



Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-2025

Strategic Assessment 2023/24 and
Partnership Plan Update

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Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan

2022-2025



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1. Executive Summary

The Maidstone Community Safety Partnership, known locally as the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP), have worked for over a decade to address crime and disorder and made Maidstone borough a safer place through embedding 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.

In more recent years, the SMP has moved to prioritising those things that cause the most harm, have impacted the most vulnerable or pose the highest risk. These complex issues require a deeper level of investigation to understand the complex mechanisms at play. With a growing knowledge and confidence in utilising creative problem solving, broad legislative powers and for creating opportunities for innovative practice, the SMP continues to demonstrate high levels of effectiveness in tackling those issues that threaten the safety or create fear in our borough.

This report provides evidence not only of the extent of the collaborative working, but also demonstrates how the SMP are challenging crimes and unwanted behaviour, improving engagement and ensuring that legacies are put in place to protect generations to come.

The Strategic Assessment 2023/24 and Partnership Plan Update contains:

- Crime data for the borough, wards, and ward clusters
- Status and delivery updates, including relevant data, for our four core priorities
- Updates regarding the six cross-cutting themes

Safer Maidstone Partnership

“Where Partnership Working is Working”



2. The 2023/4 Strategic Assessment

The purpose of this document

To ensure the Safer Maidstone Partnership (SMP) is delivering against our Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Plan

1 This is the Strategic Assessment produced for SMP, the CSP for Maidstone, for the period 2022-23. It looks at the efforts of the partnership in relation to the first year of the current CSP Plan 2022-2025. It ensures the work of the partnership remains relevant to the priorities and planned activities for 2023-24.

To analyse partnership data to identify emerging concerns outside of the current priorities

2 The Strategic Assessment checks for any emerging concerns, trends and or shifts relating to crime, ASB and wider determinants of Community Safety, such as health data. Additionally, the Strategic Assessment provides an update on the work undertaken in delivering the current priorities and cross cutting themes.

The Background of Strategic Assessments

This report fulfils our Statutory Duty as a CSP to undertake a crime and disorder audit

3 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 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 importance of partnership working led to reform, requiring an annual report to ensure partnerships were working effectively

4 In 2006, a review of the partnership provisions of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002, led to recommendations that 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 requiring an annual, rather than 3 yearly audits.

Methodology for the Strategic Assessments

Data is collated from across the SMP, presented within this report in various ways to show both long- and short-term trends.

5 Data for this report 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, including graphs and maps, for the purpose of putting the context of crime data into more perspective, over a long and short period. Consideration is also given to the threat, risk, and harm, ensuring that those offences that are low in volume, but have the potential to cause the most harm, are recognised.

3. Existing and Emerging Community Safety Considerations 2023

Ongoing impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

The impact of the pandemic continues to be considered as a factor in each individual priority theme, wherever it is relevant

- 6 The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had an 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 568 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) continue to have a significant impact on many, directly affecting individuals' physical health, their mental health and well-being, education, and employment.

Cost of Living Crisis

Operational delivery has adapted to provide support, and to mitigate against those who would exploit people made vulnerable by the cost-of-living crisis

- 7 Driven by a number of international and national factors, the current cost of living crisis presents a further social- economic pressure that will likely impact on community safety. Increases in unemployment and pressures on individual and household finances can lead to increases in not only crime levels but also increases in mental health and other determinants of crime and safety. This could be confounded further as pressures on agencies mean that services are reviewed and lost due to cuts in funding. This can be particularly impactful on areas already considered deprived where financial challenges may lead to increases in social exclusion. The crisis is likely to impact on service capacity, as the services themselves are reviewed to meet financial pressures. The SMP is also supported by the work of the charity sector, who themselves rely heavily on grants in order to deliver vital and often niche services within the borough. These services often support people in crisis or provide support that reduces the likelihood of crisis may be lost. It is therefore likely that the absence of these services would lead to increase pressures on statutory agency services.

Serious Violence Duty

CSPs have a new duty to collaborate to reduce or prevent serious violence, including knife crime.

- 8 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 ("the PCSC Act") received Royal Assent in April 2022. The Act creates a requirement for CSPs to collaborate to reduce or prevent serious violence. At the time of writing this report, it is proposed that the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner will undertake the executive function across Kent, with the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) coordinating delivery plans and data gathering. CSPs, such as the SMP will then feed into these plans using their CSP Plans, building upon our established and close working relationship with the VRU.

The SMP is well placed to continue to deliver work which will prevent and reduce serious violence.

- 9 The Kent definition of Serious Violence, as amended from the home office definition, is:
“Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in domestic abuse, sexual offences, gangs, county lines, and drug supply.”

The duty reinforces the need for a partnership led, public health approach to reduce systemic serious violence. Through our existing priority, protecting our communities against serious, violent, and organised crime (including modern-day slavery), three other priorities and the cross-cutting themes, processes, working groups and relationships are already in place to meet the duty.

Neighbourhood Policing Review

A new neighbourhood policing model in Kent should provide the partnership an opportunity to build on the current successes. It will be important for the partnership to monitor and support residents through the transition to the new model.

- 10 Kent police are currently undertaking a significant review of their Neighbourhood Policing Service. Although not finalised at the point of publication of this report, the review will see fundamental changes in the way community policing is delivered. It is already known that there will be a reduction in Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who will be replaced in communities by Beat Police Constables. These officers will be supported by a series of district and divisional based teams who will focus on key areas of neighbourhood crime, including child centred policing, problem solving task forces and crime prevention. This work will be built around a new Harm Intervention Tool, a database that identifies the most harmed and most harmful individuals within the borough. The final plans will be implemented from June 2023, however, there have been significant reductions in PCSO numbers to date, which is being managed within current policing resources and supported by SMP members, including the Community Protection Team (CPT). Throughout their existence in the community, PCSOs have played an important role in supporting the most vulnerable in our community. Dealing with community issues as well as supporting residents with mental health, substance addiction and self-care concerns.

Public Consultations

2021 Surveys remain relevant in allowing the partnership to understand the perception of crime within the borough

- 11 In 2021 we undertook public and a youth survey to help inform our 2022-25 priorities. A further Residents' Survey was undertaken in relation to Covid 19. Details of these surveys are provided in [Appendix 1](#). It should be noted that these surveys were undertaken in 2021 as part of the work to develop the current Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-25. Whilst localised surveys, such as quality of life surveys, have been undertaken as part of the SMP's delivery the Plan to understand local perceptions of crime, they are not detailed within the Strategic Assessment.

4. Delivery of the Priorities

Delivery groups and action planning

The Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022/25 is achieved via a series of delivery groups and action plans.

- 12 Strategic subgroups, operational groups and specialist teams work collectively to develop, co-ordinate and deliver activities. For each priority, the partnership has:
- Produced action plans containing measurable activities and indicators
 - Ensured that there are resources available to deliver these plans
 - Submitted funding applications to obtain additional resources where required
 - Ensured cross-cutting themes are integrated into the action plans

An update on activity since April 2022 is provided within this report

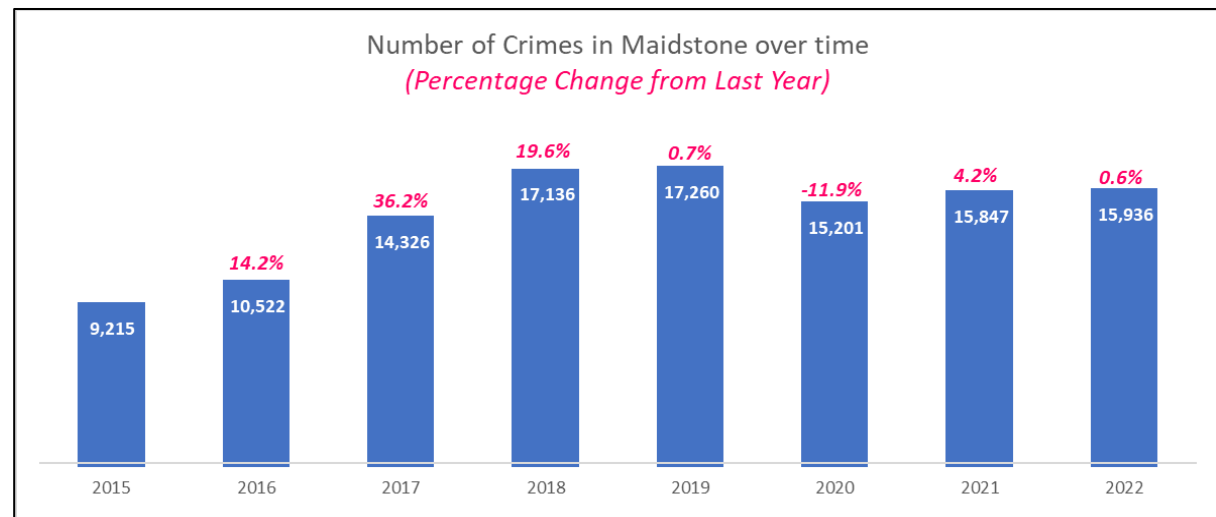
- 13 As these are active action plans, designed to evolve over the life of the Community Safety Plan, some of the actions are ongoing and will be delivered over the course of the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-25, where relevant to either a priority or a cross cutting theme. Given the nature of Community Safety there is significant cross-over between each of the working groups. Details of what has been delivered to date in each area is summarised in the following sections:
- [Protecting our communities against serious, violent, and organised crime \(including modern-day slavery\)-Delivered through the Serious & Organised Crime Panel](#)
 - [Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse \(including stalking\)- Delivered through the Domestic Abuse Forum](#)
 - [Providing a Safe Town Centre – Delivered by the Town Centre Task Force](#)
 - [Keeping children and young people safe- Delivered through the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting](#)

5. Overall Crime and trends

14 Provided below are details of how crime in Maidstone compares to previous years, comparison to national and local levels and distribution across the borough at a Ward level. Readers should note that changes in how crime is recorded means that data prior to 2017 is not comparable to more recent data. This is because offences are now broken down into more detail and one incident can result in multiple crimes being recorded.

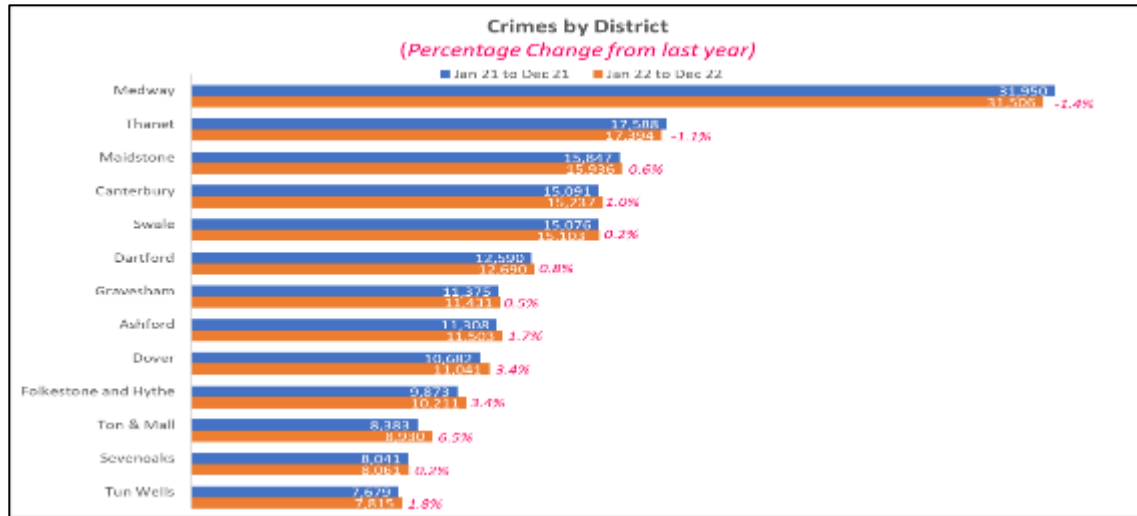
Overall reported crimes in Maidstone borough have increased by 0.6%

15 In 2022 compared with 2021, there has been an increase of 89 crimes. The graph here shows how crimes in the Borough have changed over the last seven years The 0.6% increase crimes in 2022 is in line with the overall Kent increase of 0.8%.



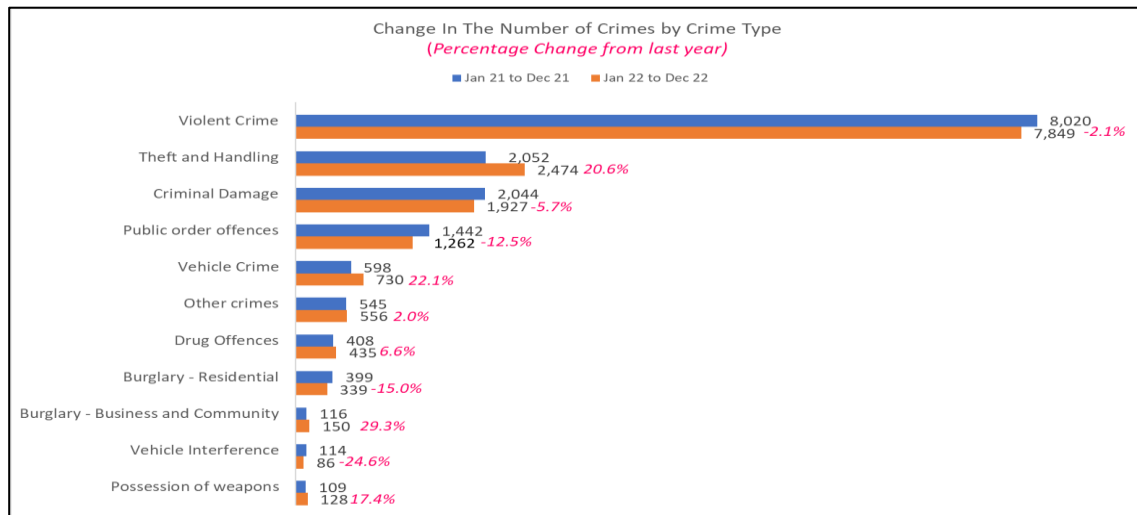
Maidstone remains the 3rd highest for Crime in Kent, behind Medway and Thanet, behind Medway and Thanet

16 The graph below shows how the Maidstone compares to other Kent districts



Increases seen across thefts and vehicle related crimes, whilst violent crime, criminal damage and public order all fall.

17 The chart below shows how different crime types have changed in 2022 (current period) compared with 2021 (previous period).



Violent Crime remains the most prevalent crime type despite reductions

18 Reductions can be seen across 5 of the crime types, including reductions of over 100 crimes in both Violent Crime and Criminal Damage and a reduction of 216 Public Order Offences. This includes a 30.7% decrease in the High Street Ward. This is significant when considering that in 2022 the World Cup coincided with the lead into Christmas, which could have led to concerns at venues within the Town Centre.

National pressures are believed to be driving up certain crimes

19 Increases in vehicle crime (+132, 22.1%) are believed to be linked to national crime trends. Increases in value of second-hand cars and car parts markets in general. Driven by international pressures, this area has seen national increases in organised crime groups exploiting this area, see section below. Theft and Handling offences (+422, 20.6%) have also risen. This includes shoplifting, which increased by 37% in the High Street ward (2021-279, 2022-382). This could also be indicative of the cost-of-living crisis, with anecdotal reports of thefts relating to staff thefts and thefts of "essential items" such as toiletries, nappies and food noted by officers. Increased collaborative working in the Town Centre as a result of the Town Centre Task Force has also seen additional work to improve reporting and to tackle serial and persistent shoplifters robustly.

Other increases are disproportionately high due to low numbers

20 Whilst there are increases in some areas, some of those with significant increases are those areas with the lowest numbers (Burglary- Business and Community (+34) and Possession of Weapons (+19). Possession of Weapons and Drug Offences are both indicative of proactive policing, with Stop and Search still a well-used and successful tool in Maidstone leading to the detection of these crimes.

High Street Ward dominates crime levels ahead of Urban areas across the borough

21 Table 1 ([Appendix 2](#)) provides a full ward breakdown in relation to all crime. The highest five wards, by volume, is indicated in dark red, with a lighter red show the top half. The lowest five are represented by Dark Green, with a lighter green showing the bottom half. High Street accounts for 22% of all crime in Maidstone, with over 2000 more crimes than the nearest other ward, Park Wood. Urban areas dominate the top 10 for crime. Map 1 in [Appendix 3](#) provides a visual representation of crime distribution for of all crime reported to the Police in 2022 in comparison with 2021.

Victim Based Crimes, such as shoplifting and violence against the person play a pivotal role in both the wards with the highest increases and decreases

22 When looking at the actual crime data, the following wards saw the highest increases and highest decreases compared to last year.

Highest ward increase

Ward	2022	2021	Diff +/-
High Street	3530	3410	120
Boxley	658	566	92
Staplehurst	493	436	57
North	865	811	54
Heath*	847	813	34

Highest ward decrease

Ward	2022	2021	Diff +/-
Fant	1069	1176	-107
South	532	630	-98
Harrietsham and Lenham	501	584	-83
Shepway North	794	862	-68
Downswood and Otham	157	194	-37

For High Street Ward, the increases are linked to Victim Based Crimes, such as shoplifting (+100) and theft offences (+68). Boxley also saw increases in Victim Based Crimes with Theft (+29) Violence Against the Person (28) and Shoplifting (+25) contributing to the rise.

The decrease in Fant and South were also down to Victim Based Crimes. In Fant, Arson and Criminal Damage (-64), Shoplifting (-26) and Violence Against the Person (-21) were key to the decrease. In South, Violence Against the Person (-71) accounted for 73% of the decrease.

*It should be noted that for Heath Ward Violence Against the Person accounts for 62% of the VBC. The vast majority of this can be attributed to the Maidstone General Hospital and Priority House, due to assaults on staff, carers, and family members.

Normalised data, based on populations, provides a better understanding of those areas disproportionately impacted by crime. Those areas most affected remain relatively unchanged

23 Normalising the data, (table two, [appendix 2](#)), with population data, provides an understanding of which areas are impacted by crime, despite the population level. The normalised data, per 1000 people shows that the top 5 wards remain the same as in the last period, with Fant moving ahead of Heath Ward, although the difference between them is marginal. 2021 ward population data was used.

Ward	2022	Ward	2021
High Street	296	High Street	286
Park Wood	128	Park Wood	129
Bridge	119	Bridge	116
Heath	114	Fant	113
Fant	103	Heath	109

Normalised data also allows analysis to see where crime has truly increase, despite the population density of the ward. In Table two, the wards showing a relative increase are indicated lighter red, with the top five greatest increases indicated by in dark red. Lighter green shows a decrease, with the top five decrease indicated in dark green. Although not reflected in the population data further consideration should be given regarding High Street Ward where the leisure and shopping provided in the Town Centre attracts an additional visiting population.

- 24 The Ward Clusters group together up to four Wards with similar geography, demographics, and concerns. The Ward Clusters, which are made up as follows, are shown on Map 2 ([appendix 3](#)):

Ward Cluster 1 (Urban)	Ward Cluster 2 (Rural)
Allington	Bearsted
Barming and Teston	Downswood and Otham
Heath	Leeds
Ward Cluster 3 (Rural)	Ward Cluster 4 (Rural)
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	Boxley
Coxheath and Hunton	Detling and Thurnham
Loose	Harrietsham and Lenham
Sutton Valence and Langley	North Downs
Ward Cluster 5 (Urban)	Ward Cluster 6 (Rural)
Bridge	Headcorn (A)
East	Staplehurst (A)
High Street	Marden and Yalding (B)
North	
Ward Cluster 7 (Urban)	Ward Cluster 8 (Urban)
Fant	Park Wood
South	Shepway North
	Shepway South

Since 2021, Ward Cluster meetings have provided Ward Members and Parish Councils a platform to engage with representatives from across the CSP.

- 25 In 2021, the SMP introduced Ward Cluster meetings to support engagement with Ward Members and Parish Councils. with the purpose of providing a framework to.
- increase engagement and understanding between all parties in regard to Community Safety, including anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance, within each cluster.
 - ensure that an evidence-based approach is taken in addressing concerns within communities.
 - share initiatives and operational information, where appropriate and relevant to each cluster
 - to encourage member, officers, and police officers to work collaboratively to challenge, report and prevent crime within each cluster.

Crime data is broken down into Victim Based Crimes and Crimes Against Society. Data is also provided in relation to ASB.

26 The crime data provided in this report is made up of two categories:

Victim Based Crimes (VBC)

- Arson & Criminal Damage
- Bicycle Theft
- Burglary - Business and Community
- Burglary - Residential
- Robbery
- Sexual Offences
- Shoplifting
- Theft From a Vehicle
- Theft Of Motor Vehicle
- Theft Offences
- Vehicle Interference
- Violence Against the Person

Crimes Against Society (CAS)

- Drug Offences
- Public Order
- Possession Of Weapons
- Misc. Crimes Against Society

Data is also provided in relation to ASB, but this is not a recorded as a crime, although it can be criminalised through the use of various statues. Further detail on this is provided later in the report.

Victim based crime makes up the majority of all crime. Urban, densely populated clusters see higher volumes of crimes

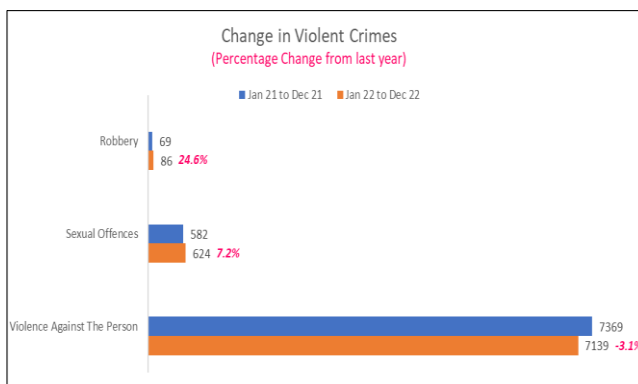
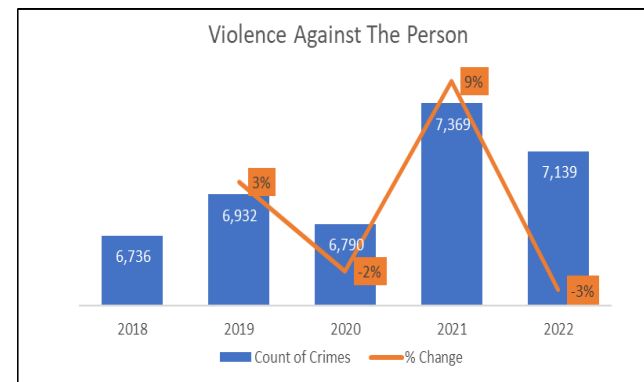
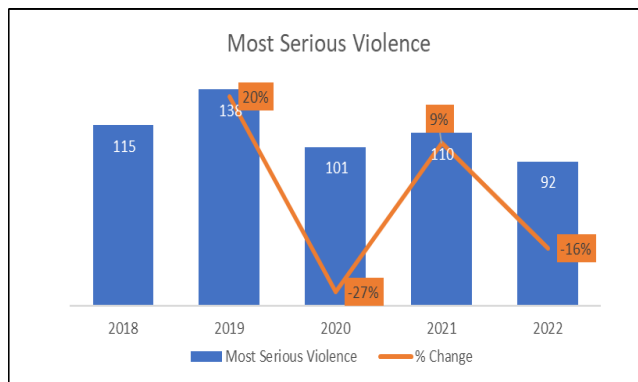
27 The VBC (Table Three), CAS (Table Four) and ASB data (Table Five) for each Cluster is provided in [Appendix 2](#). Cluster 5 accounts for 38% of all VBC, with High Street ward accounting for 22% of the cluster alone. By volume, Cluster 8 (17%), Cluster 7 (11%) and Cluster 4 (10%), although of these, only Cluster 4 increased between 2021 and 2022. It should also be noted, that for Heath Ward, Violence Against the Person accounts for 62% of the VBC. The vast majority of this can be attributed to the Maidstone General Hospital and Priority House, due to assaults on staff, carers, and family members, rather than a community-based crime. This is being raised directly with the site management. Similarly, Cluster 5 accounts for the majority of CAS (43%) and ASB (34%). Significant reductions can also be seen in reported ASB. This is explored later in this report in relation to the Town Centre, Youth Safety and as a cross-cutting theme.

6. SMP Priority area data and partnership updates

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

Serious violence reduced, but violence against a person, including domestic abuse, still makes up over 40% of all crimes

28 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.

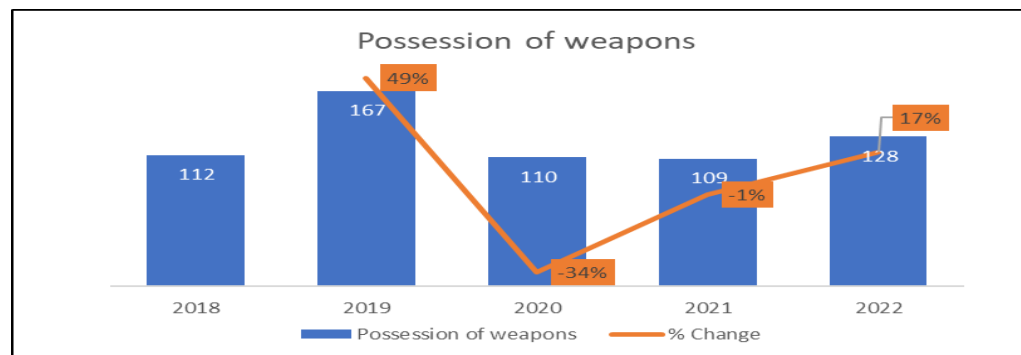


Violence against a person, which includes common assault, actual bodily harm and domestic abuse has not decreased significantly across the district but remains higher than pre-pandemic levels. The chart below shows how Maidstone's violent crime has changed in 2022 compared to 2021. 'Violence against the person' (VAP) which accounts for 91% of the overall violent crimes. Whilst VAP has fallen, robbery and sexual offences have increased. Further analysis of Domestic Abuse is provided in the next section.

Possession of weapons offences stay relatively low despite an increase in 2022. These include offences obtained by successful stop and search.

29

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.



Public Health approach key to reducing rises in violent crimes, particularly violence against women and girls.

30

As laid out in the evidence for the new Serious Violence Duty, a public health approach is key to reducing longer term trends in violence. Violent crimes, including sexual offences, are largely committed by males. There are a number of factors which disproportionately effect on boys which can lead to increases violent tendencies. This is particularly evident in violence against women and girls (VAWG) where the crimes can result in complex trauma. A trauma informed approach, alongside awareness raising programs, such as "Active Bystander" training stays a fundamental part of the SMPs service delivery outlined within the priority updates within this report. These programs help practitioners and the wider partnership to understand the push/pull factors for boys regarding relationships, social pressures, and violence. Further detail is provided in the Provide a safe town centre and Keeping Children and Young People Safe sections within this report.

Organised crime remains a threat to Maidstone, with the SOCP working on one active OCGs established in Maidstone

31 The Serious Organised Crime Panel (SOCP) is still actively working to prevent the activities of OCGs looking to become established in the borough. In the last 12 months the SMP have successfully disrupted and so archived One OCG. This is in addition to four previously disrupted since 2019. During the development of this report, one new OCG has been mapped for Maidstone for and subject to the focus of SOCP, alongside disruption out of area threats, such as County Lines, and disruption of Modern-Day Slavery, details of which can be found in paragraph [62](#).

County Lines are a type of OCG that exploits a variety of crimes, praying on the vulnerable

32 County Lines describes a specific type of OCG, which, due to their prevalence nationally in the movement of drugs, is a term the public in general are familiar with. The use of County Lines by OCGs is not limited to the supply and movement of drugs; the same criminal infrastructure is linked to Modern Slavery and People Trafficking, Brothels, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Serious Violence, Money Laundering, and the supply of illegal weapons.

Cuckooing is a particularly harmful tactic that exposes vulnerability and can be difficult to trace/expose

33 The operation of County Lines by OCGs often relies on the activity of 'cuckooing'; a practice where criminals take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. It takes the name from cuckoos who take over the nests of other birds. Victims are often people who misuse substances such as drugs or alcohol, but there are cases of victims with learning difficulties, mental health issues, physical disabilities or who are socially isolated. People who choose to exploit will often target the most vulnerable in society and will establish a relationship with the vulnerable person in order to access their home. Cuckooed addresses are commonly used to store or distribute drugs but can also be used in people trafficking and modern slavery, supply or storage of illegal firearms, sex work, or as 'safe houses' for criminals themselves who are trying to avoid detection by the Police.

County Lines continue to feature as a threat to Maidstone

- 34 A small number of County Lines are known to or have previously operated across Kent. Intelligence driven operations are undertaken to disrupt and shut down OCGs where possible. Whilst the volume of these Lines is small, the individual and community harm of an established County Line OCG can be significant. Tactical documents are shared across the SMP that allow practitioners to share intelligence in relation to local lines. This is particularly relevant to the DCSM and those practitioners working with young people, particularly those at risk of coercion. Within the last year a number of actions have been undertaken across the SMP to challenge the threat in Maidstone, including:
- Targeted activity of known drug dealing nominals across the district with positive outcomes/convictions
 - Large volume of drugs seized/cash/digital devices linked to drug dealing to support investigations
 - Warrants secured and executed to support disruption tactics
 - Dismantled a number of cannabis hydroponics set-ups (particularly in the town center)
 - Worked with HMP Maidstone around 'throw overs'
 - Regular visits to Nail Bar, car washes, brothels to gather intelligence and safeguard those being cuckooed with supporting agencies such as Immigration Services, MBC CPT, KRFS, EA, Serious Crime Directorate
 - Supporting other agencies in carrying out their investigations/warrants/visits.

New Modern-Day Slavery sub-group leads to successes

- 35 In September 2022, the SMP formed the Maidstone Anti-Slavery Partnership (Maidstone ASP). The monthly working group meet to share and develop intelligence of cross-boundary MDS risks. Although growing, the Maidstone ASP currently consists of representatives from:
- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| • MBC Community Protection | • MBC Housing and Health |
| • Kent Police | • Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority |
| • British Transport Police | • Kent Fire & Rescue Service |
| • Stop The Traffik | • Violence Reduction Unit |
| • Salvation Army | • Immigration |
| • Kent County Council | • Gravesham Borough Council |

The work of the Maidstone ASP is centred around 4 work streams, utilised across this sector:

Prevent- Intelligence sharing and early interventions are used to prevent MDS being established. Awareness raising activities have included supporting Anti-Slavery Day in October and networking with sector experts to improve local delivery.

Pursue- Using intelligence developed across the partnership, days of action and targeted visits have been undertaken to disrupt MDS in locations across the borough. This work includes visits to high-risk industries, such as farming, car washes and nail bars, where exploitation is common.

Protect- Raising awareness within vulnerable groups is a key element to disrupting MDS. “Cost of Living” Events and recruitment events have been attended to raise awareness of the risks and temptations used by OCGs etc. to draw people in. Proactive “Safe and Well” visits have also been carried out, and advice given to women located in suspected brothels. Nationalities identified as being at highest risk include Eastern European, Chinese.

Prepare- A key part of raising awareness is about ensuring as many people as possible are aware of the risk MDS poses. The Maidstone ASP has created an internal “MDS Champions Network” where we can ensure every contact with key departments is a potential opportunity to identify exploitation. Training has been supplied for information/awareness and to allow the Champions to deliver awareness training to their respective teams/ departments.

**Responsibility
to tackle extremism
through Prevent/
Channel is ongoing**

36 The Home Office have assessed Kent and Medway as a priority area due to our threat and risk – now the only Prevent priority area in the southeast. Under the Prevent Duty, partners of the SMP have a legal duty to have due regard for Prevent in their day-to-day business and to implement/contribute to the national mechanism for terrorist prevention. ‘Prevent’ safeguard’s vulnerable individuals from radicalisation and is there to deter them from being targeted or supporting terrorist organisations and extremist groups. Vulnerability to Radicalisation (V2R) is the concern we should all be looking out for and Prevent/Channel is the mechanism that supports and safeguards those who are vulnerable to radicalisation. Referrals accepted into the Channel process are subject to multi-agency review and action plan. It is also worth noting that The Independent Review of Prevent was laid in Parliament 08 February 2023, alongside the Government’s response. The Review contains 34 recommendations, all of which have been accepted and will now be implemented. The Government has committed to reporting on the implementation of the recommendations a year from publication. Prevent is a vital tool to divert people from those dangerous and poisonous ideologies. Through its early intervention approach, the Prevent programme has worked to move thousands of individuals away from radicalisation. The Independent Review of Prevent, will ensure the continual improvement of this approach.

[Independent Review of Prevent \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114111/independent-review-of-prevent-report.pdf)

[The response to the Independent Review of Prevent \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114111/independent-review-of-prevent-report.pdf)

Extreme Right-Wing radicalisation poses a greater threat to national security than other ideologies

37 Nationally, Channel cases for Extreme Right-Wing radicalisation concerns are greater than those for Islamist concerns, with those under the age of 15 making up the largest proportion of cases discussed at Channel. Across Kent, the following push/pull themes were found between June and December 2022:

- Possession of weapons, including knives
- Gore and extreme material which can lead individuals to extremist domains
- Drawings of swastikas and lack of understanding and meaning around symbology
- Anti LGBTQ+ views
- Vulnerability of exclusion or out of education (NEET) or Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Increase in referrals by the team being submitted to the front door.

UK Terror threat level remains, substantial as Dover terror attack provides opportunities to reinforce the need for good practices

38 The current UK national terror threat level is SUBSTANTIAL meaning that an attack in the UK is considered likely. In October 2022, Dover experienced Kent's first terror attack in many years, the only terrorist attack in the UK that year. The attacker, driven by extreme right-wing terrorist ideology threw a petrol bomb into the Dover, Kent, Immigration centre. The attack reinforced the importance for the SMP to have a clear understanding of Prevent and terrorist related incidents. It particularly highlighted the risk posed from self-initiated terrorist and the importance of the work that is delivered to safeguard individuals in order to stop these attacks from taking place. Reviews of the incident have highlighted the importance of considering referrals for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, as well as children and young people into the Channel referral mechanism and the role the internet can play as seen with the Dover attacker , where he often posted extreme right-wing statements. The online space is a prominent radicalising influence across Kent and Medway and is listed as the primary radical influence mentioned in several Prevent referrals for 2022.

Race prejudice dominates hate crimes and is a growing concern due to the harm caused to individuals and communities

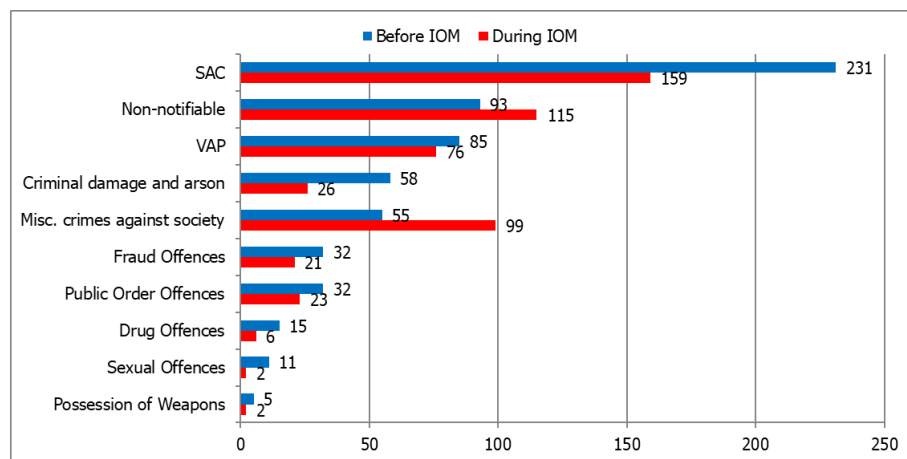
39 The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. Over the last reporting period (Dec 21 to Nov 22) there have been **520** reported hate crimes this is compared to **523**. Race prejudice accounts for 70% of all hate crimes, followed by Sexual Orientation hate related crimes which accounts for 17% of all hate crimes. The table below shows a breakdown of the hate crimes.

Integrated Offender Management allows the SMP to work collectively to reduce reoffending

40 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. Threat, Risk and Harm is considered regarding Serious and Acquisitive Crime, Domestic Abuse (DA), Serious Violence, Gang activity, Organised Crime Groups (OCG), Troubled Families, Terrorism, Trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The IOM Cohort represents a snapshot of activity at a point in time as numbers vary based on a number of factors. As of 24/11/2022, the current IOM combined cohort for Kent was 166 individuals. Of the 166 individuals, West Division represents 30% of the cohort. East Division (43%) and North (27%) make up the rest of the cohort. The 166 individuals currently on the IOM cohort have generated 529 arrests whilst on IOM. 48.2% of the individuals on IOM have been linked to an arrest whilst they have been on IOM. This is 80 individuals on the current cohort. 6 offenders have been linked over 20 arrests whilst on IOM

The graph below shows arrests made during IOM broken down by arrest reason and compared to the arrest prior to IOM.



The IOM Cohort for Maidstone are discussed at the Serious and Organised Crime Panel, where partners work to support IOM with intelligence and interventions of their own.

- 41 Domestic abuse crimes are those involving persons over the age of 16 who are personally connected and where the behaviour is abusive, such as any of the following:
- physical or sexual abuse
 - violent or threatening behaviour
 - controlling or coercive behaviour
 - economic abuse
 - psychological, emotional, or other abuse

Domestic Abuse is regarded as an under reported crime. 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.

Domestic Abuse remains everybody's business and tackling this is now a CSP duty

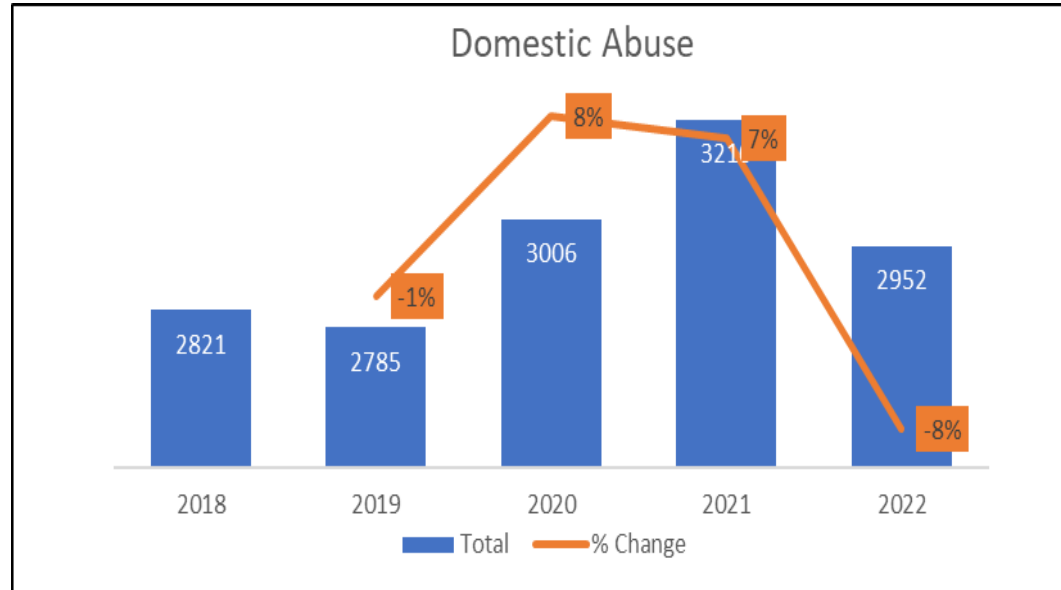
- 42 The Domestic Abuse Act became law in April 2021 and placed duties on local authorities to help tackle domestic abuse. The legislation is driving changes that will:
- promote awareness
 - protect and support victims
 - transform the justice response
 - improve performance of Domestic Abuse Services
 - Recognise children as victims in their own right- not witnesses to abuse

The SMP plays a role at a County Level to ensure consistency and has worked to improve internal processes to support DA Survivors

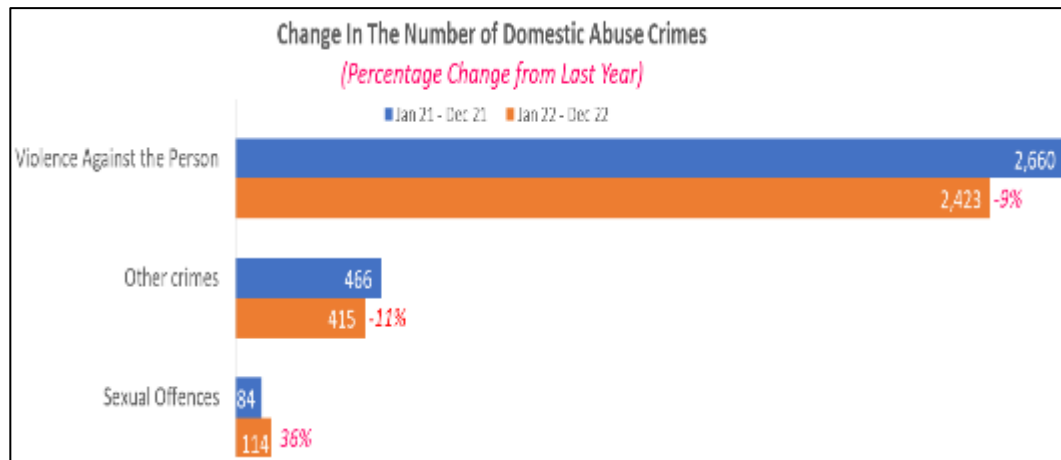
- 43 Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council officers continue to play an active role on the Kent Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the Maidstone Domestic Abuse Forum to help shape the Kent-wide Domestic Abuse Strategy and develop services for people experiencing domestic abuse. In addition, staff have been updated on changes made to the homelessness legislation brought about by the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act, which is reflected in the Council's Housing Strategy. An infographic has been created as part of the strategy for all housing for all staff to respond to DA survivors correctly.

Reported domestic abuse levels drop to pre-pandemic levels

44 The data for 2022 shows a slight decrease of 8% of all crimes recorded as Domestic Abuse, with reported levels dropping to levels closer to those seen pre-pandemic.



Currently, **19%** of all crime in Maidstone Borough is related to Domestic Abuse (where parties are connected to each other) and this equates to **31%** of all violent crime.



Breaking down the Domestic Abuse Crimes sees Violence Against the Person (VAP) reducing by 9%, but still making up 82% of these crimes.

Coercion and control and stalking/harassment reports fall disproportionately.

45 Included in VAP, Stalking/Harassment (-14%) and Coercion and Control (-27%) also decreased. Assessment will be needed, by the Domestic Abuse Forum, to determine why Coercion and Control has decreased disproportionately to other crimes, as this is a typically under reported crime type. Reported Sexual Offences, which represent some of the most harmful crimes, increased in 2022 by 36%, but remain relatively low in number overall.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Violence Against the Person	2,223	2,221	2,493	2,660	2,423
- Stalking/Harassment	585	622	676	746	643
- Coercion and Control	73	85	328	390	286
Sexual Offences	117	82	93	84	114
- Rape	77	63	60	46	62
Other crimes	481	482	420	466	415
Total	2,821	2,785	3,006	3,210	2,952

Across the wards, Domestic Abuse crimes remain highest in High Street Ward, despite drop.

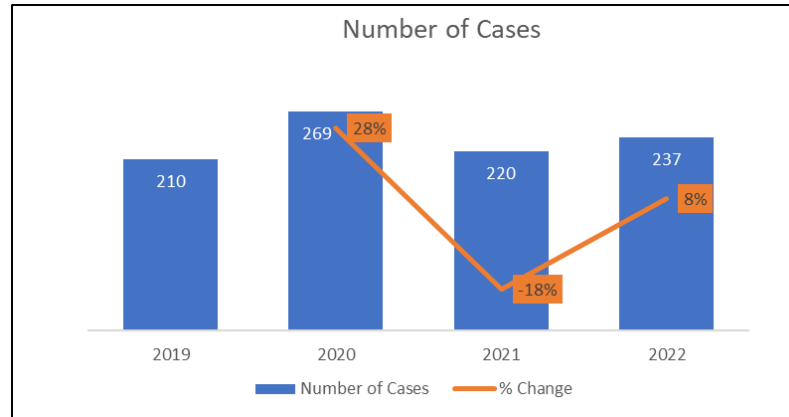
46 Table six, [appendix 2](#), provides a breakdown of domestic abuse crimes across the wards. The highest five wards, by volume, is indicated in dark red, with a lighter red show the top half. The lowest five are represented by Dark Green, with a lighter green showing the bottom half. 14 of the 26 wards show a decrease, with South, Bridge and East showing significant drops. .

Normalised data, based on populations, provides a better understanding of those areas disproportionately impacted by Domestic Abuse

47 Normalising the data, table seven ([appendix 2](#)), with population data, provides an understanding of which areas are impacted by domestic abuse. Using the 2021 ward population data, the table shows that across the borough, domestic abuse remains relatively low. The wards showing a relative increase are indicated lighter red, with the top five greatest increases indicated by in dark red. Lighter green shows a decrease, with the top five decrease indicated in dark green.

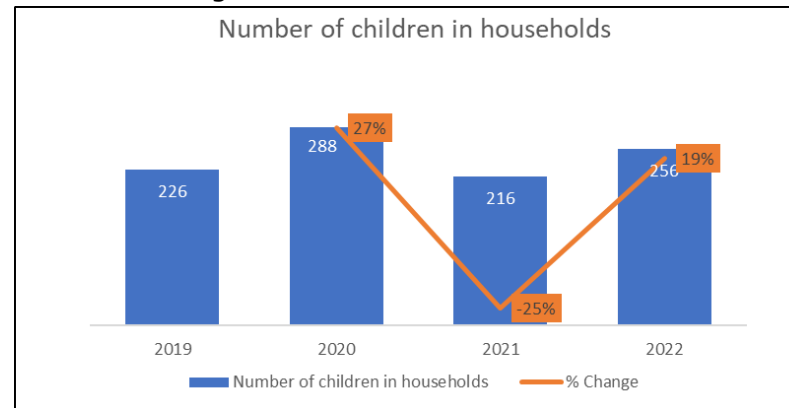
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) rise

- 48 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. Maidstone has had 237 MARAC cases in the current period, up from 220 in the previous period. 28 % (65) were repeat cases.



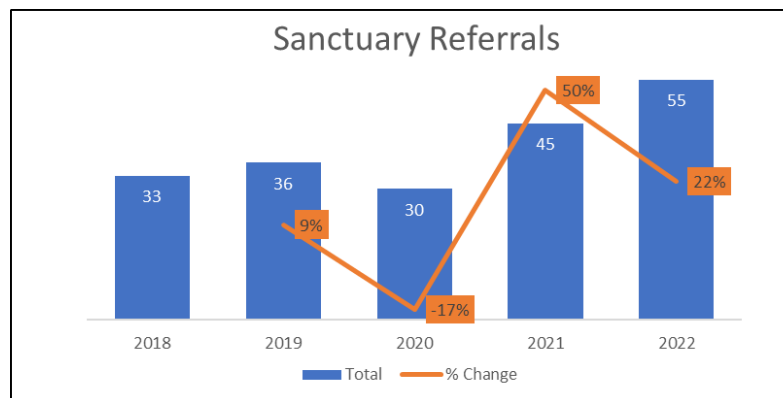
The number of children considered in MARACs rises too

- 46 There were 256 children living in these households, a 19% increase on the previous period. Under the Domestic Abuse Act all children in these circumstances are to be considered victims. The voice of the child is considered in all MARAC meetings.



Sanctuary referrals increase by 22%

47 Sanctuary assessments are undertaken by the CPT, 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 continue to increase (22%), although the rate of increase was less than the previous year. During 2022, £1,149.05 was spent to make properties secure. This excludes properties owned by Social Landlords, who undertake work on behalf of their residents where appropriate.

One Stop Shop data returns as part of supported housing offer, but attendance is low

48 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, but there were challenges post pandemic, with a virtual and new service trialled in 2020 and 2021. In 2022, the opening of the Trinity housing and Community Hub has provided a new location for the service. Since relaunching in October 2022, the monthly One Stop Shop has been visited by 14 women and 2 men. The majority of those attending are experiencing abuse from a current or ex intimate partner.

The Domestic Abuse Forum (MDAF) continues to raise

49 The Maidstone DA Forum (MDAF) work across the SMP and link in with the Kent’s Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) to deliver a number of activities and services to support the victims of abuse and to raise awareness. Here are some of the activities undertaken in 2022:

awareness and support victims by ensuring services are promoted and provided where necessary.

White Ribbon Event at Maidstone United Football Club VAWG Walk & Talk	Highly successful multi-agency event, and many male attendees showed their support by wearing a White Ribbon. Meaningful conversations were had with the public about service provision which has fed into the wider action plan.
Local service provision has been reviewed DA Commissioner's Office Survey	Town Centre engagement, utilising an online survey undertaken with women and girls focused on feelings of safety and wellbeing within the NTE. 43 surveys were completed with over three quarters saying they felt somewhat to very unsafe. <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Improvements to One Stop Shop with agencies focussing on follow on support, as oppose to only crisis intervention for high-risk victims.✓ Services for male victims and survivors to be developed to improve survivor's experience and increase agency communication.✓ HELP (Housing Empowerment Liberty Project) is due to be rolled out as a pilot within Kent with the support of the Forum. HELP is for victims of DA with children who are supported with a safety plan to flee and will have access secure housing without the traumatisation of temporary accommodation✓ Work with Sateda to include women's service following abuse and plans for a Sateda IDVA to be based in Maidstone and to split time between community services/children's centre & housing. This has been identified as a gap in service previously and the holistic approach will prevent further harm and reduce repeat victims
Improved engagement with Primary Schools	Working with Family Liaison Officers in primary schools to impact DA on young children, with specific training provided.
"Reframe for Resilience" events delivered	A professional, multi-agency conference focused on being trauma aware, trauma attachment and domestic abuse and information on support organisations. Two events delivered to date
MBC Housing DA response enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Significant training delivered including Protection Against Stalking, Domestic Abuse level 1-3 and NCDV protection order training✓ A visual housing journey map has been created alongside the MDAF to improve accessibility to victims who are accessing housing due to DA and for professionals who are supporting
MDAF Directory updated	A directory of support services has been updated and been shared with SMP
New housing notification process with Kent Police	New process (Operation Valuable) developed with Kent Police to notify housing when Domestic Violence Protection Orders/Notices (DVPOs/DVPNs) are issued. MBC will offer temporary accommodation to the perpetrator served with the notice to reduce the rate of them returning to the shared/victims' property and change the narrative on placing responsibility on victims to safeguard themselves.
Enhancing perpetrator programs/guidance	Perpetrator programmes have been established for male and females allowing for intervention with a focus on how agencies would like to offer to look. A perpetrator guidance document has been developed and rolled out across housing and external agencies
OSS volunteer programme	Currently in its infancy stages to upskill those who have previously experienced domestic abuse and would like to support the community. This will form part of our DA Action plan to engage the voice of the survivor
MDAF DA policies to be shared as good practice	Both Golding Homes and Maidstone Borough Council have worked to embed new Domestic Abuse policies and processes for both their staff and their customers. The policies, which include support for managers will be rolled out to other businesses to support them in the development of their own plans.

Town Centre Task Force (TCTF) has been established and continues to support a new partnership approach

50

In June 2022, the Safer Maidstone Partnership implemented the Town Centre Task Force (TCTF). As with Maidstone Task Force, who's success in the Shepway Wards was documented in last year's Strategic Assessment, the TCTF was implemented with the vision:

"To utilise a multi-agency 'One Team' evidence-based approach to tackle crime, health inequality and the wider determinants of crime/health. To ensure we implement long term permanent changes that improve the reputation of the Town and the quality of life for those who live, work, or visit the County Town and keep them safe from harm."



The overarching purpose of the TCTF is to work within the Town Centre, to help reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, and the wider determinants of crime. The TCTF looks to achieve this by:

- Protecting people from harm and improving the culture within DTE and NTE
- Identifying and tackling crime hot spots and trends
- Identifying vulnerability and providing protection/support where necessary
- Building resilience through participation, empowerment, and partnership with Town Centre stakeholders

The TCTF utilises a three-part delivery model to ensure a holistic approach to driving down crime and anti-social behaviour and improve public perceptions of safety.

51

The creation, implementation, and delivery of the TCTF is focused around three priority work streams:

- **IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATION** – engaging partners and stakeholders to create the TCTF, analyse available data and upskilling workforce tool kits
- **PURSUE/CHANGING/CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR (PCCB)**- identifying threats and risks associated with criminality and ASB
- **ENGAGEMENT AND LEGACY**- work to change the reputation of the town

Progress against these work streams is monitored through two alternating fortnightly meetings:

- **TCTF- Operational Delivery Group**- utilising an overarching horizon plan, this group focuses on the "Implementation and Creation" and "Engagement and Legacy" work streams and is chaired by the Communities and Strategic Partnerships Manager.
- **TCTF- ASB Nominals and Locations meeting**- a pursue based meeting focused on the work around a fluid top 10 of individuals and the businesses/locations of concern. This group also develops Hostile Ops, such as execution of warrants, test purchasing, etc. This meeting is chaired by the Town Centre Police Sergeant.

The following provides an update for each work stream.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATION
The foundation phase ensures stakeholder engagement, partnership contribution and analytical products to measure performance against agreed objectives.

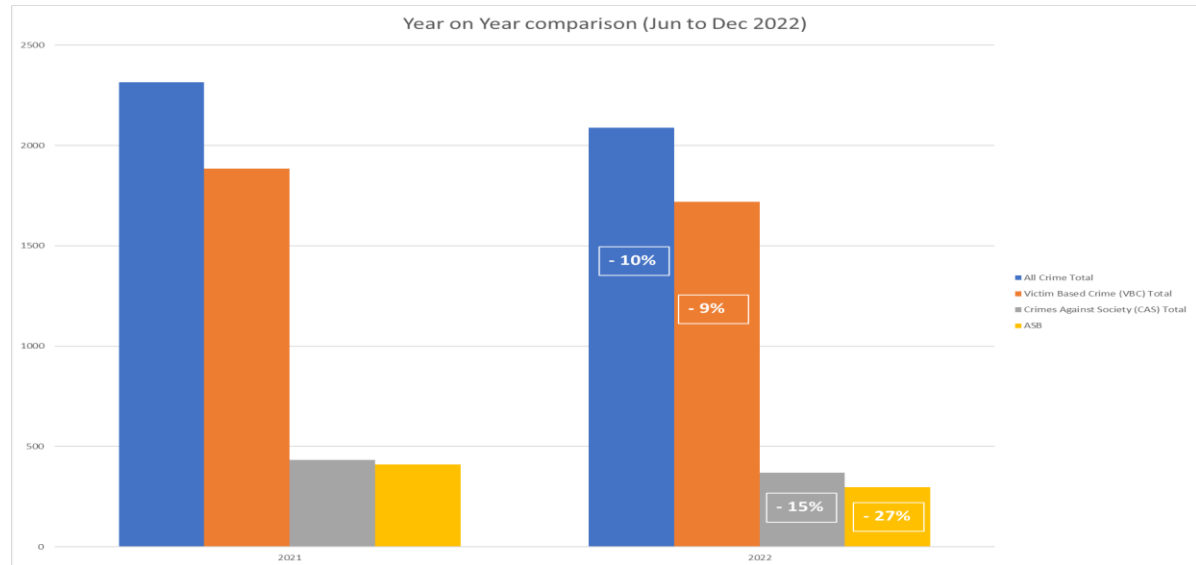
- 52 In creating the TCTF a joint working group from MBC CPT and Maidstone Police worked to develop core documents and delivery plans to agree and establish key working practices. This included but was not limited to the following:
- Produce key documents including Terms of Reference/Implementation Plan/Risk Register
 - Data analysis- including Cambridge Harm Index, ASB, Domestic Abuse, hotspot mapping
 - Recruit and onboard Taskforce members from across the wider SMP
 - Engage stakeholders, including political and strategic allies, and form steering group
 - Establish working groups and align existing sub-groups
 - Develop joint training for Taskforce members, including OSARA Problem Solving, Contextual Safeguarding and Trauma Informed Practice.
 - Develop and implement joint comms strategy, linked to the cross-cutting theme of Improving Public Perception /Confidence
 - Identify funding opportunities for initiatives to support TCTF objectives

IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATION
Securing Safer Streets 4 and VRU funding has provided a significant opportunity to put in place sustainable changes to the Town Centre

- 53 Prior to launching the TCTF, an opportunity was identified for Maidstone to be supported by the Kent PCC's office in an application for Safer Streets 4. An application was successfully made, via the PCCs office, securing £565,877 to undertake wide range of initiatives across the Safer Maidstone Partnership to reduce Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and Anti-social Behaviour in particular. Details of the supported initiatives are provided in the engagement section below. In addition to Safer Streets Funding, the Town Centre was also identified by the Kent and Medway VRU as an area eligible for additional funding to reduce violent crime. A further £18,000 in funding was secured and is detailed in the engagement section below.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATION
The data for the High Street Ward is starting to show the impact of the TCTF

- 54 Crime data for High Street Ward, which accounts for 22% of all crime in the borough identifies some positive trends since the TCTF was introduced in June. Comparing the same period (Jun to Dec), the results show significant reductions. The graph below shows significant reductions in Overall crime **(-10%)**, Victim Based Crime (VBC) **(-9%)**, Crimes against Society (CAS) **(-15%)** and ASB incidents **(-27%)**.



IMPLEMENTATION AND CREATION
TCTF performance in High Street shows greater reductions than in the borough as a whole

55 Owing to the volume of crime in High Street Ward, these reductions signify not only a significant volume of crime (-228) and ASB (-113), but, as shown in the table below, the reduction rates, for the same period, are significantly better than the borough as a whole. Relevant harm data is being sourced to determine the impact of the TCTF on the most harmful crimes.

Reported crimes (Jun to Dec)	2022	2021	Diff +/-	% Change
All Crime High Street	2088	2316	-228	-10%
All Crime Rest of Borough	7240	7436	-196	-3%
High Street VBC Total	1719	1884	-165	-9%
VBC Rest of Borough	6185	6364	-179	-3%
High Street CAS Total	369	432	-63	-15%
CAS Rest of Borough	1055	1072	-17	-2%
ASB High Street	298	411	-113	-27%
ASB Rest of Borough	1114	1338	-224	-17%

**PURSUE/CHANGING/
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR
(PCCB)-A small number of
individuals represent
a disproportionate amount
of the crime and ASB
in the town centre**

**PCCB
A holistic approach
ensures individuals are
supported where possible,
before enforcement is
used**

**PCCB
Protecting the town
reduces the threat posed
by the unknown through
culture and partnership**

**PCCB
The TCTF identified certain
locations and businesses
had become synonymous
with Crime and ASB**

- 56 The TCTF identified that a disproportionate amount of crime and ASB in the Town could be attributed to a relatively small number of individuals. These individuals are often known to a number of services, agencies, or businesses across the town. The TCTF created an ASB Nominals list of around 10 to 15 individuals whose behaviour makes them a risk to themselves, others or businesses which is reviewed regularly to ensure the individuals are in the TCTFs focus. The behaviours of concern can include persistent:
- ASB, including drunk or rowdy behaviour
 - Shoplifting/theft
 - Begging
 - Drug dealing/substance misuse
 - Fighting and or violence
 - Domestic Abuse/ coercion.
- 57 The TCTF then use their collective resources and powers to disrupt their behaviour 4P approach. The 4 Ps are Prevent, Protect, Pursue, Protect ensures each individual is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The most appropriate combination of "Ps" is used to either disrupt their behaviour or make them accountable. Since June 2022, **15 individuals** have been archived owing to their behaviour no longer impacting on the Town Centre.
- 58 The TCTF also identified that the most serious acts of violence that have been seen in the town have often been undertaken by individuals who were not known to services or were from outside the borough. The TCTF, through the work undertaken in the Engagement and Legacy workflow is working to ensure a safe culture, which is equipped to prevent where possible and, if necessary, respond swiftly when the unknow/unforeseen happens.
- 59 Certain locations within the town are identified as high risk. These can locations areas, parks, and businesses/premises. These can be as a result of incidents, intelligence or reputation amongst partners and residents alike. Since June, the locations of focus have included: `
- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Concerns around young people | Concerns around adults |
| • North Week Street | • Jubilee Square |
| • Brenchley Gardens | • Cannon Square |
| • Whatman Park | • Brenchley Gardens |
| • Royal Star Arcade | • Amphitheatre |
| • Lockmeadow | • Residential properties |

PCCB
Locations are assessed and plans are put in place, appropriate to the nature of the problem, and whether the risk is posed to young people or adults.

PCCB
The narrative around Brenchley Gardens is changing

60 Certain locations in the town were identified as contributing to the levels of crime and ASB. Problem solving models have been utilised to change the locations and reduce concerns. Multi-agency OSARA problem solving plans, are used to identify opportunities to disrupt or prevent unwanted behaviour through a range of target hardening techniques, such as more high-profile patrols or training for businesses. Where locations are a concern because of their link to young people, an additional Contextual Safeguarding Location survey feeds into the OSARA process. Both models are interchangeable as they both utilise very similar problem-solving theories to challenge/support offender/victims, location/environment, and guardianship respectively. This includes working with staff at "honeypot" locations to improve their approach to ASB.

61 Sustained concerns around ASB, violence, drug use/supply, sex offences and CSE had significantly damaged the reputation of the park. However, events and activities in the park, such as concerts and the Heart of Kent Hospice "Elmer Trail" have shown visitors that the parks reputation is not fully warranted. Isolated incidents, including an attempted murder (pic right) in August 2021, had seen the park feature prominently in local press stories.



Since June the TCTF have been working hard to change the narrative. Increased CCTV, night closures, regular patrol, youth engagement activities, school visits (pic left), bandstand concerts, summer security and deck chairs have all been utilised to significantly reduce concerns about behaviour in the park.

Further work to restore the bandstand and to convert the disused toilet block to a community safety hub will further safeguard the parks improving reputation.



PCCB
Where significant risks are identified through intelligence, hostile operations have been undertaken to disrupt criminal activity or to safeguard those at risk of exploitation

62 As part of the TCTFs arsenal, the use of intelligence sharing, across the SOCP, MASP, DCSM and TCTF working groups has led to the execution of a number of “hostile operations” against crimes that create the most risk. The operations are intelligence led and can be in the form of days of action, test purchasing operations or the execution of warrants. Below is a list of some of the Hostile Ops undertaken since June:

- Drug Busts** Hardy Street Drug bust
Pevensey Court Drug bust
- Trading Standards**
 - Illegal Tobacco Day of Action with KCC Trading Standards
 - 1,025 vapes
 - 6.65kg tobacco
 - 15,920 cigarettes
 - 30 packs of Spanish tobacco pods
 - 1,367 counterfeit items including, Disney merchandise, Rolex watches and Apple AirPods
 - Test purchase Operation utilising police cadets- Knives/Vapes
 - 77% (26) passed test by asking for ID
 - 6 premises followed up by Licensing Officer
- MDS/ Immigration** Hand Carwash
 - Two people found living in the car wash
 - Illegal foreign national removed to Dover. 2nd re-housed by MBC
- Community Protection** Noisy neighbour seizure warrant and prosecution
 - Resident prosecuted for breach of Community Protection Notice, fined £1,500
 - Recovery of investigation costs in the sum of £1,500
 - A Forfeiture Order for some of the items that were seized under warrant- all speakers and the drum kit are to be forfeited
 - A Criminal Behaviour Order, to be in place until 11 January 2025 restricting offender’s anti-social behaviour



ENGAGEMENT AND LEGACY
Safer Streets has provided funding which is being used to reduce and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and ASB.



63 The SMP were successful in obtaining funding from the Safer Streets 4 fund. As a partnership we identified a number of initiatives that would reduce and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and ASB. These initiatives are being funded by safer streets funding:

<p>Repurposing of Brenchley Gardens Toilet Block – Community Safety Hub</p> <p>Creating a hub for SMP partners to utilise whilst working in and around Brenchley Gardens. The hub will improve presence in the area, provide a visible deterrent, increase CCTV and the aesthetic of a well-used corner of the park.</p>
<p>VAWG safety equipment and initiatives</p> <p>The fund has been used to purchase a number of panic alarms and anti-spiking cup covers which are being distributed at VAWG initiatives across the Town and in schools. Subscriptions for a DA/ Stalking prevention app for higher risk victims (Hollie Guard) have been sourced and will be administered through the DA Forum. A Self Defence Seminar and classes are being developed for Town Centre Staff and Residents.</p>
<p>Youth Workers for the “lost hours”</p> <p>Additional youth workers have been introduced to enable engagement with young people after school and at weekends. This is through outreach and through the provision of a new youth hub, detailed below.</p>
<p>Active Bystander Training</p> <p>Training sessions for professionals and the community are being provided. Active Bystander takes a public health approach to reducing violence, particularly in men.</p>
<p>Safer Maidstone Media Campaign</p> <p>MaidSafer is a media campaign that promotes safety in the town. It demonstrates how the SMP work together to provide a safe town.</p>
<p>Additional CCTV</p> <p>Additional CCTV has been sourced to provide greater coverage of hot spots and spaces where people could be vulnerable.</p>
<p>Funding for NTE Volunteers and equipment</p> <p>Equipment has been provided to Street Pastors and Urban Blue to help support their voluntary services in the NTE</p>
<p>New NTE – Culture Setting Initiative (Best Bar None)</p> <p>Best Bar None is a national initiative to improve safety within the NTE. The initiative challenges NTE venues to do more to reduce violence, particularly in regard to women, by training staff to a higher standard and by providing initiatives like “safe spaces”.</p>

ENGAGEMENT AND LEGACY

Further funding was secured from Kent and Medway VRU to help tackle hotspots of serious violence.



64 Over recent years we have been able to secure funding from the Kent and Medway VRU, funding been delivered or progressed in this period:

326 Youth Hub, The Mall, Maidstone
February saw the launch of our new youth hub. The concept was to provide a facility that not only complimented the Town Centre youth clubs, with a brand-new shop, opened each weekday between 15:00 and 18:00 (lost hours). The space offers young people a place where they can feel safe, where they are be heard by professions, but ultimately where they can have fun. Delivered in partnership with One Maidstone, this initiative puts KCC Youth Workers in a prime location to engage with a range of young people. The Hubs launch was supported by England Lioness and Manchester United Footballer, Alessia Russo, who grew up in Maidstone. (https://youtube.com/shorts/Mm49p4A28IQ?feature=shares)
Core Gym initiative
In partnership with KCC Youth Services and the Core Gym, this initiative allows young people who need support and diversion to be given 3 months access to the gym as part of their engagement with youth workers. Exercise, particularly gyms, are a fantastic location to work with young men on improving their mental health, confidence and decision making.
Youth safety fortnight
In April 2023, the SMP will be supporting Maidstone’s first “Youth Safety Fortnight”. Working with a number of outreach partners, this event will provide advice on how to stay safe whilst out and about in the borough.
Switch away day
In July 2022, the Switch Café were able to take a group of under privileged young people to a Theme Park for the day. The day enabled the team to build meaningful relationships with the young people and to provide them with an opportunity to make friends and make memories.
Youth Forum
In 2022, KCC Youth Services worked with the wider SMP to launch a brand-new Youth Forum. The group have been provided a small amount of funding to enable them to run an initiative of their own design for Your People in Maidstone.

ENGAGEMENT AND LEGACY

**Engagement Activities help
raise awareness and
change the narrative
around perceived crime**

65 In addition to the engagement activities brought about through specific funding, the TCTF has also delivered and support a number of engagement activities, including these:

- White Ribbon at Maidstone United (as detailed in the DA Forum section)
- Hate Crime Week
- VAWG Walk and Talk (as detailed in the DA Forum section)
- "All out" Youth Engagement evenings
- Regular High Profile Multi-agency foot patrols

Strategically, the SMP have aligned this priority to the Local Children’s Partnership Group’s Action Plan 2022-2023, which is linked to the 0-25 Kent Health and Wellbeing Board Priorities

- 66 The behaviour of some young people puts individuals and communities at risk. The SMP continues in its duty to safeguard our young people. This includes those individuals that intend to cause them harm through the supply of drugs and sexual exploitation (CSE) or those whose acts of domestic, drug or alcohol abuse in the home. Knife crime, serious youth violence and the impact of gang culture remain prevalent threats in young people’s lives. The SMP, through the DCSM, continues to look for opportunities to provide safe spaces for young people, where meaningful relationships can be formed.
- 67 The Maidstone District Local Children’s Partnership Groups (LCPG) brings a number of partner organisations together with the aim of improving outcomes for children and young people in the Borough. Working collaboratively to understand and meet the needs of local residents, the LCPG set out yearly district partnership priorities of:

Community-
Children and young people to grow in safe families and communities, free from exposure to adverse childhood experiences, domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, parental and/or community conflict, with better access to educational, social, and developmental opportunities.
Resilience and Empowerment
Support children and young people to become empowered and resilient through developing core life skills and improving awareness of issues such as child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and risk-taking behaviours.
Family
Improved support for parents that enhances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parental engagement ○ Access to services such as employment opportunities ○ Parental understanding of child and adolescent development ○ Parent’s ability to manage children’s behaviour and nurture their development

SMP is delivering on the LCPG action plan through its working groups

- 68 The action plan includes KCC specific deliverables around Early Years provisions, social services, and children/youth provisions. However, that are actions delivered by the SMP in response or support of the agreed priorities, including:

District Contextual Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Forum
Partnership work to protect young people, particularly around trauma informed practice, as detailed within this report
Maidstone Task Force in Marden and Yalding
Relocated from Shepway to Marden and Yalding in June and has delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant engagement with a particularly problematic family • Work undertaken to reduce the risk around YP swimming in the river at Yalding Lock. • Weekly boxing provided by Olympia Boxing • Staplehurst Youth Club and Marden Youth Clubs reopened and is attracting large numbers of YP from all over the South Maidstone region
Town Centre Task Force
As detailed in previous section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaken extensive work has been undertaken to reduce ASB particularly in North Week Street and Brenchley Gardens. • Looked at substance misuse in young people, with growing concerns around underage vaping and associated risk-taking behaviour. • operations undertaken to tackle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ those selling vapes to minors ○ those acquiring them for young people, ○ and challenging the young people themselves. • the 3-2-6 Youth Hub opened • Several measures under Safer Streets 4 feed into this priority, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brenchley Gardens Community Safety Hub ○ Youth Workers for the “Lost Hours” ○ Bystander Training for professionals who work with Young People ○ CCTV for locations where young people are known to gather since the intensification of guardianship in Brenchley Gardens.

Operationally, the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting (DCSM) continues to identify locations and the young people using them, that are putting themselves and others at risk

69 In 2022 the DCSM identified 22 locations / premises across the borough where young people's behaviour is deemed to have been putting themselves or others at risk. In discussing these locations 39 young people were identified and plans put in place to support, divert, or disrupt their behaviour in order to safeguard them. In addition to discussing locations and young people of concern, the DCSM also benefits from the following inputs:

- VRU input- intel and trends in relation to violence in U25s. Feedback from the Prevent, Prepare Protect Board (PPP) regarding exploitation and County Lines risks.
- 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
- Training inputs- frequent inputs from services, charities and initiatives that support young people.

Children who go missing are at a higher risk of harm and are often those identified as being linked to risk taking behaviour in hotspot locations

70 Nationally, children represent approximately two thirds of the missing person incidents. The reasons for running away are varied, complex and unique to individual children. The most frequent reason given is 'problems at home'. Physical abuse from adults, mental health and substance misuse problems, and involvement in criminality are commonly associated with children running away. Missing children are at high risk of physical and sexual abuse, criminality, and homelessness. Persistent running away is increasingly understood to be an indicator that a child may be a victim of sexual exploitation.

Partnership working is recognised as being essential when looking after children who frequently go missing.

71 The DCSM ensures local concerns and young people, who's missing episodes are of greatest concern, are kept safe through effective partnership working. From the information provided below, Maidstone borough saw an increase of 31% in comparison to the previous period, although levels remain lower than pre-pandemic. Whilst increasing levels is a concern, the levels in Maidstone and West as a whole remain considerably lower than the levels seen in East Kent and North Kent, where missing children are considerably higher.

Increases in missing children, particularly those who suffer or are at risk of CSE, are a focal point for the work of the DCSM.

72 There has been a noticeable increase in risk taking behaviour in children between 11 and 14 in the borough and nationally, the age groups whose transition to secondary school was most impacted by the pandemic. However, it is important that we continue to see them as children first, 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.

	Maidstone	North Kent	East Kent	West Kent
Missing Reports	414	2563	3214	973
Individuals	173	837	1196	449

M-CET DATA	2022	2021	Diff +/-	% Change
Missing Reports	414	315	99	31%
Individuals	173	154	19	12%
Average Missing Time (hours)	20	18	2	11%
Repeat Rate%	72%	67%	-	5%
Possible CSE	99	51	48	94%
Found Harmed	16	14	2	14%

- **Possible CSE** – CSE is a highly complex crime. This figure is used to record both those at risk, not just those as confirmed as victims of this offence, so the increase here reflects risk as opposed to harm.
- **Found Harmed** – this can mean a multitude of things. A child can be harmed either from an assault, road traffic crash or even self-harm. This remains relatively low.
- **Repeat Rate** – children have a significantly higher rate of repeat missing than adults, with children in care more likely to go missing more often. Repeat rate has not increased significantly.

Care is still needed to ensure “gang culture” is not confused with gang behaviour and that efforts continue to ensure peer groups who evolve into street groups are not allowed to escalate into organised crime groups.

73 Maidstone does not have an identified “gang/OCG”, although the risk of County Lines remains. Perceived “gang culture” does however continue to influence how our young people act, dress, and speak. When referring to groups of young people we must ensure that we use the defined terms, as the follows:

- **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’.

The DCSM often works to disrupt “Peer Groups” who’s behaviour is considered unacceptable or posing a risk. Where a Peer Group starts to demonstrate a hierarchy and begins to engage in criminality and violence, the then “Street Group” are then mapped, and a holistic plan drawn up to disrupt their behaviour.

Youth Justice and the Youth Offending Team continue to support young people who commit criminal offences Numbers remain relatively low in regard to both offences committed and children committing crimes.

74

Age of Offenders	2021/22	2020/21
Age under 12	10	1
Age 13	10	1
Age 14	10	1
Age 15	9	10
Age 16	18	5
Age 17 +	26	12

Looking at the latest period, April 2021 to March 2022, youth offences have decreased from **152 to 146**, a decrease of **6 (4%)**.

There has been a decrease in the number of individuals committing crime, from **91 to 83** a decrease of 8(**9%**). The breakdown of these offenders’ age groups is shown in the table on the left.

Around **0.5%** 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	2021-22
2021/22	184	132	97	110	87	152	146

**Proposed changes to KCC
Community Services could
impact on the way
vulnerable people in
communities access
services**

75 KCC, due to financial challenges, is reviewing how it provides a number of its community-based services. At the time of this report, KCC is undertaking a consultation on proposals which affect the delivery of: Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, Public Health Services for Children and Families, Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education), and Gateways. In principle the proposals are in regard to how customers access those services as the access points for these services will change, with fewer properties, collocated services, delivered through outreach or by accessing services online. For the SMP, consideration needs to be given as to how this changes how some victims access services, particularly where disclosures or requests for help are only provided once a relationship has been built between them and a service provider. This is very true of children's centres and domestic abuse, where there is a long history of survivors of abuse reaching out for services to help them recover.

A further consideration is the potential review of KCC Community Wardens. Community Wardens play an important role within the SMP, particularly in rural areas, where they undertake a community liaison role, helping to relieve community tensions and helping communities to develop initiatives that support better community life. In many aspects of their roles, KCC Community Wardens, like PCSOs, also support services like Health Care and Social Service by providing support to the most vulnerable, including those with care and mental health needs. A reduction in this service will impact on Community Safety in some communities and will, like the changes for PCSOs, need to be monitored.

KCC's decision to withdraw their Early Help Grants, which offered up to £15,000 per charity per financial year, is thought to impact on those charities that undertake specialist services around bereavement, mental health, and wellbeing.

For both Community Services and the KCC Community Wardens, it will be vital that the SMP works closely with appropriate links at KCC to ensure suitable services and access points are created, so as to meet the needs of services, particularly where data in this and future reports indicates a community need.

7. Priority area Summary Reviews

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

Priority status: On track 76 The SMP is well placed to continue to deliver work which will prevent and reduce serious violent and organised crime as this area continues to pose a significant risk. Particularly areas where the volume of incidents is likely to be extremely low, but the individual or community harm would be significant.

Priority status: Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse

Priority status: On track 77 Domestic Abuse remains a national priority. Locally, Domestic Abuse makes up nearly a fifth of all crime and over 80% of all crimes involving violence against a person. The MDAF is well placed to continue to support the SMP's Domestic Abuse duty, continuing to support victims and raise awareness.

Priority status: Provide a safe town centre

Priority status: Exceeding expectations 78 The introduction and investment of partners into the TCTF has seen significant improvements into not only how the town centre is policed, but also in the way service providers, such as housing providers, businesses and youth providers have collaborated with the wider SMP in delivering a holistic, public health response to identified challenges. This has led greater than expected levels of crime and ASB reduction. Secondly, the success of obtaining funding from Safer Streets 4 has meant an acceleration of services that would have taken years to fund or may not have been delivered at all.

Priority status: Keeping children and young people safe

Priority status: On track 79 Alignment to the LCPGs action plan has ensured that, alongside other children services' priorities, adverse childhood experiences, their impact on decision making and risk taking, continues to be considered when protecting young people across the priorities. It also ensures that services are designed that create spaces where young people feel safe, have a sense of belonging and know that they matter. DCSM continues to work to protect young people in locations where their behaviour, or the behaviour of others puts them or others at risk.

8. SMP Cross-cutting Themes

ASB falling to pre-pandemic levels. Dog incidents are increasing, but still relatively low in comparison to other issues

Effective use of Community Protection Powers continues across the SMP

Use of CPWs to challenge ASB has increased, with Kent Police increasing their use significantly

Use of CPNs has increased

- 80 As detailed the [Cluster Data Analysis and trends](#), ASB has reduced by 31% across the whole borough.
- 81 The table eight in [appendix 2](#) provides a breakdown of ASB reported by Kent police by Ward. Map 3 ([appendix 3](#)), shows the distribution of ASB in 2022, in comparison with 2021. The Council's CPT has also recorded a reduction in service requests for both ASB (-27%) and Nuisance (-15%), whereas incidents involving dangerous, or nuisance dogs has increase (+25), although the numbers remain relatively low. The service request activity breakdown is provided in [Appendix 4](#)
- 82 Community Protection Notice (CPNs) remains one of the most effective tools in the Community Safety tool kit. 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. These are referred to within the SMP as CPWs. CPWs continue to be the most effective aspect of this power, as compliance with warnings remains high.
- 83 The following provides the collective breakdown of warnings and notices issued, including those issued within the MTF and TCTF. Warnings for ASB has increased significantly, with greater police understanding of their effectiveness, without necessarily issuing formal notices.

Breakdown of CPWs Issued	2019	2020	2021	2022
ASB	13	28	26	62
Nuisance/Dangerous dog (Inc Barking)	5	8	19	6
Noise (Inc with ASB)	4	18	25	28
Nuisance	1	14	15	12
Unauthorised Encampment	5	2	0	0
Total	28	70	85	108

- 84 Where the unwanted behaviour persists after a CPW is issued, it can be necessary to issue a CPN, which

relative to CPWs, but still shows CPWs are largely effective in dealing with unwanted behaviour

can put in place requirements. The use of CPNs, with the threat of prosecution or fixed penalty notice, is used as part of an escalating approach. CPN use by the TCTF and MTF is indicative of the type of individuals they are dealing with, where a warning is not sufficient and accounts for some of the increase, relative to the CPWs issued.

Breakdown of CPNs Issued	2019	2020	2021	2022
ASB	1	20	4	19
Nuisance/Dangerous dog (Inc Barking)	0	0	0	5
Noise (Inc with ASB)	1	2	6	12
Nuisance	0	8	3	1
Unauthorised Encampment	1	1	0	0
Total	3	31	13	37

Criminal Behaviour Orders used to challenge persistent offenders, following prosecutions

85 In addition to the above, the SMP successfully obtained three Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) against offenders who were found guilty of criminal offences. The police obtained CBOs for two individuals who’s ASB has had a detrimental impact on their communities, which included a ban from being in the Town Centre. The CPT were also successful in applying for a CBO, putting place conditions to protect neighbours from excessive noise, following a successful prosecution and seizure of noise equipment following the breach of a noise related CPN.

No Community Triggers requested in 2022

86 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 2022.

Only one unauthorised encampment, which was removed under police powers within a few hours

87 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 2022 this trend continued with the only encampment, which was made up of a large number of vehicles in Mote Park, was removed under police powers.

Considerable investment has been made by partners across the SMP to utilise their media channels to raise awareness and celebrate successes.

89 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. A specific communications plan is in place to install a sense of safety, remove the fear and negative perception, and encourage behaviour change of people who install fear and are responsible for antisocial behaviour. The plan includes the use of several press releases, social media posts, newsletter content to promote the work of the SMP and to promote the Town Centre, in particular, in a positive way. As an example, there has been 90 My Community Voice posts from Kent Police about activity in the Town. The MaidSafer brand, on posters around the town provides a visual reminder of the work being undertaken to keep Maidstone safe.

Borough Insight- winter edition	Safer Maidstone Media Campaign	
 <p>Safer Streets Funding</p> <p>Maidstone Street Pastors Playing a vital night-time role</p> <p>#MaidSafer</p>	 <p>#MaidSafer</p> <p>Be Safe Keep Safe</p> <p>Safer Streets brought to you in partnership with:</p> <p>AT&T, ONE, M2, FIBRE, BT, BT Sport, BT TV, BT Music, BT Sport, BT Sport, BT Sport, BT Sport</p>	 <p>Be Safe. Keep Safe.</p> <p>Safer Streets</p>

Trauma informed practice remains a fundamental element of the SMPs work

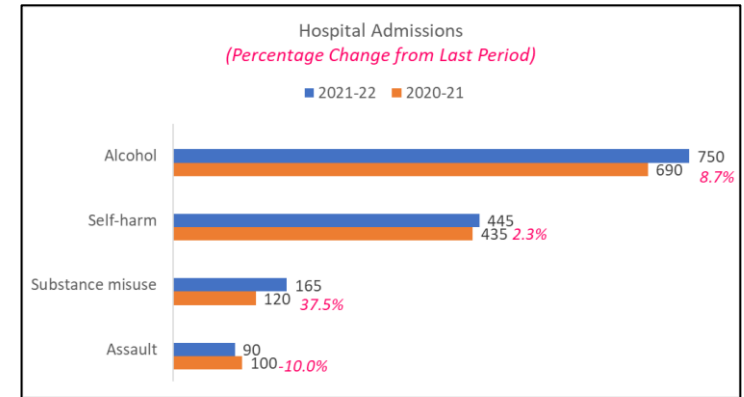
- 90 There is a significant body of evidence that identifies that a public health approach is needed to reduce violence and reduce the wider determinants of crime.
- 91 Trauma informed practice is imbedded within the work of all the priority delivery groups as a foundation to the work undertaken. There are several examples within this report of the work undertaken in this period where a public health approach is taken. Here are some examples for each group:

Protecting our communities against serious, violent, and organised crime (including modern-day slavery)-Delivered through the SOCP
Recognising the impact of past traumas in offenders. Plans that put in place support and opportunities for rehabilitation, restorative justice, and community payback
Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse (including stalking)- Delivered through the MDAF
Processes that support victims/survivors of DA through the housing process. Trauma informed awareness events for practitioners
Providing a Safe Town Centre – Delivered by the TCTF
Active Bystander training funded by safer streets, promoting awareness of social influences and pressures on boys in particular
Keeping children and young people safe- Delivered through the DCSM
Recognising the impact on young people who are witnesses to violence or abuse in their decision making. Raising awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences within schools and with businesses.

Alcohol remains the highest cause for hospital admissions

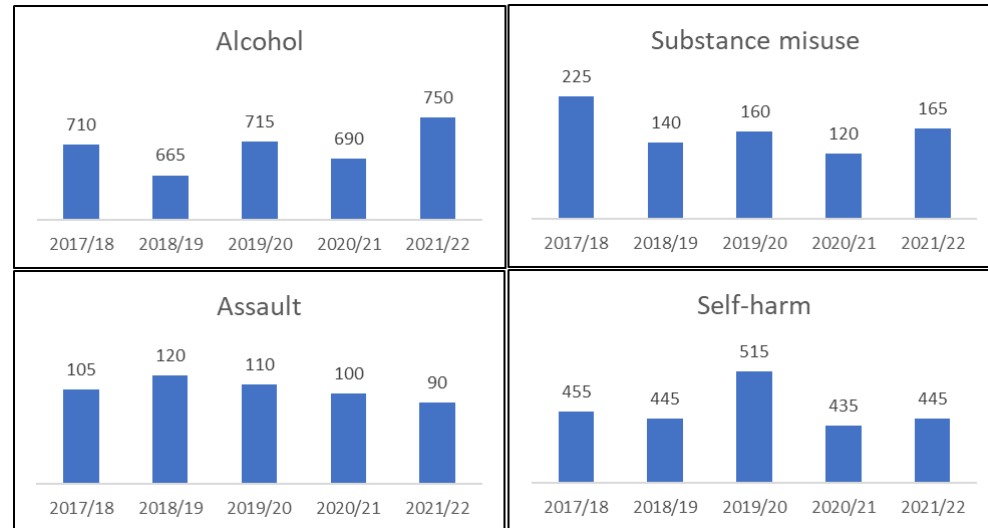
92 Substance misuse relates to the use of drugs, alcohol and includes New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) previously known as 'legal highs

93 The data regarding Hospital Admissions, which covers the fiscal year, show that Alcohol and Substance Abuse admissions have increased, with the volume of alcohol admissions remaining significantly higher than other admission types. Maidstone also saw an increase in admissions for self-harm, but admissions for assault decreased.



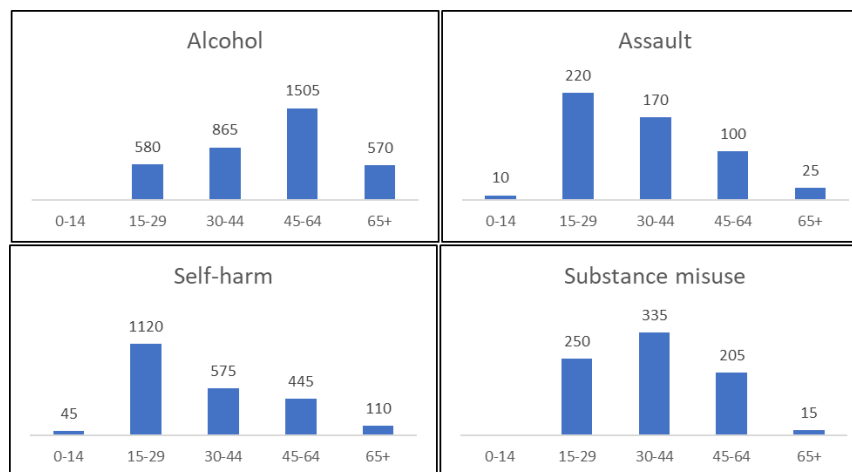
Hospital admissions over a longer period show that levels are remaining stable in Maidstone for all categories

94 The volume of emergency admissions for alcohol, self-harm, assault, and substance misuse remains stable over the last five years, with alcohol showing the most significant increase.



Different age categories responsible for most Alcohol (45-64) and Substance misuse (30-44) admissions

95 Admissions for substance misuse are focused around the 15 to 44 age group, whereas alcohol admission are more towards the older age groups. Highs in Self-Harm and Assault can be found in the younger age bands.



Number of hospital admissions by type and age band in Maidstone during 2017/18-2021/22.

Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Digital.

Drug offences rise

6.6%



96 Kent police's recorded drug offences include both offences of drug supply and possession. Under this category of crime Maidstone has seen a **(6.6%)** increase in drug offences in 2022 compared to 2021 with **435 (+27)**. Overall, Kent saw an increase of (2.2%) of drug offences for the rolling year January 2022 to December 2022 with ninety-five crimes more than last year. This data includes the proactive work of Maidstone police engaging in warrants and stop and search.

Needle finds fall, but not as much as the figures suggest



-56%

The riverside locations continue give rise to concern as hot spots for needle finds

97 The following table shows the needle finds in the borough. The figure combines the needles removed by the council’s waste team and the contents of external needle bins, strategically placed in the town to try to reduce discarded needles. 472 Needles were found/retrieved in the year 2022, which is a 56% decrease. However, last year 500 needles were found in Sutton Road Cemetery, which is an anomaly. The true figure for 2021 was closer to 550, which is still a significant drop from previous years.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	143	164	84	205	87	85	85	203	120	136	113	97	1,522
2020	59	54	138	1,542	117	27	104	128	107	121	17	74	2,488
2021	135	55	38		14	539	34	42	23	120	43	23	1,066
2022	80	15	18	51	22	41	79	55	26	24	43	18	472

98 The decrease in needles has been linked largely to the work of the Outreach team within the Council’s Housing Team, who this year have worked closely with the TCTF. The following shows that some areas like the Rose Garden, has seen significant decreases. The Rose Garden is close to the Amphitheatere and River Steps, which is an area where some displacement has been seen from the Town Centre. These will be considered by the TCTF going forward.

Jan-21 to Dec-21

Location	Count
Sutton Rd Cemetary	500
Rose Garden	129
Ampitheatre	107
River steps	96
Whatman Park	88

Jan-22 to Dec-22

Location	Count
Whatman Park	143
Ampitheatre	109
River steps	70
Brewer St Cemetary	61
Rose Garden	40

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

	99	Mental health/wellbeing can play a significant role in how people behave, but it also influences how they access services and vulnerability to others who might choose to exploit them.
Mental Health/wellbeing is integral to all aspects of the CSP Plan	100	Mental Health is intrinsically linked to all aspects of this plan, including the four priority workstreams. 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 to reduce crime and ASB
The Community Safety and Vulnerability Group (CSVG) works in partnership to safeguard our most vulnerable residents	101	The CSVG is a partnership meeting that considers the welfare most vulnerable in our district, with mental health a common concern for those residents referred to the group for discussion. Representatives from more than ten partnership agencies and service providers discuss the needs of individuals of concern, sharing intelligence and targeting their resources to safeguard them against themselves and those who might seek to exploit them. In 2022 the CSVG discussed 86 Cases. 100% of them identified concerns with mental health, although many of them had no mental health support or had refused to engage with services. Thirty-five cases considered some form of substance misuse, including alcohol abuse.
Work around the point of crisis remains key to minimise risk	102	When someone is in crisis in a public space and posing a risk to themselves or others, the police have the power under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act to remove a person to a place of safety. The power cannot be used to remove people from their own home, or someone else's home. In 2021/22 the use of Section 146 reduced by 26%, from 176 times to 130 times. Hospital admissions, as shown in eighty-seven , also showed that self-harm was the second highest reason for admission, with 31% of Hospital Admissions in the borough. Many of the hospital admissions for alcohol and substance misuse also included a mental health aspect to the admission.
Referrals into support services rise	103	Where a concern is identified, practitioners can make a mental health referral into support services. For younger adult (18-64) services (including acute/community recovery services) 1433 case referrals were made, compared to 1243 the previous year, an increase of 15% . In older adults (65+) there was an increase of 23% to 1065 cases compared to 866 the previous year

104 Reducing reoffending is a statutory requirement for all Community Safety Partnerships.

Reoffending remains an area of concern

105 People offend for a variety of reasons. Some offenders have troubled lives with complex needs, and, in many cases, this contributes to their continuing offending behaviour. Some of these factors include health related issues (including mental health), accommodation, drugs and alcohol and attitudes (thinking/behaviour). The IOM data provided in paragraph 40 indicates the impact on offending IOM plans are, in terms of reducing offending.

Partnership working remains a key element of reducing reoffending

106 The HMPPS Reducing Reoffending Plan 2021-2024 acknowledges the importance of partnership working to provide services and interventions at the critical time when repeat offenders want to change their offending lifestyle. The Plan articulates this will be achieved at a local level through the Community Safety Partnerships, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference [MARAC], local MAPPA boards, Child and Adult Safeguarding Partnerships and Reducing Reoffending groups. The current IOM cohort and prison releases for Maidstone are discussed at SOCP

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Community Safety, Youth Safety Surveys and Residents Covid 19 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 comparable 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 do not 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 centre, 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 behaviour 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 behaviour 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, most 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 behaviour 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 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, 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.

Residents Covid 19 Survey

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 three concerns and around 14% selected mental health as one of their top three concerns.

Table One- Actual Crimes Reported

Ward	This Year	Last Year	Change in Crimes	Ward	This Year	Last Year	Change in Crimes
Allington	272	247	-25	Heath	847	813	34
Barming	82	82	0	High Street	3530	3410	120
Bearsted	258	262	4	Leeds	145	173	-28
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	151	117	-34	Loose	113	98	15
Boxley	566	658	92	Marden and Yalding	616	607	9
Bridge	777	796	19	North Downs	239	236	3
Coxheath and Hunton	397	429	32	North	865	811	54
Detling and Thurnham	140	162	22	Park Wood	1201	1212	-11
Downswood and Otham	194	157	-37	Shepway North	794	862	-68
East	729	737	8	Shepway South	545	574	-29
Fant	1176	1069	-107	South	532	630	-98
Harrietsham and Lenham	584	501	-83	Staplehurst	493	436	57
Headcorn	419	441	22	Sutton Valence and Langley	167	169	-2

Table Two- Normalise Reported Crimes based on population (per 1000 people)

Ward	This Year	Last Year	%Change	Ward	This Year	Last Year	%Change
Allington	31	34	-9%	Heath	114	109	4%
Barming	34	34	0%	High Street	296	286	4%
Bearsted	31	31	2%	Leeds	60	71	-16%
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	40	52	-23%	Loose	44	38	15%
Boxley	75	65	16%	Marden and Yalding	65	64	1%
Bridge	119	116	2%	North Downs	89	88	1%
Coxheath and Hunton	52	48	8%	North	84	79	7%
Detling and Thurnham	50	43	16%	Park Wood	128	129	-1%
Downswood and Otham	47	58	-19%	Shepway North	86	93	-8%
East	82	81	1%	Shepway South	92	97	-5%
Fant	103	113	-9%	South	52	61	-16%
Harrietsham and Lenham	71	82	-14%	Staplehurst	74	65	13%
Headcorn	73	69	5%	Sutton Valence and Langley	54	54	-1%

Table Three

VBC	2022	2021	Diff +/-	% Change
Cluster 1	989	1002	-13	-1%
Cluster 2	485	515	-30	-6%
Cluster 3	716	702	14	2%
Cluster 4	1349	1287	62	5%
Cluster 5	4983	4578	405	9%
Cluster 6	887	877	10	1%
Cluster 7	1415	1512	-97	-6%
Cluster 8	2173	2228	-55	-2%
Total	12997	12701	296	2%

Table Four

CAS	2022	2021	Diff +/-	% Change
Cluster 1	181	159	22	14%
Cluster 2	81	99	-18	-18%
Cluster 3	122	116	6	5%
Cluster 4	201	214	-13	-6%
Cluster 5	992	1029	-37	-4%
Cluster 6	148	137	11	8%
Cluster 7	212	254	-42	-17%
Cluster 8	356	406	-50	-12%
Total	2293	2414	-121	-5%

Table 5

ASB	2022	2021	Diff +/-	% Change
Cluster 1	166	232	-66	-28%
Cluster 2	96	120	-24	-20%
Cluster 3	127	169	-42	-25%
Cluster 4	271	492	-221	-45%
Cluster 5	806	1139	-333	-29%
Cluster 6	161	252	-91	-36%
Cluster 7	268	480	-212	-44%
Cluster 8	469	630	-161	-26%
Total	2364	3514	-1150	-33%

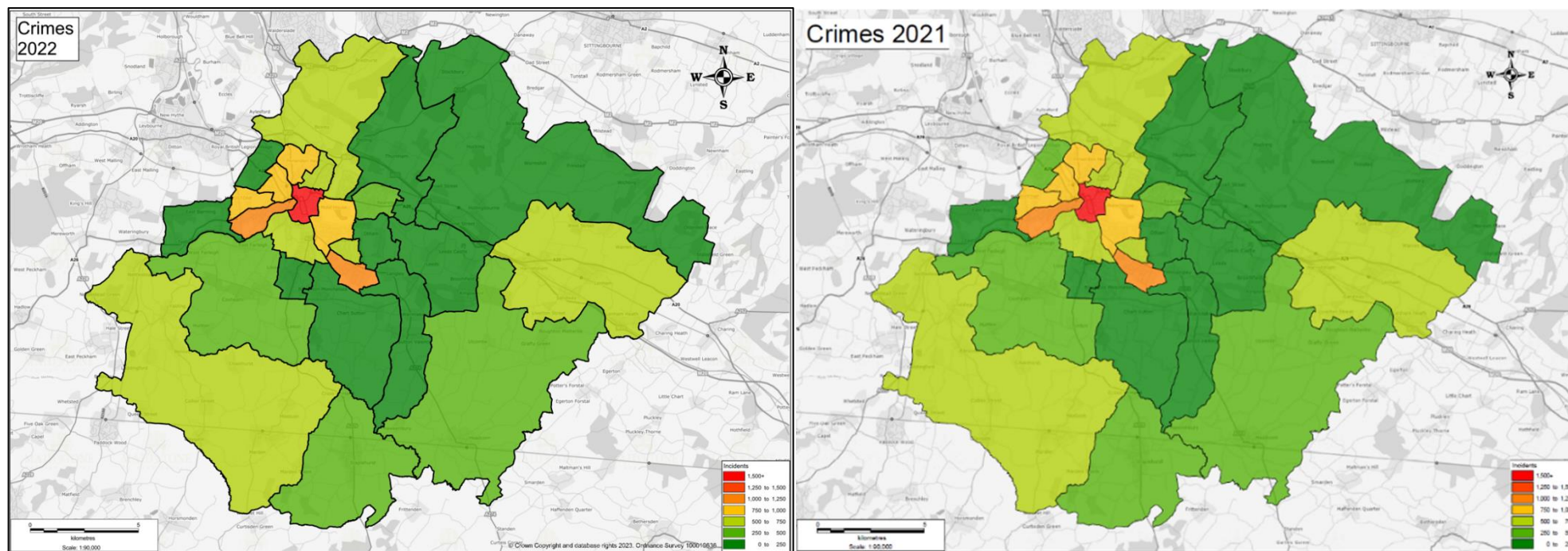
Legend	
VBC	Victim Based Crime
CAS	Crimes Against Society
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
	Negative trend
	Positive trend
Cluster 1	Allington, Barming, Heath
Cluster 2	Bearsted, Downswood & Otham, Leeds
Cluster 3	Coxheath & Hunton, Loose, Boughton Monchelsea & Chart Sutton, Sutton Valance & Langley
Cluster 4	Boxley, Detling & Thurnham, North Downs, Harrietsham & Lenham
Cluster 5	Bridge, East, High Street and North
Cluster 6	Marden & Yalding, Staplehurst, Headcorn
Cluster 7	Fant, South
Cluster 8	Shepway North, Shepway South, Park Wood

Table Six- Actual DA Crimes Reported								Table Seven- Normalise DA Crimes Reported based on ward population (Per 1000 people) with 2021 population data.							
	This Year	Last Year	Change in Crimes	Ward	This Year	Last Year	Ward	Ward	This Year	Last Year	%Change	Ward	This Year	Last Year	%Change
Allington	68	68	0	Heath	111	95	16	Allington	9.2	9.2	0%	Heath	15.8	13.5	17%
Barming	13	24	-11	High Street	461	497	-36	Barming	5.7	10.6	-46%	High Street	39.4	42.5	-7%
Bearsted	53	43	10	Leeds	24	36	-12	Bearsted	6.3	5.1	23%	Leeds	10.0	15.1	-33%
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	15	25	-10	Loose	22	16	6	Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	5.4	8.9	-40%	Loose	8.6	6.3	38%
Boxley	91	72	19	Marden and Yalding	147	148	-1	Boxley	10.6	8.4	26%	Marden and Yalding	16.8	16.9	-1%
Bridge	132	183	-51	North	200	196	4	Bridge	19.7	27.2	-28%	North	19.9	19.5	2%
Coxheath and Hunton	114	118	-4	North Downs	42	34	8	Coxheath and Hunton	14.7	15.2	-3%	North Downs	17.2	13.9	24%
Detling and Thurnham	20	20	0	Park Wood	309	292	17	Detling and Thurnham	6.4	6.4	0%	Park Wood	33.5	31.7	24%
Downswood and Otham	49	35	14	Shepway North	170	205	-35	Downswood and Otham	16.2	11.6	40%	Shepway North	18.2	22.0	-17%
East	130	169	-39	Shepway South	132	136	-4	East	14.5	18.9	-23%	Shepway South	22.0	22.6	-3%
Fant	262	280	-18	South	91	168	-77	Fant	24.2	25.9	-6%	South	8.9	16.4	-46%
Harrietsham and Lenham	97	118	-21	Staplehurst	94	92	2	Harrietsham and Lenham	14.4	17.6	-18%	Staplehurst	15.1	14.7	2%
Headcorn	80	70	10	Sutton Valence and Langley	28	37	-9	Headcorn	13.4	11.8	14%	Sutton Valence and Langley	8.0	10.6	-24%

Table 6- ASB in Wards

Ward	Last Year	This Year	Change in Crimes	%Change	Ward	Last Year	This Year	Change in Crimes	%Change
Allington	39	65	-26	-40.0%	Heath	82	106	-24	-22.6%
Barming	45	62	-17	-27.4%	High Street	539	738	-199	-27.0%
Bearsted	37	59	-22	-37.3%	Leeds	28	24	4	16.7%
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	23	20	3	15.0%	Loose	18	24	-6	-25.0%
Boxley	61	181	-120	-66.3%	Marden and Yalding	96	149	-53	-35.6%
Bridge	92	153	-61	-39.9%	North Downs	137	194	-57	-29.4%
Coxheath and Hunton	63	104	-41	-39.4%	North	28	69	-41	-59.4%
Detling and Thurnham	11	33	-22	-66.7%	Park Wood	196	241	-45	-18.7%
Downswood and Otham	31	38	-7	-18.4%	Shepway North	172	262	-90	-34.4%
East	147	180	-33	-18.3%	Shepway South	101	127	-26	-20.5%
Fant	165	235	-70	-29.8%	South	103	246	-143	-58.1%
Harrietsham and Lenham	62	84	-22	-26.2%	Staplehurst	61	78	-17	-21.8%
Headcorn	65	103	-38	-36.9%	Sutton Valence and Langley	23	22	1	4.5%

Map 1 All Crime (2022 and 2021)

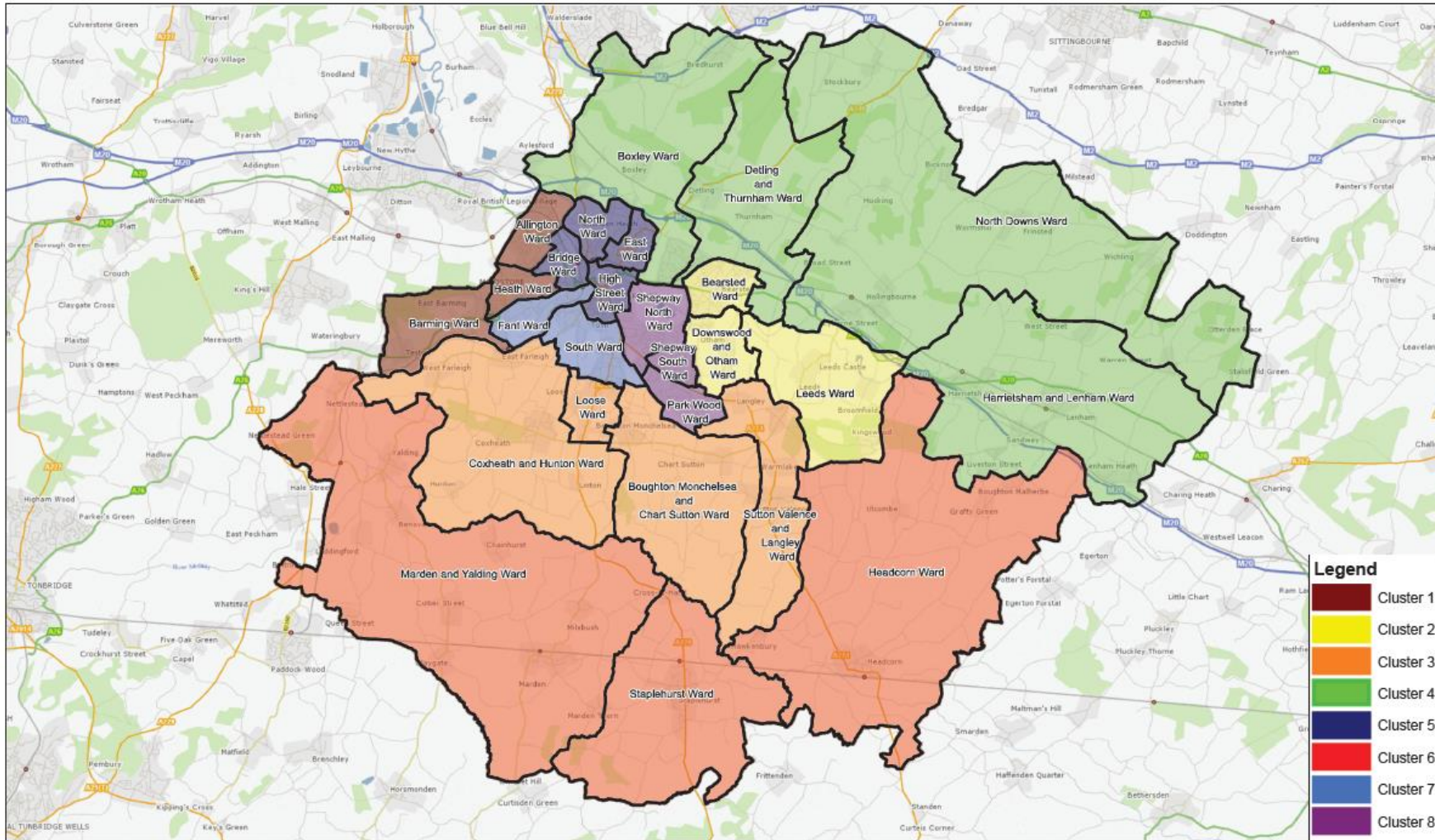


Map 2- Ward Clusters

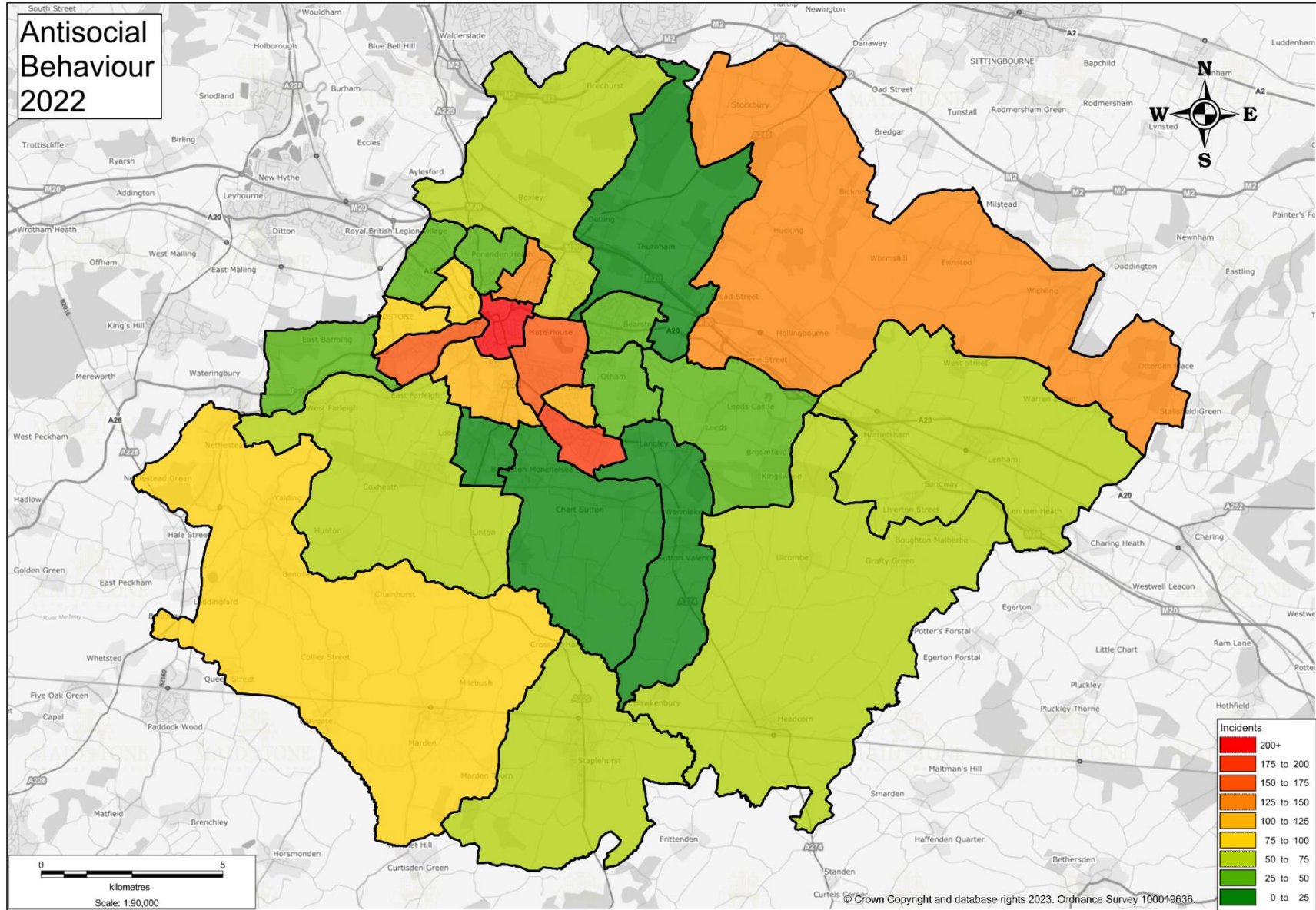


Combined Ward Clusters

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Map 3- Anti-social behaviour 2022



Appendix 4- Community Protection Team Activity

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

Description	2019	2020	2021	2022	Comments
All Anti-social behaviour complaints	217	440	408	299	ASB, as per the police data has reduced, and for the CPT in now at levels more aligned to pre-pandemic levels.
All noise nuisances including amplified music and barking	569	693	719	610	Noise nuisance complaints have seemingly returned to pre-pandemic levels. Amplified music (118) and barking dogs (115) remain the most reported area of concern.
Other Nuisance (Odour, dust etc.)	208	349	257	222	No significant change.
Dangerous and Nuisance dogs (Not strays)	57	47	52	65	Allegations of Dangerous Dogs (31) and Dog attacks on animals (21) make up a significant proportion of the complaints here. Kent and National statistics which show an even greater increase, with the topic receiving national press coverage. Specialists believe that an influx of new dog owners, driven by the pandemic, are struggling to control their dog's behaviour. This has led to some high-profile cases nationally, which themselves will raise awareness and give rise to more complaints due to greater fear. Specific cases, with local interest did greater multiple cases for the same incident/dog(s).
Dog Fouling	12	30	28	47	Similarly, increases in complaints about dog fouling may symbolise more irresponsible dog owners.
Straying and lost dogs' enquiries	411	261	212	252	No significant change with levels remaining lower than pre-pandemic. Rehoming presents a significant challenge currently as the increases in dog population over the pandemic has seen more dogs in rescues.
Street trading enquiries/ complaints	11	9	5	2	No significant change.