

People & Health Scrutiny Committee

20 July 2026

Community Safety Annual Report

For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr M Bell, Public Health, Prevention and Communities

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:

S Crowe - Executive Director, Housing, Prevention and Communities

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Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

Report status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Under the Police & Justice Act 2006, local authorities are required to have Crime & Disorder Committees that review and scrutinise partners' community safety work. The committees should formally review progress at least once a year. In Dorset Council, the function of the Crime & Disorder Committee is fulfilled by the People & Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 This annual scrutiny report provides information on the Council's and partners' work against their statutory community safety functions. Any observations or recommendations from the Committee will be considered by the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and used to help develop its work.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That members of the Committee consider and comment on the community safety annual report.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure the Council complies with its legal duties relating to community safety.

4. Background

- 4.1 Local authorities are required to have Crime & Disorder Committees that scrutinise the Council's and its partners' delivery of their shared statutory community safety functions. The committees should formally review progress at least once a year.
- 4.2 The Council's and partners' work on community safety is co-ordinated through the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CSP is a statutory partnership under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. It brings together the following responsible authorities who must work together to understand and address community safety issues in their area:
- Dorset Council
 - Dorset Police
 - NHS Dorset
 - Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
 - The Probation Service
- 4.3 Although many of the responsible authorities work across the pan-Dorset area, CSPs are organised around local authority boundaries and there is a separate CSP for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council area with its own scrutiny arrangements.
- 4.4 Although separate, the Dorset and BCP CSPs work together on joint initiatives and share best practice where relevant and beneficial.
- 4.5 CSPs are responsible for numerous statutory functions. This annual scrutiny report looks at progress and compliance against these.

5. Dorset Community Safety Plan 2023-2026

- 5.1 CSPs are required to produce three-year Community Safety Plans that are revised annually. The plans must be informed by needs assessments and local people's views on community safety issues.
- 5.2 The Dorset CSP's last Community Safety Plan ran from 2023 to 2026 and included the following priorities:
- Domestic Abuse and Stalking
 - Sexual Offences
 - Serious Violence
 - Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Rural Crime

5.3 These were complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Complex cases / multiple needs
- Violence against women and girls

5.4 Partnership activity to deliver the Community Safety Plan undertaken since the last scrutiny report includes:

- the provision of a wide variety of services aimed at supporting victims of domestic abuse. Services have been provided and commissioned by various partners covering a wide range of needs, from emergency safe accommodation to information and advice. Partners have a Pan Dorset Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group in place to help bring commissioning activity for domestic abuse services and interventions together.
- joint working arrangements relating to domestic abuse including the High Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) approach that brings partners together to discuss individual cases, share information and develop joined up responses.
- programmes and initiatives aimed at addressing domestic abuse offending. It is the Council's and partners' ambition to stop people becoming victims of domestic abuse. Addressing offending behaviour is key to achieving that aim.
- regular communication and awareness raising campaigns relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences. These are timed to coincide with wider national campaigns such as the 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse.
- training on a wide range of community safety issues across agencies including domestic abuse, Modern Slavery and Preventing Violent Extremism (training on Modern Slavery and Prevent is mandatory for all Dorset Council staff).
- a range of activities and initiatives to help tackle cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- a wide variety of multi-agency initiatives aimed at addressing violent crime and sexual offences including in the night-time economy.

5.5 Cross cutting issues set out in the Plan are addressed through the delivery of activities relating to specific priorities. For example, violence against women and girls is addressed through the delivery of actions relating to domestic abuse, sexual offences, serious violence etc; substance misuse is addressed through the delivery of actions relating to anti-social behaviour and serious violence etc.

5.6 The CSP monitors and manages the delivery of its Community Safety Plan at each of its quarterly meetings. This includes using performance information to assess impact and direct activity. A summary of performance is provided below with further detail at Appendix 1:

- Since 2018, total crime in Dorset has reduced.
- The proportion of domestic abuse victims that are repeat victims has steadily reduced since June 2022.
- The proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators that are repeat perpetrators has reduced in the last year.
- The number of reported domestic abuse related stalking crimes has steadily increased since 2020/21.
- The number of sexual offences reported to the Police has plateaued over recent years.
- After a significant reduction in ASB reports to the police between 2021 and 2025, the volume has recently started to increase.
- The number of rural crimes has remained stable.
- The volume of fly tipping reports registered by Dorset Council declined between 2018 and 2022 and, after an increase during the following two years, continues to fall.
- There has been a decline in the annual volume of reported violent crime (local definition) and repeat perpetrators of serious violence.
- The volume of knife crimes recorded in Dorset has dropped noticeably since the start of 2024.

* Please note, performance indicators are used to guide partners' work but trends can be influenced by and reflect numerous factors

5.7 In addition, the CSP monitors volumes of hate crime so it can respond to any issues of concern.

5.8 At their meeting on 18 June 2026, members of the CSP agreed their new Community Safety Plan for 2026-29. The Plan retains the same priorities but hate related crime has been added as a cross cutting issue. Including hate related crime in the latest plan ensures partners respond to the prevalence and impact of issues and link with related areas of work including community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism.

5.9 It is a requirement for Community Safety Plans to be formally adopted by the local authority for the area and the latest Plan will be taken to People & Health Overview Committee on 21st September 2026.

6. Other plans and strategies

Reducing Reoffending

- 6.1 In accordance with the Policing and Crime Act 2009, CSPs are responsible for developing reducing reoffending strategies. Locally, partners have traditionally developed pan-Dorset reducing reoffending strategies because organisations and issues are common across the area.
- 6.3 Partners are in the final year of their current strategy which sets out their vision to reduce reoffending:
- ‘To cut crime, reduce harm and protect victims by reducing re-offending through joint working and rehabilitation’.*
- 6.4 The strategy contains information on the reasons for reoffending and the services and programmes operating in Dorset to address issues and includes several strategic principles and objectives, including activity around early intervention and targeted support, efficient resource allocation and integrated approaches, and outcome-orientated monitoring.
- 6.6 The Strategy is delivered by the pan-Dorset Reducing Re-offending Strategy Group. The group will shortly commence work to produce a new strategy for 2027-2030. The new strategy will be brought to Dorset Council to adopt in due course.

Dorset Serious Violence Strategy

- 6.7 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 places a duty on the Council and its partners to produce an evidence-based analysis of serious violence and develop and implement a strategy in response.
- 6.9 The partners responsible for the duty are the same as those responsible for CSPs with the addition of Youth Offending Teams. It is recognised that Education, Prisons and the Young People’s Estate also have a key role to play under the Duty. In Dorset, partners agreed to lead their response to fulfilling the duty through the Dorset CSP and published their first Serious Violence Strategy in January 2024.
- 6.10 The needs assessment used to inform the Serious Violence Strategy was last updated in January 2026. It identified the same priorities as previous years supporting a continuation of the agreed strategic approach.

- 6.11 The Strategy includes a local definition of serious violence, as required under legislation. This allows partners to ensure their work on serious violence reflects local need. A list of the offences included in the local definition is provided in the appendix along with two further indicators mandated by the Home Office (recorded knife crimes and volume of murder). Figures relating to serious violence in this report reflect the local rather than national definition and are for the Dorset CSP area.
- 6.12 Initiatives undertaken through the Serious Violence Strategy in 2025/26 include a:
- Specialist nurse providing targeted and tailored approaches to prevent highly vulnerable young people being drawn into or becoming a victim of serious violence.
 - Healthy relationships and mentors in violence prevention programme providing universal to focused activity delivered through schools, dealing with relationship and behaviour management, deploying bystander and mentoring approaches.
 - School based level-up project targeting those at high risk of exclusion, which is proven to raise vulnerability to being drawn into or becoming a victim of serious violence.
 - High harm perpetrator tool to identify and secure most appropriate interventions for High Harm Perpetrators.
- 6.14 All projects made significant strides forward during the year, recording successes against their individual project's identified outcomes framework.
- 6.15 The Serious Violence Strategy is closely aligned to and complements partners' Community Safety Plan. Progress against the Strategy is monitored regularly by the CSP.
- 6.16 Partners have been awarded central government funding to cover the costs of responding to the serious violence duty and implementing initiatives in their serious violence strategies. Funding has been channelled through Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and partners in Dorset have worked with the Dorset PCC to determine the allocation and use of funding locally.

Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy

- 6.17 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places duties on local authorities to establish a Local Partnership Board (LPB) for domestic abuse and produce a needs assessment and strategy relating to support for victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation.

- 6.18 The Dorset CSP took on the functions of the LPB for the Dorset Council area and its terms of reference and membership were updated accordingly.
- 6.19 Dorset Council, in conjunction with the CSP, revised its Domestic Abuse Strategy in 2025 with details presented to Cabinet in October 2025. The revision incorporated the findings of an independent audit of the Council's previous strategy, conducted in October 2024.
- 6.20 Activity under the revised Strategy focuses on prevention, supporting victims, and tackling offending. Key highlights following publication include:
- Partners' commitment to the High-Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) multi-agency information-sharing process, including the allocation of additional resource to ensure the model remains effective and sustainable.
 - Progress to formalise the Pan-Dorset Stalking Clinic.
 - Exploration of options to diversify the local safe accommodation offer.
 - Establishment of the Pan-Dorset Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group.
 - Work to develop a lived experience group.
 - Continued collaboration between partners in response to changes in local processes and policy.
- 6.21 In the Strategy, there is an increased focus on ensuring services are accessible to better meet the needs of all members of the community.
- 6.22 The Domestic Abuse Strategy is closely aligned to and complements partners' Community Safety Plan. Progress against the Strategy is monitored regularly by the CSP.

7. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

- 7.1 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 requires that following a domestic homicide, the local area should organise a multi-agency review. This requirement came into force on 13th April 2011. Reviews should be undertaken on both homicides and suicides.
- 7.2 The statutory responsibility for coordinating Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) lies with the local CSP.

- 7.3 The purpose of a DHR is to consider the circumstances that led to a death and identify where responses could be improved in the future. Reviews aim to ensure agencies are responding appropriately to victims of domestic abuse by offering and putting in place appropriate support mechanisms, procedures, resources and interventions with an aim to avoid future incidents of domestic homicide and violence.
- 7.4 DHRs are not inquiries into how a victim died or who is culpable; that is a matter for coroners and criminal courts to determine as appropriate. DHRs are required to be anonymised to protect individuals' identities.
- 7.5 Dorset CSP has conducted numerous DHRs. Where appropriate, reviews have been published on the CSP pages of the Dorset Council website.
- 7.6 Lessons learned from DHRs are formulated into action plans, which are disseminated across all partners and any additionally involved agencies, and progress against recommendations is monitored by the CSP.

8. Prevent and Channel

- 8.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Although not a CSP function, there is a requirement for the Council to work closely with key partners in the delivery of Prevent.
- 8.2 The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (updated in March 2024), sets out the requirements for local authorities which include to:
- Work in partnership with other agencies to co-ordinate Prevent activity.
 - Carry out work to understand the risks in the local area and have plans in place to respond.
 - Assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism and ensure there is a referral pathway in place for those people susceptible to radicalisation.
 - Ensure staff are appropriately trained.
 - Carry out work that reduces permissive environments, including ensuring council resources are not used to provide a platform for extremists or to disseminate extremist views.
 - Collaborate with other councils on Prevent issues.
 - Work with other agencies and organisations supporting children.
 - Monitor and quality assure Prevent delivery.

- 8.3 Officers assess progress against Prevent duties each year using the Home Office's Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities and through an annual benchmarking exercise with the Home Office's Regional Prevent Advisor. Dorset Council's most recent benchmarking results demonstrate it continues to be compliant in all areas and exceeding in most. Within the results there are some suggestions for development which will be taken forward with partners through the relevant structures.
- 8.4 Channel Panels are multi-agency practitioner groups that come together when someone is identified as being at risk of being drawn into extremism. Panels put support packages in place to steer individuals away from extremist activity.
- 8.5 The Channel Duty Guidance, sets out expectations for local authorities in carrying out their functions in relation to Channel.
- 8.6 The Dorset Channel Panel meets monthly and is Chaired by the Corporate Director for Care and Protection, and Deputy Chaired by the Director of Adult Social Services.
- 8.7 The Home Office recognises that local authority elected members play a key role in local Prevent delivery. They have published a 'Prevent Elected Members Handbook' that explains the Prevent programme in-depth, helps build understanding and can be used in meetings and when engaging with local communities.

9. Alternative options considered

- 9.1 Not applicable, statutory requirement.

10. Legal considerations

- 10.1 Legislation dictates that the Council's formal Crime & Disorder Committee should scrutinise partners' community safety work at least once a year.

11. Financial implications

- 11.1 The Dorset CSP does not receive funding directly, however partners' plans and strategies clarify where they will focus their time and effort and their broad activity to meet priorities.
- 11.2 New Burdens funding has been made available to Dorset Council to deliver statutory duties relating to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Central government has made available funding to partners to deliver the serious violence duty.

- 11.4 From time to time, central government makes available one-off funding opportunities to support community safety work such as tackling domestic abuse. When possible, partners apply for such funds.

12. Natural environment, climate and ecology implications

- 12.1 None.

13. Well-being and health implications

- 13.1 Tackling crime and the fear of crime has a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

14. Other implications

- 14.1 Community safety as set out in the report.

15. Risk implications

- 15.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

16. Equalities

- 16.1 EqlAs have been completed on the CSP's various plans and strategies.

- 16.2 The EqlA for the Community Safety Plan covered serious violence issues drawing on findings from the serious violence needs assessment work. Given that, a separate EqlA was not needed for the Serious Violence Strategy.

- 16.3 The EqlA process identified opportunities which have been used to help steer the delivery of the Plans and Strategies.

17. Appendices

Appendix – Performance Report

18. **Background papers**

[Community Safety Plan 2023 - 2026 \(2025-2026 Refresh\)](#)

[Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024 to 2027](#)

[Dorset Serious Violence Strategy](#)

[Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025 to 2028](#)

[Domestic Homicide Reviews](#)

[Prevent Elected Members Handbook](#)

19. **Report sign-off**

- 19.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director, Governance and Assurance (Monitoring Officer), the Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

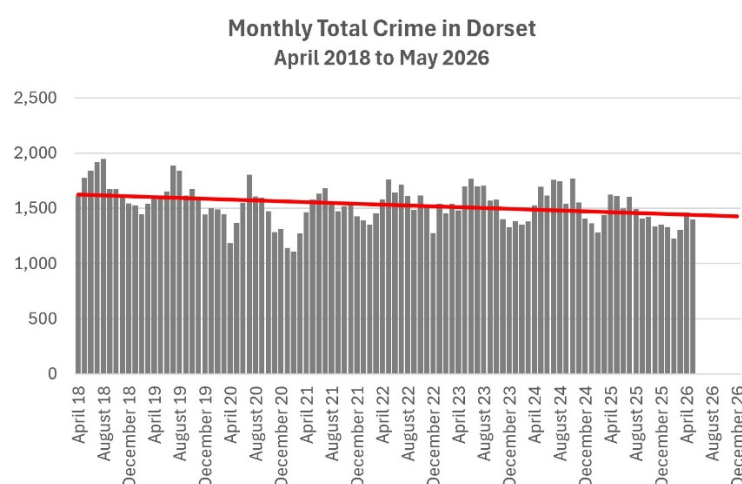
Introduction

The Dorset CSP monitors its progress through a series of performance indicators.

The graphs below illustrate the recent changes observed in CSP priority areas. Two graphs are shown for each indicator – the first indicates the monthly indicator value/volume, the second illustrates the monthly rolling average value for each¹. All data relates solely to instances recorded within the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area.

Monthly volumes of total crime are shown as a bar chart, with each month distinguished as a separate vertical bar.

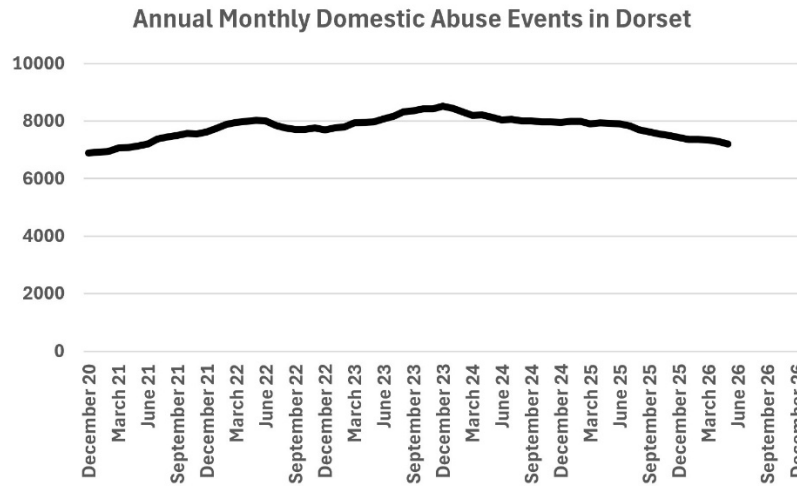
Total Crime (2018 to Present)



Priority One: Domestic Abuse

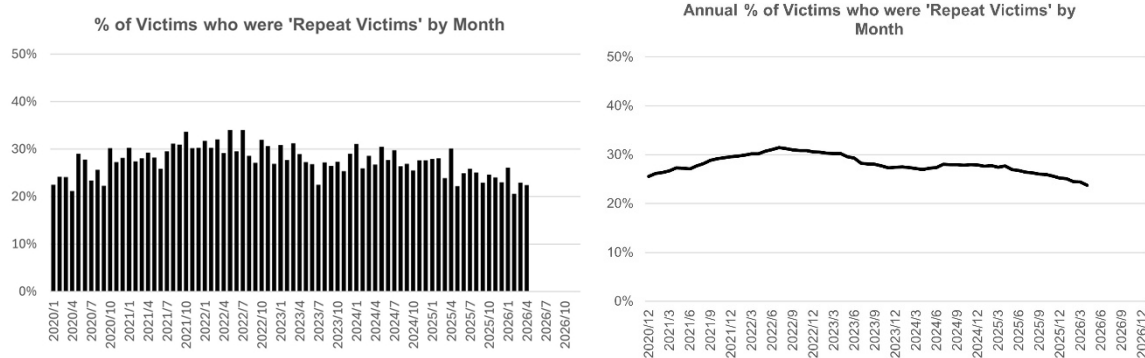
The graph below shows the ‘monthly annual’ volume of domestic abuse events (a combination of crimes and non-crime incidents) reported to the Police in the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area. The map illustrates the relative distribution of domestic abuse events.

¹ For individual priorities, a ‘monthly annual’ figure has been used. These figures represent, for each month, the total number of crimes recorded during the preceding twelve months. This approach removes any seasonal variations, allowing a clearer identification of any long term trend in the changing volumes of crime.

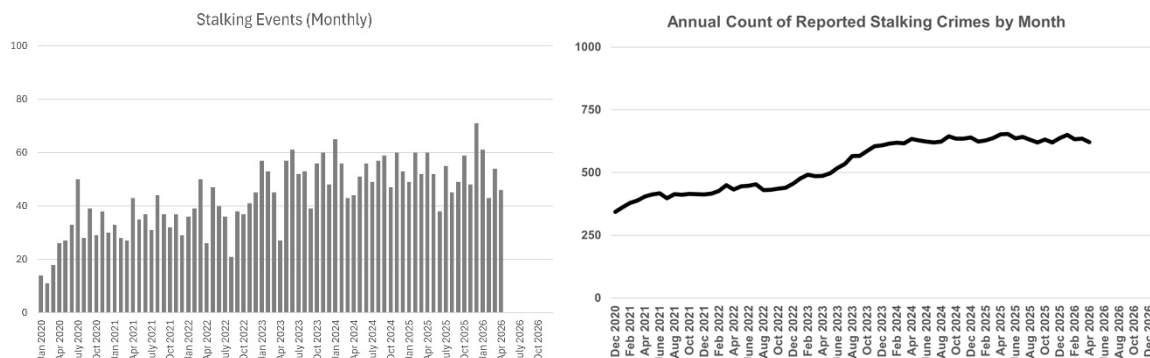


The Dorset CSP has three performance indicators related to domestic abuse and stalking:

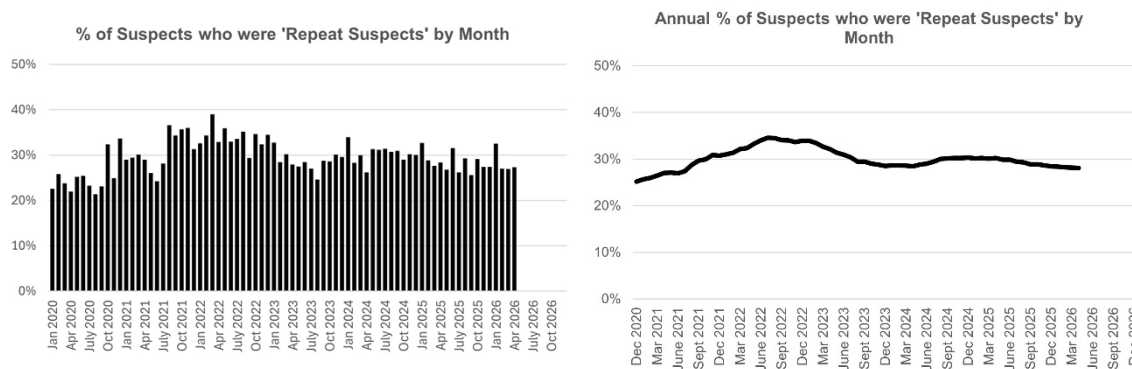
Measure 1.1 - *A reduction in the annual proportion of all domestic abuse victims which are identifiable 'repeat' victims.*



Measure 1.2 - *A reduction in the number of domestic abuse related stalking crimes reported annually.*



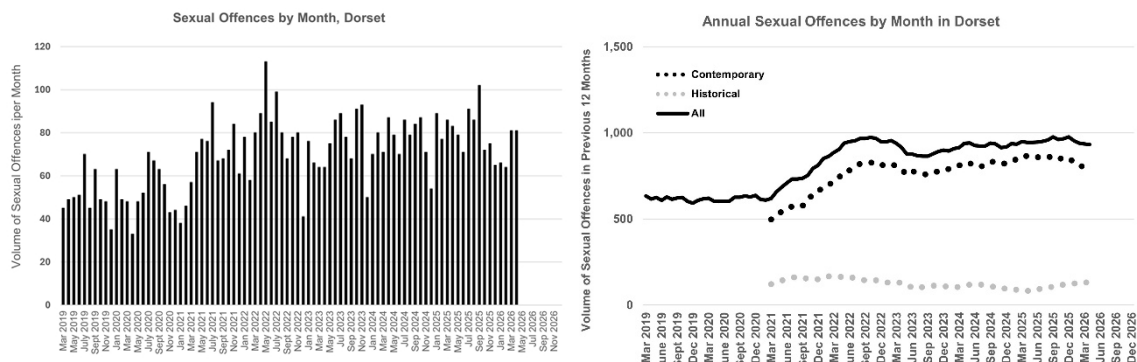
Measure 1.3 - A reduction in the annual percentage of domestic abuse perpetrators identified as 'repeat' perpetrators.



Priority Two: Sexual Offences

The Dorset CSP has one performance measure for sexual offences:

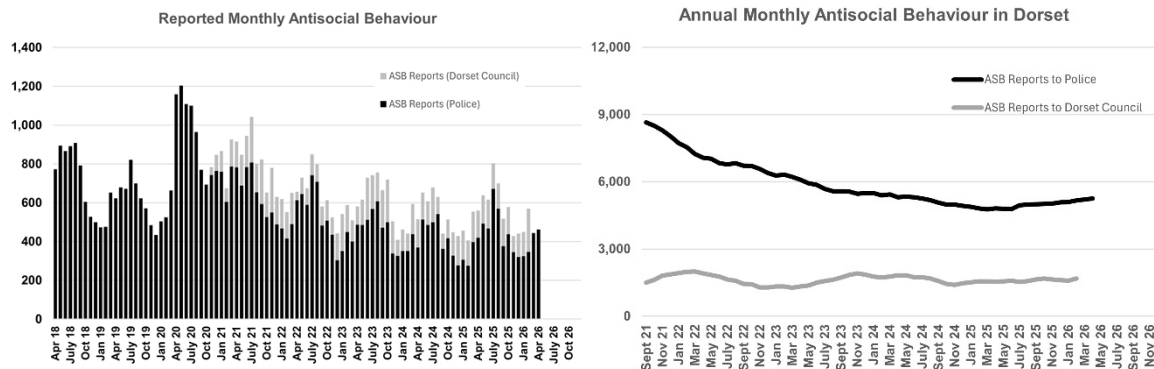
Measure 2.1a - An annual reduction in the number of sexual offence crimes recorded by the Police.



Priority Three: Antisocial Behaviour

The Dorset CSP has adopted two measures for performance for antisocial behaviour. One is shown here. The other is a series of measures each based on a specific local area where antisocial behaviour was thought to be a particular priority.

Measure 3.1a - An annual reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour crimes recorded by the police, countywide.



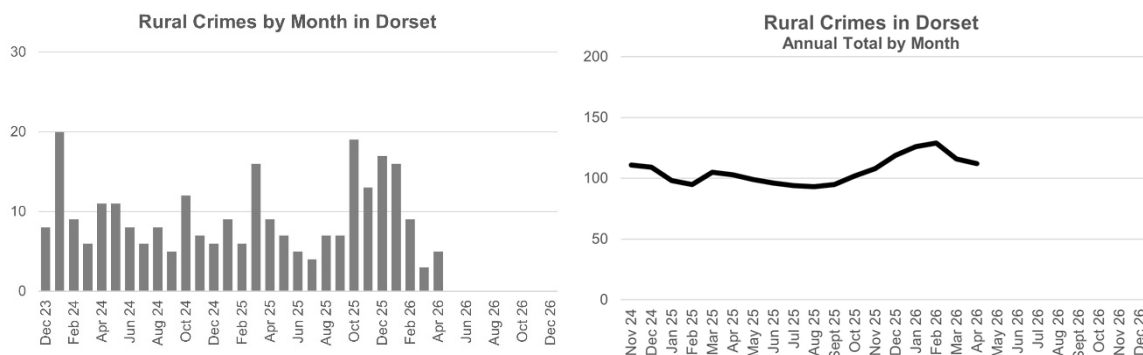
Priority Four: Rural Crime

Dorset Police's definition of 'rural crime', which has also been adopted by the Dorset CSP, includes the following crimes:

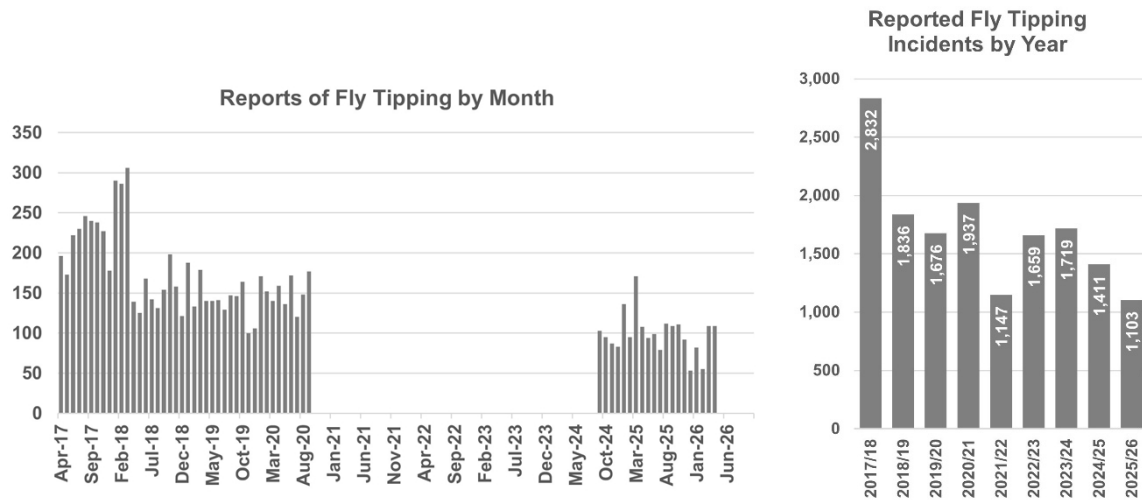
- Equine crime
- Theft of farm machinery
- Theft of fuel
- Theft of livestock
- Livestock worrying
- Theft of plant
- Poaching

Two performance measures have been adopted under this priority:

Measure 4.1 - A reduction each year in the total number of rural crimes, as defined by Dorset's Rural Crime Unit.



Measure 4.3 - An annual reduction in the volume of reported incidents of fly tipping



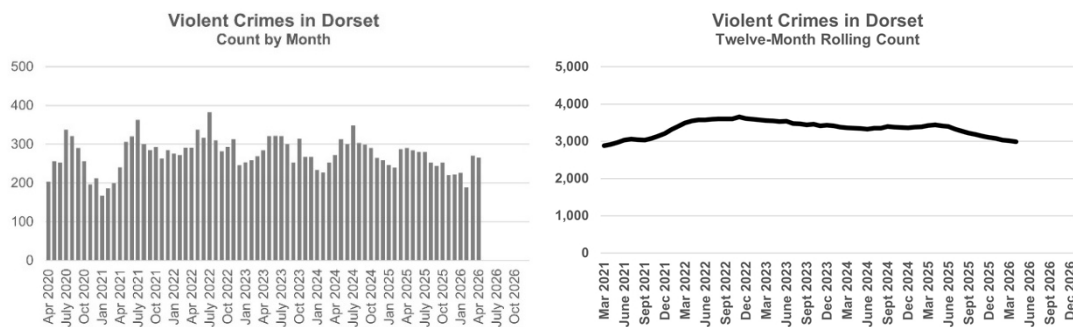
Priority Five: Violent Crime

The Dorset CSP's definition of 'serious violence' includes:

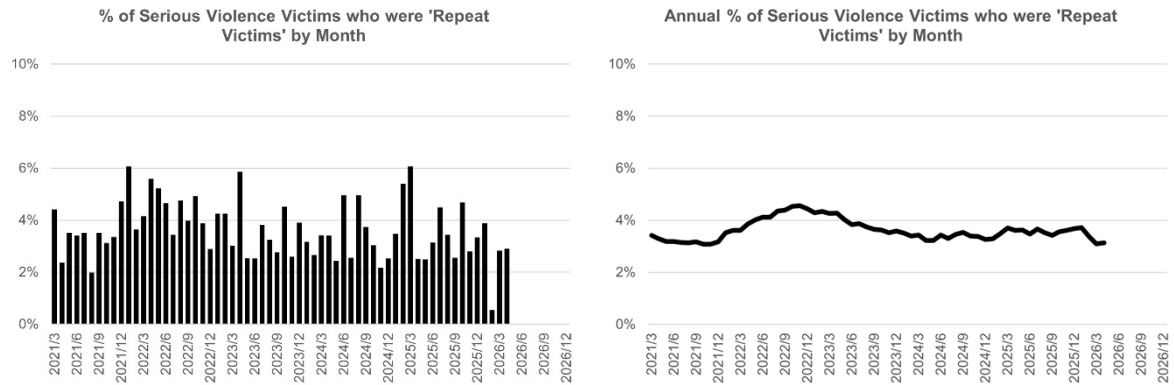
- Violence against the person (excluding harassment; non-injury violence against the person; malicious communication; and stalking)
- Knife and gun crime
- Possession of weapons with intent
- Aggravated burglary
- All sexual offences
- Domestic violence with injury
- Robbery
- Arson with the intent of danger life

There are five performances indicators which track the CSP's progress:

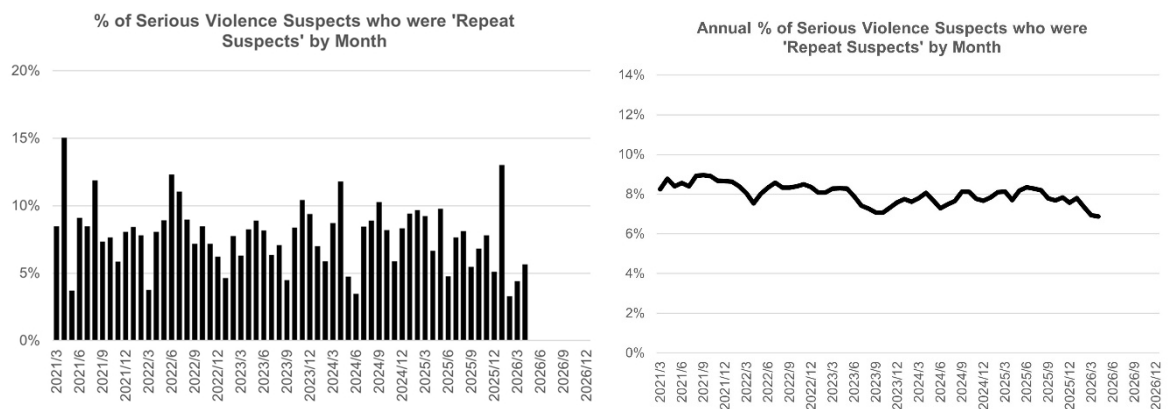
Measure 6.1a - An annual reduction in recorded violent crimes throughout the Dorset Council area.



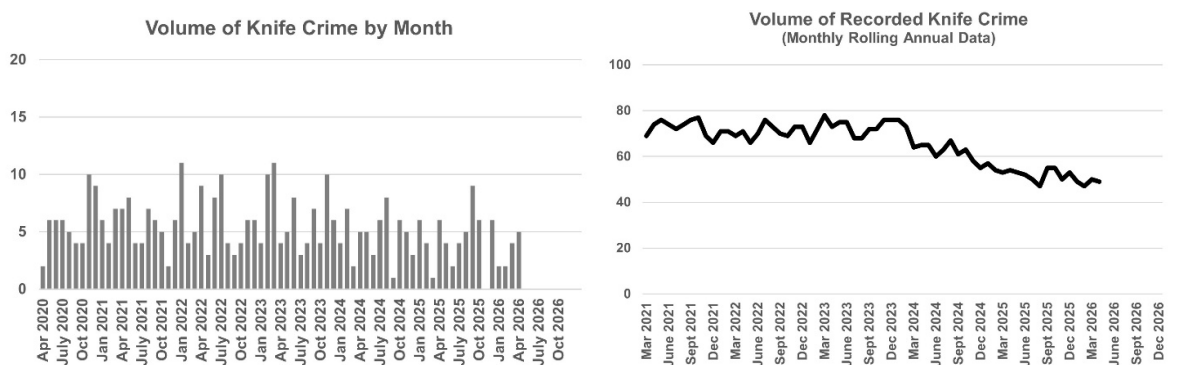
Measure 6.2 - A reduction in the proportion of victims of serious violence that are identified as 'repeat victims'



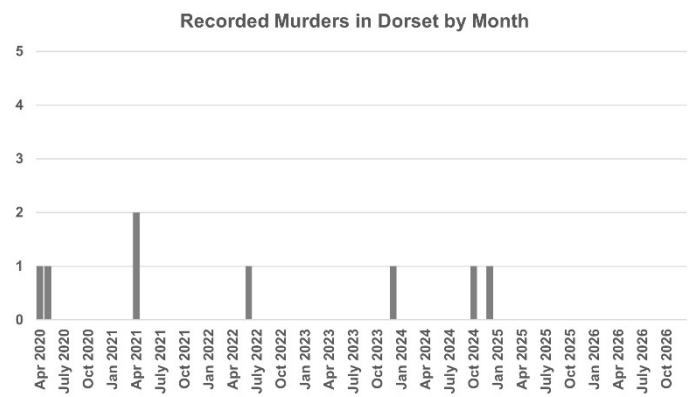
Measure 6.3 - A reduction in the proportion of perpetrators of serious violence that are identified as 'repeat offenders'



Measure 6.4 – Monthly count of recorded knife crimes



Measure 6.5 – Volume of murder



Cross Cutting Issue – Hate Crime

The volume of reported hate crime in Dorset is shown in the graph below

Hate Crime Data

