission rates for the borough



Delivery in the focus areas is centred around "Building Community Engagement and Cohesion". Using the problem-solving model, known as OSARA, the task force is taking a partnership approach to challenging some of the social norms that are particular to the wards. Tackling ASB in partnership with Golding Homes, who have provided a dedicated officer into the task force, has seen some improvement in the area according to residents.

Further details of the achievements of the task force in 2021 can be found in the following table.

TASK FORCE IN ACTION IN 2021

Enforcement

33.4% DECREASE IN HARMFUL CRIME- Cambridge Harm Score.

196 ARRESTS including drug, weapon, domestic abuse, and indecent exposure offences.

110 OFFENCES CHARGED with many still under investigation and 15 cautioned

384 STOP SEARCHES- detecting drugs, weapons and to provide reassurance to the community, with 127 positive searches (33% positive) resulting in 57 arrests

635 INTEL REPORTS- submitted to the Central Intelligence Unit.

SEIZED OVER £115,000- in street value drugs.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS' OPERATIONS- to reduce including arrests, patrols and awareness raising.

ASB OPERATIONS FOR HALLOWEEN AND FIREWORK NIGHT- Proactive policing and engagement which led to a significant reduction in incidents in the area.

100% ORIGINAL 15 "ASB NOMINALS" ENFORCEMENT PLANS ARCHIVED- Plans put in place to target and safeguard a number of individuals known to have caused ASB and Crime have been closed due to the target's inactivity or court actions.

65 TRAFFIC OFFENCES REPORTED- for offences in and around Shepway

50 VEHICLES SEIZED for various offences

HIGH RISK OFFENDERS LOCATED AND ARRESTED- in joint crackdown with Probation

Engagement

KCC EARLY YEARS "RECONNECT" FAMILY FUNDAY- MTF worked closely with KCC Early Help to plan and run a Community Fun Day.

"IGNITE YOUR FUTURE" EMPLOYMENT EVENT- MTF worked with the Department for Work & Pensions and the National Careers Service.

ART CLASSES FOR 55+ - Kent Arts and Wellbeing, supported by the MTF, are offering 4 x 10-week courses in a range of visual arts activities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY SURGERIES- MTF are running fortnightly drop-in sessions introduced.

CHANGE, GROW, LIVE (CGL) AND CLARION DROP IN AT MTF COMMUNITY HUB- community 'drop-in sessions' for substance mis-use and mental health support and domestic abuse support respectively.

DAYS OF ACTION- MTF co-ordinated and delivered a number of days of action in relation to drug abuse, exploitation and violence against women and girls.

SELF DEFENSE COURSES- MTF arranged two pilot sessions were hosted in October. There was approximately 40 women and girls at each session. Sessions are being developed for 2022.

THE MANOR MUGA RESTORATION- MTF secured funding to restore the area. Community Payback have been engaged to work on the project.

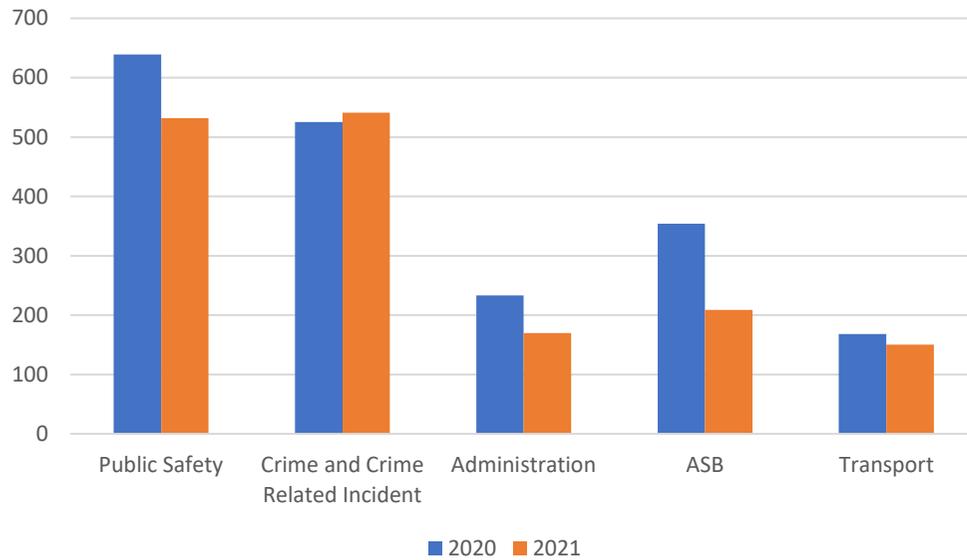
KNIFE CRIME AWARENESS- Year 6 Primary School students taken to Ben Kinsella Trust facility in Barking for a specialist input based around Ben.

SHEPWAY INSIGHT PROJECT- Specialists are undertaking a project to provide a better understanding of obesity and healthy living in the area.

DEMENTIA CAFÉ LAUNCHING- MTF have worked with AGE UK and Heart of Kent Hospice to open a Dementia CAFÉ in the Shepway in Spring 2022

EARLY HELP CHRISTMAS PARTY- MTF supported a party for young families in the Shepway area. Officers engaged with families and one officer even donned "the red suit" to surprise the children.

Change in the Number of Calls by Type (Shepway)



17% overall reduction is all calls to the police. Calls about Public Safety reduced by 18%, whilst calls regarding Crime and Crime Related Incidents showed a slight increase (3%). By far the biggest overall reduction was calls regarding ASB, which reduced significantly (41%) in the last year.

In October 2021, to coincide with the anniversary of the Task Force's activity in the Shepway area. A review was undertaken of the crime and ASB reports over that time. The key findings were as follows:

- **Harm reduced despite increase in reported crime**
- **Improved public confidence can be inferred from increased reporting of crime & incidents, although data for a direct assessment is not available.**

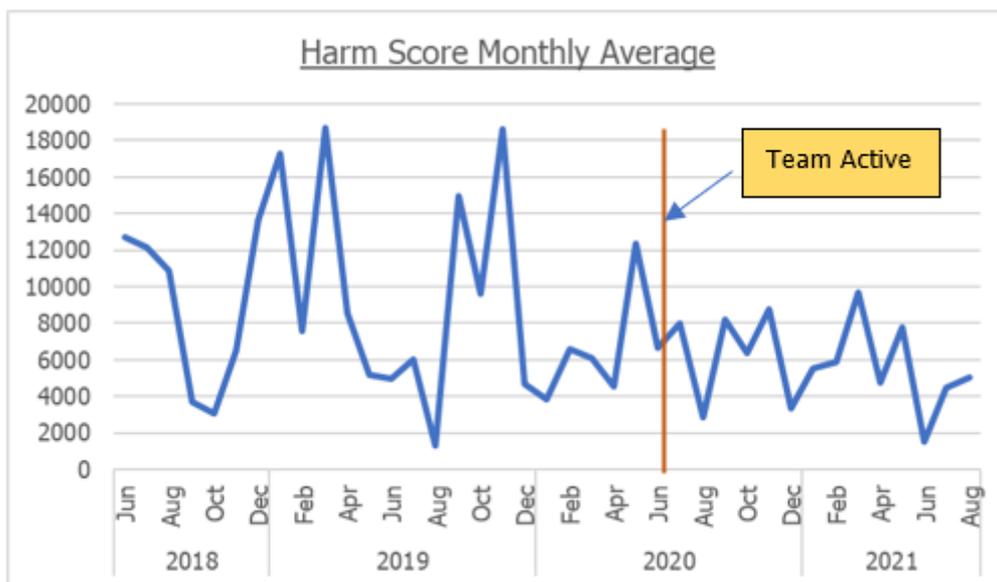
The graph below shows the trend for all Crime during the reporting period. A reduction in All Crime was a stated goal for the team, it is useful to see this overall context when assessing more specific crime types. When analysed the data showed that the monthly average had increased slightly.



Further analysis showed that reported crime increased by an average of 2 offences per month after the team became active, a rise of 1.8%. In comparison the monthly average of crime across the county fell by 4.1% and across the Maidstone district by 3.3%. It is important though to understand exactly what these figures represent. They are the average number of offences reported each month to the force. They are not necessarily the actual number of offences that were committed as some offences will not be reported to the force by the victim for a variety of reasons. One of the stated aims of the team was to improve public confidence and engagement. A consequence of doing this can be an increase in the number of offences being reported to the force. It does not increase the number actually occurring but does mean that a greater proportion come to our attention. Over recent years increases in the number of Domestic Abuse, Rape and Sexual Offences recorded by all police forces nationally have been attributed to improvements in how forces engage with victims and the service provided to them, which has led to more victims coming forward to report. These rises in crime do not therefore represent a real rise in the number of offences being committed. In the context of the Maidstone Task Force, the greater and more consistent presence they provided has led to victims of crime being more likely to report offences.

This assertion is further evidenced by using the Cambridge Harm Score, which gives scores offences based upon the assessed seriousness of the offence. With regards to the type of offences that the team would deal with (other offences such as Rape and Sexual Assaults have a different dynamic), many of the previously unreported offences would be fairly minor in nature with victims simply not being bothered to go through the process of reporting them. It is therefore likely that it is these minor offences with low harm scores that would be contributing to the increase in reported crime. More serious offences though, which would always have a much higher reporting rate would not be subject to any change in reporting owing to the impact of the team. If the team is actually reducing the levels of crime committed, this would be reflected in the overall harm score, which would reduce. The impact of increased reporting of minor offences on the score would be overtaken by the reduction in more serious offences that carry a greater harm score. Despite the rise in reported crime therefore it is possible that the harm score for the areas can still be lower.

The graph below shows that the average monthly harm score has fallen since the team became active, in fact by 33.4%. The figures for the whole county and for the Maidstone district show average monthly harm falling by 8.8% and 13% respectively. Achieving this was a stated aim upon the creation of the team and has undoubtedly been achieved. Although recorded crime has shown a slight increase, this increase in minor offences is more than offset by a reduction in more serious offending, as demonstrated by the fall in harm score. This supports the assertion that the increase in recorded crime is not an indication that more crime is actually being committed, in fact the opposite is true as the harm score has fallen and to a far greater extent than seen either at county or district level.



Community Protection Team Activity

The following provides a breakdown of service requests received by the community protection.

Description	2019	2020	2021	Comments
All Anti-social behaviour complaints	217	440	408	ASB continues to hold at a level higher than pre-pandemic, in line with police figures. Many other reports are directed straight to police colleagues due to their serious nature.
All noise nuisances including amplified music and barking	569	693	719	Amplified music (146) and barking dogs (118) remain the most reported area of concern. There has been an increase in the use of CPWs to which reflects this. There has also been an increase in complaints about licensed establishments (109), but most relate to less than 3 reports about an individual premise, therefore not a sustained issue, and have been dealt with informally.
Other Nuisance (Odour, dust etc.)	208	349	257	The pandemic saw an increase in nuisance complaints, particularly between neighbours. In 2021, significantly less bonfire smoke complaints saw this figure return to similar, pre-pandemic, levels. Most reports related to one off incidents and advice was provided to both parties.
Dangerous and Nuisance dogs (Not strays)	57	47	52	No significant change.
Dog Fouling	12	30	28	No significant change.
Straying and lost dogs' enquiries	411	261	212	No significant change with levels remaining lower than pre-pandemic. There is though, a concern about backlash from the number of dogs brought during the pandemic, with more people working at home. With restrictions lifting there is a concern that abandoned dogs may rise.
Street trading enquiries/complaints	11	9	5	No significant change.

Enforcement Action

The Community Protection Notice remains one of the most effective tools in the Community Safety tool kit. Introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Community Protection Notices (CPNs) allow authorised officers to require those who are behaving in an antisocial way or are allowing that behaviour to occur to take action to prevent its recurrence. It is a legislative requirement to issue a written warning prior to issuing a CPN, which are still proving to be the most effective aspect of this power as compliance with warnings is relatively high. In 2021, whilst CPW numbers increased, CPNs did not increase respectively, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the warnings in challenging behaviour.

Breakdown of Community Protection Warnings Issued

Reason	2019	2020	2021
ASB	13	28	26
Nuisance/Dangerous Dog (Inc. Barking)	5	8	19
Noise (Inc. with ASB)	4	18	25
Nuisance	1	14	15
Planning related issues	0	3	0
Unauthorised Encampments	5	2	0
Total	28	74	85

Breakdown of Community Protection Notices Issued

Reason	2019	2020	2021
ASB	1	20	4
Nuisance/Dangerous Dog (Inc. Barking)	0	0	0
Noise (Inc. with ASB)	1	2	6
Nuisance	0	8	3
Planning related issues	0	3	0
Unauthorised Encampments	1	1	0
Total	6	34	13

In order to confirm whether best performance was being achieved. A benchmarking FOI was sent to all Kent Local authorities and our CIPFA nearest neighbour authorities. The FOI establish how often they utilised the Community Protection Notice power.

The following tables demonstrate that Maidstone is, on average, using this power far more effectively and more often than either cohort

2018/19	AVG	MAX
Kent	18	145
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	11	48
Maidstone	42	

2019/20	AVG	MAX
Kent	10	26
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	18	96
Maidstone	22	

2020/21	AVG	MAX
Kent	28	154
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	11	48
Maidstone	86	

Unauthorised Encampments

In 2019 the CPT introduced the use of ASB powers to challenge the behaviour of those individuals or groups who created unauthorised encampments in the borough. This led to a significant reduction in the impact the encampments were having on our communities. In 2020 this trend continued with all, but one encampment removed within hours of first engagement by the team.

Year	No. Encampments	No. Locations	Avg. Time in Situ	Total Days of disruption	No. of
2018	10	6	3.7	37	
2019	7	5	1	11	
2020	6	5	10.5	67	
2021	1	1	1	1	

As a result of the pandemic, additional safeguarding was introduced around encampments and one of the encampments was permitted to in situ for 62 days. In 2021, only one encampment was investigated and removed within 1 working day. We have had no further encampments since March 2021.

Community Trigger

The 'Community Trigger' gives victims of persistent anti-social behaviour the ability to demand a formal case review where the locally defined threshold is met, in order to determine whether there is further action that can be taken. No Community Triggers were requested in 2021.

Key Conclusions and Recommended Changes to the current Community Safety Partnership Plan priorities.

Overview

The SMP continues to develop new levels of synergy across the partnership, with the Maidstone Task Force's multi-agency "public health" approach spreading beyond the confines of its focus area. The partnership has continued to demonstrate agile ways of working to adapt to the continued pressures of the pandemic. The global pandemic continues to impact on how front-line services have operated and how people are behaving. The wider impacts of the pandemic on health and well-being are becoming more obvious but agencies must remain aware of the risk of hidden impacts of the pandemic.

Despite the continued work of the partnership, certain issues are continuing to present challenges that impact on people's fears and the reputation of the Borough, with the town centre itself coming under particular scrutiny.

Whilst most of the 2019-2022 priorities remain relevant to some extent, there is a need to refine and refocus efforts to ensure emerging themes, particularly around ASB and the public perception are incorporated.

Review of Existing Priorities

Keeping children and young people safe

Of the existing priorities, Keeping Children and Young People Safe was listed as the "Most Important" priority for those responding to the Community Safety Survey. Young people are often affected by issues across our priority themes which affect them more deeply, causing longer term damage. The partnership has a pivotal role to play in safeguarding young people from individuals that intend to cause them harm through the supply of drugs and sexual exploitation (CSE). There is growing concern about serious youth violence and the impact of gang culture in our young people, which is putting individuals and communities at risk. Increases in our young people's own fear is leading to a worrying national trend of carrying knives for safety and this must be challenged. Better understanding of violence, from projects and initiatives across the UK, demonstrates the need to adopt a Public Health approach and the need to look at boys and young men in particular. Males are disproportionately involved in violent crimes against women, children and other males and working practices need to adapt to demonstrate the need to challenge learnt behaviours and to put in place systems and services that will ensure all violence is reduced. The recommendation is that "Keeping Children and Young People Safe" remains a priority.

Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking).

Domestic Abuse remains a national priority, requiring everyone to play their role in breaking the silence of abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021 and places new duties on local authorities to help tackle domestic abuse. The SMP, through the Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the Maidstone Domestic Abuse Forum, should remain focused on supporting victims, challenging perpetrators, creating survivors, and raising awareness.

In addition to safeguarding victims of abuse, the SMP, through its wider CSP Plan should adopt a trauma informed approach to ensure empathy is shown to those whose life has been impacted by adverse childhood experiences, whilst ensuring that their ACEs do not define them. Males are disproportionately involved in violent crimes against women, children and other males and working practices need to adapt to demonstrate the need to challenge learnt behaviours and to put in place systems and services that will ensure all violence is reduced. The recommendation is that "Reducing the Harm Caused by Domestic Abuse (Including Stalking)" remains a priority.

Protecting our communities against serious, violent, and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)

The Serious Violence Strategy (2018) recognised that a range and powers are held by agencies, such as local authorities, that play a vital role in supporting the police to disrupt serious and organised crime activities in the borough. The Serious and Organised Crime Panel (SOCP) continue to work to disrupt organised crime and reduce violence in the area. Maidstone, due to the appeal of the County Town and our diverse communities, will always present opportunities for organised criminals and we must remain vigilant and active in ensuring Maidstone remains hostile to those who may seek to establish activity in the area.

Serious, violent crimes remain relatively infrequent, but continued effort is needed across all the SMP priorities to ensure services are in place that reduce violence in our district. When incidents do occur, we must also be swift to act to bring those responsible to justice and to support victims.

The pandemic has also highlighted another form of organised crime in relation to the supply of dogs. Changes in people's lifestyles as a result of the pandemic have seen significant increases in demand for puppies in particular. Unlicensed breeders and puppy farms are actively exploiting this demand and a partnership approach is needed to disrupt the illegal activity and to ensure animal welfare standards are met.

The recommendation is that "Protecting Our Communities Against Serious, Violent and Organised Crime (Including Modern-Day Slavery)" remains a priority.

Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community

Substance misuse remains a contributing factor across many aspects of the CSP Plan. It can be a trigger to Anti-social Behaviour and other crimes. It can modify peoples' behaviour altering their risk taking and thus putting them at risk. Or can lead to them causing harm to others. The work of the partnership has significantly reduced the threat caused by complex cases in the town itself, but substance misuse remains prevalent in much of the work undertaken to support the most vulnerable people in the borough. It is also responsible for 60% of Hospital Admissions in the borough. Giving its overarching impact on other priority areas it is recommended that "Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community" becomes a cross-cutting theme, as detailed below.

Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

The ongoing nature of the pandemic means that the full extent of the mental health impact has not yet been assessed. Whilst Mental Health remains an area of concern, it is clear that it is intrinsically linked to a number of work streams, including the other 4 priority areas. Whether it is the control and coercion used by a domestic abuse perpetrator or adverse childhood experiences stunting development in our young people, mental health remains at the heart of the SMP's work. Self-harm also makes up 33% of Hospital Admissions in the borough. Giving its overarching impact on other priority areas it is recommended that "Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community" becomes a cross-cutting theme, as detailed below.

Emerging priorities and themes

New Priority- Provide a safe Town Centre

The surveys undertaken for both adults and young people have highlighted the Town Centre as an area where they feel unsafe. A series of isolated but unacceptable incidents, that have been well documented in the local press, have further tarnished the towns reputation. Analysis of the data shows that there are hotspots within the Town Centre where violent crime and ASB is most prevalent. Parks, such as Brenchley Gardens and other areas of the town have suffered significant reputational damage in recent years due to the behaviour of a small number of individuals. As a results, steps are being taken to protect these areas from unwanted activity.

More so than ever a multi-agency response is needed to pull together both the skills and powers of various partners to tackle not only the more visual concerns, such as people behaving in an intimidating, drinking anti-socially, but to address deeper concerns around domestic violence, substance misuse and the abuse of vulnerable people amongst a small cohort of people who live within the Town.

The Town Centre attracts a great variety of people and due a number of factors, there will be occasional incidents. But we must continue to work to ensure these remain isolated. It will be vital that, alongside the use of robust enforcement powers, work is undertaken to prevent offending in the first place. There are roles for businesses to help ensure there is a culture within in the town that keeps people safe. Whether that is night-time economy venues going beyond the requirements of their licence conditions, or those venues that attract young people taking steps to ensure they provide safeguarding opportunities for those young people in need of support.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Cross-cutting themes are key issues and concerns that intersect with our Core Priorities.

Tackling ASB in Our Communities

Anti-social behaviour means a wide range of unacceptable activity and includes things like vandalism, graffiti and flyposting, nuisance neighbours and intimidating groups taking over public spaces. Anti-social behaviour can ruin lives and create an environment where more serious crime can take hold. As a partnership we have strong and effective powers to deal with anti-social behaviour problems and we must use them to ensure behaviour does not escalate into more serious crimes. In doing so we must ensure we are victim focussed and support the needs of local communities through the Ward Cluster meetings. Our young people are growing up in very challenging times and we must practice empathy, ensuring we safeguard them against dangers in and around their home. We must also support parents in understanding their responsibilities.

Improving Public Perception /Confidence

The surveys undertaken in 2021 and conversations with ward members have highlighted that there is a perception that crime and ASB is increasing in the borough. Whilst that is true, the extent to which it is increasing is disproportionate to the actual crime figures. Within this report we are able to demonstrate the extent to which the partnership is working to reduce crime and ASB and safeguard the vulnerable and young people. However, the public perception is that this is either unsuccessful, or that we are not successfully communicating our efforts or that services are available to support those people affected by crime or ASB.

Taking a public health approach

There is a significant body of evidence that identifies that a public health approach is needed to reduce violence and reduce the wider determinants of crime. Trauma informed practice is imbedded within many service areas delivered by the partnership but there are service gaps where more awareness of ACEs is needed to ensure vulnerable or affected adults and children are supported effectively. Ensuring the wider partnership adopts a public health approach in the delivery of the core priorities will maximise the effectiveness of their outcomes.

Reducing the impact of substance misuse on our community

As detailed in the previous section, the overarching impact of substance misuse on the other priority areas means that its adoption as a cross-cutting theme, will ensure all services look to find ways to minimise the impact on the community.

Safeguarding people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

As detailed in the previous section, the overarching impact of mental health on the other priority areas means that its adoption as a cross-cutting theme, will ensure all services look to find ways to minimise the impact on the community.

Priorities for the Safer Maidstone Partnership for 2022-2023

The information collated for this year's Strategic Assessment, detailed within this document, identifies that the five priorities in the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-2022 remain relevant to some extent. Greater focus is needed in relation to four priority areas, which will be underpinned by four cross-cutting themes:

Priorities

- Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)
- Provide a Safe Town Centre

Cross-cutting themes

- Tackling ASB in Our Communities
- Improving Public Perception /Confidence
- Taking a public health approach
- Reducing the impact of substance misuse on our community
- Safeguarding people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

These priorities are echoed across the SMP with multi-agency working remaining pivotal, especially as each of these areas has and will likely continue to be affected by the pandemic. Our sub-groups and working groups have never been stronger or more diverse in their attendance. As lockdown restrictions are eased, these galvanised partnerships will be critical to help the borough recover.



Appendix 1- Updates on 2019-2022 priorities

Protecting our communities against serious and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)-Delivered through the Serious & Organised Crime Panel

Organised Crime is defined as planned and co-ordinated criminal behaviour and conduct by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. Organised crime in this and other countries recognises neither national borders nor national interests.

Actions currently identified or delivered	Status	Update
Introduce a scheme to promote safer socialising in the borough to prevent / reduce violent crime in the Night Time Economy (NTE).	Ongoing	<p>Impact of Covid</p> <p>Covid-19 continued to play a role in the development of a safer socialising scheme with many NTE venues continuing to be impacted by restrictions and changes in behaviour. An alternative initiative is explained below.</p> <p>Euro 2020</p> <p>NTE saw significant increases in footfall as relaxation of restrictions coincided with the success of the England Football team, reaching the final of Euro 2020. Significant work was undertaken to support licensees, particularly in the Town Centre, in providing safe events. The period was largely successful with police managing the crowds that gathered in Jubilee Square after each England game. The tournament was marred by ugly scenes after the final, which were scene across the country and at Wembley Stadium itself. A thorough investigation following, utilising CCTV, body worn cameras and inputs from licensees and partners, lead to several arrests for the disorder and assaults on officers in the town. The investigation also found an element within those causing the trouble who were in town to cause a disturbance and not to watch the football specifically.</p> <p>Violence Against Women and Girls a local and national concern</p> <p>The tragic murders of Sarah Everard and PCSO Julia James made Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) a national priority.</p>

With both murders linked intrinsically to Kent, Kent Police were disproportionately impacted, not only with the resources needed to support the investigations, but also in the need to ensure Kent residents that they were safe. The Chief Constable and Police Crime Commissioner addressed an audience of 125 residents, Councilors, residents, and industry specialists to convey their commitment to ensuring Kent Police officers would work with partners to ensure Women and Girls could have confidence in the police force.

The CPT, in partnership with Kent Police, Clarion and One Maidstone applied to the Home Office for funding to launch several initiatives to improve "Safety of Women at Night" but were unsuccessful owing to the fund being massively oversubscribed. Despite not being able to secure the additional funding, the areas of work identified in the bid, are still being developed utilising alternative funding and resources where appropriate as follows:

- **Best Bar None replaces Safer Socialising**

A working group has been developed to look at introducing the Best Bar None scheme. This National initiative is being supported County wide by Kent Police, encouraging NTE businesses to go above and beyond when it comes to keeping not only their venue safe but in taking an active role in promoting a safe culture within the surrounding community. The scheme, which we hope to launch in Spring 2022, will see businesses assessed against various criteria and initiatives. Work is ongoing to secure local sponsorship and participation in the scheme that, whilst voluntary, is likely to grow as businesses compete for recognition. The desired Outcomes for this project include not only a reduction in violence in the NTE, but an increase in consumer confidence and a culture that will attract similarly successful business to join the NTE.

- **Bystander training**

Bystander Intervention training is an approach developed in by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and brought to Kent by the Kent and Medway VRU. Through the training, practitioners, such as Youth Workers, Sports Coaches and Security Staff, who regularly interact with young people, are trained to understand how to work with young people who might be affected by violence, including knife crime. The Bystander approach is centered around the idea that anyone can make a difference, and that, 'good people can do good things when faced with challenging situations. The training planned for 2022 will provide attendees with the knowledge and resources to work with young people and have conversations about the difference young people can make to those around them. This approach, which has seen significant reductions in Violent Crime in Scotland, will ultimately lead to young people themselves taking steps to prevent situations from escalating by "not being a bystander, but by being a friend".

Cost Effective CCTV Control Room reintroduced.

Following a successful pilot, a new long-term arrangement has been put in place with One Maidstone and The Mall. As part of the initiative One Maidstone funded an upgrade to the Mall security office to create a 24-hour control room to actively monitor the CCTV across the Town Centre. The operatives actively support Police officers in detecting crime, dealing with incidents and in providing evidence to support investigations and arrests. Whilst serious violent incidents in town have been limited, there have been a few that have received significant media attention. The CCTV footage associated with these incidents was utilised to enable Kent Police to act very swiftly and make the necessary arrests, often within just a few hours of the incident itself.

Disruption of criminal enterprises and Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) including puppy farms, county line gangs and brothels within the district

Ongoing

In the year 2021, Maidstone Community Policing Team (MCPT) have successfully disrupted and dismantled significant criminal activities spanning multiple crime types across the Kent Police Control Strategy.

To highlight a few examples, in early 2021, a large, sophisticated and well established OCG was identified operating in Maidstone, with links to Money Laundering, Drug Supply, Human Trafficking and Firearms. After weeks of intelligence gathering, it was identified that this OCG was much larger than first thought and controlled a significant amount of businesses.

The activities of this OCG were disrupted significantly with multiple warrants executed resulting in the arrests of 7 persons and the seizure of a large amount of drugs and cash. On a separate occasion, a vehicle was identified and stopped with two people inside, one of whom had been wanted for 6 months was found with £10,000 cash and in control of several drug supply phone lines, all of which were seized thereby effectively taking them out. Both are now in prison. Responsibility for managing this OCG now sits with Serious Crime, and MCPT continue to disrupt and gather intelligence on OCG members.

Drug supply gangs have been identified in the last year as an increasing issue with Kent, particularly seen in large Cannabis Cultivations and Cocaine supply.

MCPT in the last year have executed warrants at two such large scale Cannabis farms, resulting in arrests, and have also conducted several proactive stops of vehicle linked to Cocaine supply lines, resulting in the arrests of a further four drug runners and further cocaine and cash seized. Intelligence gained from these arrests is building a bigger picture which this coming year it is hoped will result in further disruption.

In addition to tackling drug supply in Maidstone, MCPT in 2021 continued working alongside colleagues in Serious Crime to identify and safeguard victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation whilst working to identify and bring to justice the offenders. To this end, MCPT activity led to serious crime investigations and the identification of a human trafficking OCG. As part of this work, MCPT have identified and attended numerous brothels around Maidstone often housing suspected trafficked female sex workers. These females have subsequently been safeguarded and efforts made to track down those profiting from their exploitation. As a result of this work, throughout 2021 MCPT have been involved in the arrests of at least 10 persons suspected to control prostitution for gain, resulting in jail time for several of these, with the rest still under investigation.

MCPT also proactively targeted persons committing burglaries and vehicle thefts. This work seeks to ensure recidivist offenders are monitored and any identified offences are quickly and robustly followed up. Several stolen vehicles have subsequently been recovered following execution of warrants and proactive vehicle stops including a stolen high value Range Rover being recovered near Staplehurst along with a large amount of cocaine being found. More recently, following a spate of burglaries in rural locations around Maidstone, MCPT have been proactively patrolling these hotspot areas, in both marked and unmarked cars, identifying suspect vehicles and persons. So far, two arrests have been made for these burglaries with enquiries ongoing to link the suspects.

2021 also brought challenges with anti-social behaviour, particularly in Lenham where for months, issues were reported by residents with a male living there who caused serious concern to the community. Through partnership working, and intensified patrols, this male was arrested on numerous occasions including one occasion where he assaulted one of our officers. Despite initial frustrations with the courts, this led to his eventual conviction and prison sentence where he currently remains, and has also now been issued a court order banning him from the area.

The pandemic has driven demand in relation to pets, resulting in significant increases in breeders applying for licenses to sell their puppies. However, the opportunity has also inspired and uncovered a growing number of illegal breeders. Some of these operate as puppy farms, whereas others are much lower profile. Warrants have been undertaken with Kent police and neighbouring authorities to disrupt illegal activity in the borough. Due to the increase and the need to prioritise our investigations, the Community Protection Team has introduced an Intelligence Matrix which allows officers to score the intelligence collated from residents and partners. Those ranked highest are taken to the established "Sights of Interest" working group and considered, with partners for enforcement action.

<p>Increase intelligence reporting by holding a training session with KCC and Kent Police Intel teams to ensure information is shared appropriately.</p>	<p>Delivered</p>	<p>Training sessions continue to be held periodically with partners within the Serious Organised Crime Panel (SOCP) meetings over the course of the plan. Partners were reminded of this intelligence gathering process recently. The adoption of the OSARA policing model has also seen partners engaged in developing and designing responses to shared problems.</p>
<p>Deliver a series of events to raise awareness of the risks and dangers of Illegal Money Lending and support services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MBC's CPT hosted a number of community engagement events and awareness sessions for staff, external partners and members of the public. This included three Loan Shark Awareness sessions where a national trainer was able to disseminate key information to professionals, so they could identify those most at risk and signpost them to appropriate support. Social media campaigns were also used to raise awareness. Officers also engaged with a number of schools to support the delivery of money awareness lessons to Year 6 students.</p> <p>As a result of the work the CPT received a national accreditation from Trading Standards Illegal Money Lending under their Partner Recognition scheme.</p>

<p>Cost Effective CCTV Control Room reintroduced to support Town Centre CCTV.</p>	<p>Delivered</p> <p>Following a successful pilot, a new long-term arrangement has been put in place with One Maidstone and The Mall. As part of the initiative One Maidstone funded an upgrade to The Mall's security office creating a 24-hour control room to actively monitor the CCTV across the Town Centre. The operatives actively support Police officers in detecting crime, dealing with incidents and in providing evidence to support investigations and arrests. Whilst serious violent incidents in town have been limited, there have been a few that have received media attention. The CCTV footage associated with these incidents was utilised to enable Kent Police to act very swiftly and make the necessary arrests, often within just a few hours of the incident itself.</p>
<p>Reduce incidents in within Brenchley Gardens and improve the park's reputation</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>The multi-agency working group, set up last year, continued to meet monthly to look at "designing out" crime in Brenchley Gardens and to address the reputation the Park has developed over many years. Working alongside colleagues from the Museum and Parks and Open Spaces, a series of initiatives were developed that were designed to increase guardianship, disrupt criminality and protect the users of the park. A series of events, including deck chairs, the Elmo trail and live music were well received and showed the park in a very positive light. Unfortunately, the reputation of the park was significantly damaged by a few isolated incidents that were reported in the press, and this ultimately undermined the excellent work undertaken by the working group. In response to some of the incidents in the Park, Kent Police were able to secure the resources of the Chief Constable's PCSO Task Force, placing an additional 21 officers (on rotation) in the vicinity of the Park from August 2021. These officers have undertaken active patrolling and to have challenged behaviour in and around the park, utilising the PSPO powers to discourage anti-social drinking over 250 times. Although some of this behaviour was displaced, the officers responded and widened their area to incorporate the new areas of concern where possible.</p>

In November 2021 a report was taken to committee that advised members of the options available to further reduce the incidents in the park. The committee agreed to the proposed improvements to the CCTV (to be implemented in February 2022) and the bandstand and to the introduction of foot patrols in the vicinity (introduced in January 2022). The Committee also asked officers to put in place measures to secure the park at night. This work is being implemented by the Parks Team and is ongoing.

Protect the residents of 5 high risk Ongoing
properties in the Town Centre

Analysis of Domestic Abuse data during the National Lockdowns identified that crime rates, which had previously been attributed to the NTE, remained high despite the NTE shutting down and reducing due to National restrictions. Further analysis of the data identified 5 properties where flats had been occupied, largely, by people placed into the area from other local authorities under the Government’s “Everybody-in” scheme in response to the pandemic. A multi-agency response group, chaired by MBC’s CEO, was formed an action plan was put in place to actively support residents and reduce the disproportionate amount of violent crime associated with these properties. The group uncovered a series of service failures from the placing authorities and steps were taken to not only get those authorities to assist in the response but to make changes to their processes to reduce future recurrences. In addition, the group have lobbied central Government for tighter Governance on placing authorities to ensure that they support their residents in transitioning into a new community. OSARA plans were developed for each of the properties which saw increased support to victims, joint visits with probation services and various enforcement activities from across the SMP to reduce criminality associate with the properties and within their vicinity. This included work with Trading Standards to uncover a significant counterfeit cigarette operation that was specifically targeting vulnerable residents.



Keeping children and young people safe- Delivered through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting

Young people are often affected by issues across our priority themes, affecting them more deeply, causing longer term issues than in adults. We work collectively to safeguard our young people from those that cause them harm.

Actions	Status	Update
Introduce District Contextual Safeguarding Meetings for Maidstone.	Ongoing	An update on the work of the DCSM is provided below.
Introduce a scheme to support Young People who are relocated to Maidstone by other local authorities to minimise the risk of ASB [Revised target date of April to June 2021]	Ongoing	Despite the ongoing impact of the Pandemic, "My Place" was finally launched in 2021. Initial uptake has been limited but has seen young people who are new to the area engage with support services at Infozone. An increase in referrals has been noted more recently as families with young people are being moved away from London areas via housing associations – many of whom because they are looking to break the cycle of gang involvement. Youth workers are currently working to build relationships with three young people, who attend weekly sessions.
Undertake a youth safety survey that will improve understanding of young people's fears, particularly around carrying knives	Complete	The Youth Survey was undertaken in 2021. 2014 (including 507 partial) responses were received. 80% of respondents were female due to a surge of responses from Maidstone Girls Grammar School. The survey highlighted some areas of concern and fear for young people in Maidstone, but also highlighted the impact of the media on their perceptions, particularly around knives and gangs. This disproportionately impacted on those in year 6 and year 7, those transitional from primary to secondary school, which is itself a stressful time. Further detail is provided in the survey section within this report.

<p>Undertake a review of Brenchley Gardens to identify opportunities to safeguard young people.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The multi-agency working group, set up last year, continued to meet monthly to look at “designing out” crime in Brenchley Gardens and to address the reputation the Park has developed over many years. Working alongside colleagues from the Museum and Parks and Open Spaces, a series of initiatives were developed that were designed to increase guardianship, disrupt criminality, and protect the users of the park. A series of events, including deck chairs, the Elmo trail and live music were well received and showed the park in a very positive light. Unfortunately, the reputation of the park was significantly damaged by a few isolated incidents that were reported in the press, and this ultimately undermined the excellent work undertaken by the working group. In response to some of the incidents in the park, Kent Police were able to secure the resources of the Chief Constable’s PCSO Task Force, placing an additional 21 officers (on rotation) in the vicinity of the Park from August 2021. These officers have undertaken active patrolling and to have challenged behaviour in and around the park, utilising the PSPO powers to discourage anti-social drinking over 250 times. Unfortunately, some of the behaviour was displaced and led to the closure of Trinity Park and officers also responded by widening their area to incorporate the new areas of concern where possible. In November 2021 a report was taken to committee that advised members of the options available to further reduce the incidents in the park. The committee agreed to the proposed improvements to the CCTV (to be implemented in February 2022) and the bandstand (2022) and to the introduction of foot patrols in the vicinity (introduced in January 2022). Although not recommended by officers, the Committee felt it necessary to asked officers to put in place measures to secure the park at night. This work is being implemented by the Parks Team and is ongoing and services are working on plans to mitigate against the displacement.</p>
<p>Undertake assertive outreach work to safeguard young people in areas where CSE and gang activities are believed to be taking place</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Regular Outreach is undertaken by a number of services including Switch, Salus and KCC Youth Services. Locations have included the Town Centre and surrounding parks, Mote Park, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst.</p>

<p>Increase support for depression, self-harm, and suicide awareness in young people (schools, GPs etc.) to address their vulnerability (From Mental Health Plan)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>This work is ongoing with professionals continuing to put the voice of the child first. The DCSM itself is a reflection on this work as attendees are reminded at each meeting that we are talking about children and therefore it is really important that we see them as children first, regardless of their actions. This means recognising that their behaviours or actions could be influenced by other people (such as adults who may be exploiting them) or by a past traumatic experience. Words or phrases that suggest children are 'choosing' to do something or are to 'blame' for something are unhelpful and attendees are reminded to always reframe this and keep the child's view. This message has also been conveyed to Ward Councillors through their Cluster meetings.</p>
<p>Utilise VRU funding to provide initiatives that reduce violence and protect young people within the borough.</p>		<p>Following successful applications in 2020, the CSP were again successful in securing funding to support initiatives. The VRU made available two funds which Maidstone was eligible for. One fund was for areas with a task force and the other for our CSP. The combined fund amounts to £31k. Successful applications were made to secure the funding. The application consisted of three focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre youth hub - essentially leasing a premise in the town centre to provide a safe place for young people to come and engage with KCC youth workers and specialists. A unit has been secured in the Mall and will open in the Spring. • Youth diversion and support in Shepway - funds to undertake essential works to the outdoor play area at The Manor Youth Club and to take year 6 children to the Ben Kinsella interactive exhibition in North London which looks at violent and knife related crime. Community Payback have been used to clean up the play area and works will now be undertaken to repair damage etc. In addition, 26 students from Molehill Copse School have attended. • Supporting behaviour change- a small fund to reward behaviour change for those who have been identified as being high risk and who, following interventions and support, demonstrate sustained behaviour change. The reward will fund opportunities and experiences up to £30 after 6 months of positive behaviour and will be based on nominations through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting.

<p>Develop initiatives that support young people and raise awareness of the pressures faced by boy/young men and how that can lead to violence</p>		<p>There are a number of unique factors that are influencing young people in society today. Amongst a number of other growing concerns is the disproportionate amount of violence caused by males to women, children, and other males. Taking inspiration from the Scottish VRU, this is a fact also recognised by the Kent & Medway VRU in their implementation of bystander training across the partners. Maidstone CSP is working to secure funding to allow up to 60 professionals who work with Children to receive Bystander Training so that it's teachings can be incorporated into their work. Participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the challenges facing boys/young men including the impact of childhood adversity (and how this may shape their behaviour towards women/girls), • Explore and examine dominant stereotypes in society which present challenges to boys/men, • Discuss the outcomes they would like to better equip them to deal with challenges, • Define violence within a prevention focused framework, • Fully understand the role of bystanders in the prevention of abuse particularly towards women/girls, • Develop a strong awareness and range of tools/activities to enable them to then participate with boys/young men on healthy relationships.
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Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking): Delivered through the Domestic Abuse Forum

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. This can encompass but is not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial abuse.

Actions	Status	Update
Delivery of an awareness/ education session for Hairdressers including Mid Kent College and Saks Academy	Ongoing	Following the successful training of 70 hairdressing students last year, the Forum has booked in annual sessions and will be working with Saks Academy again in February 2022. Conversations are ongoing with Mid Kent College, but restrictions have made it difficult to access their Hair and Beauty Cohort.
Continue to raise awareness and increase networking, knowledge sharing and understanding of DA issues in Maidstone and the support available.	Ongoing	Following the success of the initial virtual conference a further conference was delivered in May 2021. Approximately 80 people attended representing a variety of industries, including health and education.
Develop a Domestic Abuse Champions Network to support the introduction of Rural DA Champions and build on the existing Urban DA Guardians	Ongoing	DA Champions is now being rolled out Kent wide due to the initially being conceptualised in Maidstone. To ensure greater impact the Oasis Domestic Abuse Service CEO is working with members of KIDAS to develop the training. To date, 9 DA Super Champions are training, and they will deliver training to local professionals, creating the first network of Professional DA Champions. Once this has happened it will be rolled out to create Community Champions.
Incorporate DA into Safer Socialising initiative	Ongoing	As detailed above, under Best Bar None replaces Safer Socialising
Deliver a Violence against Men initiative.	Ongoing	An event in conjunction with Maidstone United football club was postponed in 2020 due to the pandemic. Work is ongoing to revisit this when pandemic restrictions are lifted and there is stability around fixtures being unaffected by Covid 19.
Generate and publish Maidstone Borough Council at work domestic abuse policy	Ongoing	Maidstone CPT are currently working with MBC to adopt a DA policy to support staff and managers in supporting victims of domestic abuse in our workforce. An initial draft has been shared with the aim to adopt this in the coming months.
Generate and publish Maidstone Borough	Ongoing	MBC have appointed a new Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Co-ordinator in response to MBC's responsibilities to delivering the requirements of the

Council at work domestic abuse policy		Domestic Abuse Act 2021. As part of their role in they have taken over as the Chair of Domestic Abuse Forum.
Maidstone Taskforce Domestic Abuse Day of Action	Delivered	<p>The day consisted of holding a stall in Shepway near the hub with partners including clarion, council, Golding Homes, KCC Wardens, PCSOs and The Forward Trust/Worth Programme. The stall had merchandise and posters raising awareness of VAWG and offering any support to victims. All partners engaged with members of public and gave out panic alarms and other merchandise.</p> <p>Several repeat victims were visited in Shepway and town – these were joint partner visits with clarion.</p> <p>Several arrests were made for offences relating to VAWG.</p> <p>Self-defence taster sessions were provided in the evening and were extremely with over 40 women and girls in attendance. Due to the success Golding Homes have agreed to fund more sessions in 2022.</p>
Delivery of Domestic Abuse Awareness Presentation for Parish Council Members		Discussions have started with Parish Councils to do some high-level inputs to raise awareness. This will be the pre-cursor to engaging Parish Councillors in the role out of DA Champions in Communities.
Support Golding Homes and other housing associations to support their Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation		Golding Homes have highlighted Domestic Abuse as a priority for them as an organisation. As part of their commitment to reduce Domestic Abuse and support victims, Golding Homes are working towards getting a DAHA accreditation. This will ensure that Domestic Abuse is at the heart of their policies and decisions as an organisation. The partnership is supporting Golding Homes, as our largest housing provider, by assisting with policy development and training.
Develop initiatives that support young people and raise awareness of the pressures faced by boy/young men and how that can lead to violence		As detailed under “Keeping children and young people safe”- Delivered through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting.



Reduce the impact of substance misuse on our community- delivered through Community Protection Team and Licensing

Substance abuse or misuse is formally defined as the continued misuse of any mind-altering substance that severely affects person's physical and mental health, social situation, and responsibilities.

Actions	Status	Update
Develop a bottle watch programme that is deliverable where alcohol is sold or consumed by people at risk, such as vulnerable or young people	Delivered	Bottlewatch was introduced as part of the plan to reduce ASB in and around Brenchley Gardens. Off-licenses in North Week Street were asked to participate in a scheme where-by bottles were marked with coloured stickers in a discreet position. Alcohol seized could then be checked to determine where it was purchased. This is particularly effective in identifying where underage drinkers obtained their alcohol. This is an initiative that can be revisited periodically as part of on-going efforts in the area.
Engage in pilot of a 'Co-occurring Conditions' Multi-Disciplinary Team for people who have Mental Health and Substance Misuse Issues from January 2021	Ongoing	MBC CPT and Housing staff are engaging in a pilot led by KCC and the NHS to look at an alternative approach to supporting people with complex needs due to co-occurring conditions, such as substance misuse and mental health concerns. KCC Public Health are continuing to develop this approach, undertaking scoping exercises and reviews of current practice to identify how to adapt existing practices to promote a more MDT approach.
Support the implementation of the Kent Drug & Alcohol Strategy 2022-2027	Ongoing	Members of the Safer Maidstone Partnership are supporting Kent Public Health in the implementation of the Kent Drug & Alcohol Strategy 2022-2027. The draft strategy, which has the subheading "Better Prevention, Treatment & Recovery and Community Safety" is centred around introducing a whole systems approach to stakeholders, including stakeholders, to adopt a whole system approach in responding to complex challenges dynamically, by coming together and sharing understanding.



Safeguard people whose mental health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

Mental health refers to our cognitive, behavioural, and emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel, and behave. The term 'mental health' is sometimes used to mean an absence of a mental disorder.

Actions	Status	Measure
Arrange a self-neglect summit for 2020/21 that brings together different agencies and experts to raise awareness of self-neglect and hoarding	On hold	Postponed to 2022/23 due to pandemic
Identify funding opportunities to run a hoarding and self-neglect project	On hold	Postponed to 2022/23 due to pandemic
Engage in pilot of a 'Co-occurring Conditions' Multi-Disciplinary Team for people who have Mental Health and Substance Misuse Issues from January 2021	Ongoing	KCC Public Health are continuing to develop this approach, undertaking scoping exercises and reviews of current practice to identify how to adapt existing practices to promote a more MDT approach

Appendix 1-Priority setting process:

The SMP has a duty to produce an annual strategic assessment to measure performance against priority areas under its CSP Plans and other crime and disorder issues in the borough. It gathers research, evidence and intelligence from local and Kent-wide sources, as well as drawing upon the professional expertise of those working at district level. The Assessment and our performance is reviewed each year by the Council's elected members sitting as a Scrutiny Committee. The strategic assessment takes in to consideration both quantitative and qualitative information which includes not only data provided by various partners, but also considers:

- [Key Legislation](#)
- [Local Community Safety Considerations](#)
- [What people told us](#)
- [Partnership data](#)

Key Legislation:

Due consideration has been given to the following:

Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Police and Justice Act 2006, Policing and Crime Act 2009

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave statutory responsibility to local authorities, the police, and key partners to reduce crime and disorder in their communities. Responsible authorities, commonly referred to now as Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), were required to carry out audits every three years and to implement crime reduction strategies.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced amendments, including the addition of anti-social behaviour and substance misuse within the remit of the CSP strategies. Reducing reoffending was added by the Policing and Crime Act 2009.

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

The requirement for Community Safety Partnerships to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews came into effect on 13th April 2011

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

This introduced directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to replace Police Authorities in England and Wales. It is a requirement for the PCC to have regard to the priorities of the responsible authorities making up the CSPs and for those authorities to have regard to the police and crime objectives set out in the Police and Crime Plan. The legislation also brought with it a mutual duty for the PCC and the responsible authorities to act in co-operation with each other in exercising their respective functions.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

The Act introduced simpler and more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and provide better protection for victims and communities. This includes a new Community Trigger and Community Remedy to give people a greater say in how agencies respond

to complaints. Updated statutory guidance from the Home Office released in December 2017 has brought greater clarity around the use of the tools and powers introduced by the Act.

Safeguarding legislation

Between 2014 and 2016 a number of pieces of legislation were introduced, including the Care Act 2014, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Serious Crime Act 2015, Modern Slavery Act 2015 and Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. Legislation introduced duties including new reporting, referral and decision-making mechanisms, staff awareness requirements and impacts on contract management in the work of relevant organisations.

Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

This places a legal duty on local authorities “when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.” Prevent is one of four strands of the Government’s Counter Terrorism Strategy and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Section 36 of the CTSA places a duty on local authorities to ensure that a Channel Panel is in place for their area that provides support for people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The changes introduced by the Act will impact on victims, families and agencies by improving the response to domestic abuse. Changes include a statutory definition of domestic abuse; introduction of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner; a new domestic abuse protection notice and order; a new duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims and their children in safe accommodation. This is an evolving piece of draft legislation, but community safety partners welcome the changes new legislation could bring. Maidstone Borough Council takes an active role in the Kent Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board.

Serious Violence Bill 2019/20

The outcome of a 2019-20 consultation was to bring forward legislation to create a new duty on organisations to collaborate, where possible through existing partnership structures, to prevent and reduce serious violence. There is an intention to ensure serious violence is an explicit priority for CSP’s. Pending legislation, partners are already working together to address serious violence as a priority.

Local Community Safety Considerations:

The borough of Maidstone covers 40,000 hectares and is situated in the heart of Kent and is strategically located between the Channel Ports and London, with direct connections to both via the M20 and M2 motorways. The borough's population of over 173,000 is the largest in Kent with approximately 75% of its population living in urban areas. Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and hosts one of the largest retail centres in the south east, serviced by three central railway stations connecting to London, the coast and to the Medway towns. It also hosts a large night-time economy.

Where the borough is located and our economy, including the sheer number of visitors it attracts through the year, are all factors that are considered as part of our priority setting. Direct links to London and the Medway towns provide fantastic connectivity for people who live and work in and around Maidstone, however, they also provide opportunities for criminals who exploit these networks to access vulnerable people and places in our borough.

Geographical breakdowns of crime types within partnership data will improve identification of trends and concerns in both urban and rural communities. To support this with a local narrative, the Community Safety team host "Ward Cluster" meetings. In these meetings, elected members from, up to 4 similar, wards, and Parish Council representatives meet with members of the SMP to discuss their Community Safety concerns and to work collaboratively to deliver against agreed plans for their areas.

Partnership Data:

Data for this year's Strategic Assessment has been sourced by the Kent Community Safety Unit from a variety of statutory partners including Police, Health, Probation and KCC Services. Several different data display tools have been included in this year's assessment for the purpose of putting the context of crime data into more perspective, over a longer period. The data is analysed and supported by narrative from partners, co-ordinated through the SMP Sub-groups, to provide qualitative and quantitative information for consideration in setting priorities.

Appendix 2-MoRiLE

The Kent Community Safety Unit has explored the use of the MoRiLE (Management of Risk in Law Enforcement) scoring matrix to look at ranking offences based on threat, risk and harm. Maidstone Borough Council and others in Kent have again incorporated this methodology within this year's Strategic Assessment.

The rationale behind MoRiLE is that it targets resources at offences that would have the biggest impact on individuals and organisations/areas. This contrasts with concentrating solely on crime figure tables which can sometimes provide a skewed view on threats and risk based only on the frequency/volume of crimes.

Each thematic crime area is scored individually against various criteria. There is then a formula that calculates a final score. These are then ranked high to low, listing priorities based on threat, risk & harm which can then contribute to the SMP's final recommendation of priorities.

Appendix 3-Acronym Glossary

- **ASB** = Anti-Social Behaviour
- **BOTD** = Burglary Other Than Dwelling
- **CCG** = Clinical Commissioning Group
- **CDAP** = Community Domestic Abuse Programme
- **CDRP** = Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- **CGL** = Change, Grow, Live
- **CPT** = Community Protection Team
- **CSE** = Child Sexual Exploitation
- **CSP** = Community Safety Partnership
- **CSU** = Community Safety Unit
- **DA** = Domestic Abuse
- **DTE** = Day Time Economy
- **HMIC** = Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary
- **IDVA** = Independent Domestic Violence Advisor
- **IOM** = Integrated Offender Management
- **JSNA** = Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- **KCC** = Kent County Council
- **KFRS** = Kent Fire & Rescue Service
- **KSSCRC** = Kent Surrey & Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company
- **MARAC** = Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- **MBC** = Maidstone Borough Council
- **MOJ** = Ministry of Justice
- **MoRiLE** = Management of Risk in Law Enforcement
- **MSG** = Most Similar Groups
- **NPS** = National Probation Service or New Psychoactive Substances depending on context
- **NTE** = Nighttime Economy
- **OCG** = Organised Crime Group
- **SOCP** = Serious and Organised Crime Panel
- **PCC** = Police & Crime Commissioner
- **PS** = Psychoactive Substances
- **SMP** = Safer Maidstone Partnership
- **SOC** = Serious Organised Crime
- **UE** = Unlawful Encampments
- **VATP** = Violence Against the Person
- **VCS** = Voluntary & Community Service