

Community Safety Plan 2026-2029

Dorset Community Safety Partnership



Introduction

The Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) aims to:

- Reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- Address risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities; and
- Facilitate the strengthening of Dorset's communities in the delivery of local initiatives.

It also acts as Dorset's Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board required under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and leads partners' response to meeting their duties relating to serious violence under the Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act 2022.

Find out more about the CSP here: [Dorset Community Safety Partnership](#)

CSPs are required to have three-year Community Safety Plans that are refreshed annually. This latest Plan for 2026-2029 sets out partners' priorities based on the most recent assessment of community safety issues. The Plan is complemented by the [Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025 to 2028](#) and [Dorset Serious Violence Strategy](#).

The Plan sets out activity to address priorities in broad terms. Further details regarding delivery and performance are contained in partners' various work plans which are developed, assessed and revised over the course of each year.

Crime in the Dorset Community Safety Partnership Area

Since 2018 the volume of crime reported in the Dorset CSP area has tended to decrease annually. The number of crimes recorded during 2025 was 12.8% lower than the equivalent figure for 2018. Crime volumes were artificially depressed during the two years affected by Covid and its associated lockdowns (2020 and 2021) and, consequently, a rise in the annual count was seen in the year that followed.

Crime volumes in Dorset follow an annual cycle, which peaks each year in July/August and reaches its lowest in January/February.

When compared to the equivalent figures for England and Wales, Dorset is seen to be a relatively low crime area. During the six years from 2018, the crime rate for Dorset, when expressed as the number of crimes per 1,000 population, was a little over half that seen nationally.

Consultation and Engagement

Partners use the findings of consultation and engagement exercises to help inform their understanding and work to tackle community safety issues.

A public consultation was undertaken with residents specifically for the CSP in 2023. This included members of the Council's People Panel (a group of residents who volunteered to give responses on a range of questions relating to living in Dorset) who were asked a series of questions on what they thought about crime in their local community.

Respondents were asked whether they thought that crime and antisocial behaviour were issues where they lived. In addition, they were asked to state whether, in the past twelve months, they had been victims of either. These questions had been asked regularly in previous years, enabling any changes in public perception and experience to be identified.

Most respondents (79%) believed that crime had little or no impact on their daily lives. However, the proportion of residents who felt that crime was a problem in their neighbourhood had increased, having doubled in the four years since 2020. This was reflected by a comparable increase in the number of respondents stating that they had been victims of crime in the past year.

Consultees were asked which crime categories they thought were a problem where they live. The four categories that registered the highest concern were:

1. **Anti-social Behaviour** (46% of respondents)
2. **Rural Crime** (39% of respondents)
3. **Vehicle Crime** (38% of respondents)
4. **Drug Dealing** (37% of respondents)

The 3 categories of least concern were Slavery/Human Trafficking, Hate Crime and Knife Crime.

Dorset Council's most recent Residents Survey was undertaken in 2024. As in previous editions of the survey, respondents were asked how safe they felt in their local area, both during daylight hours and after dark.

A clear majority of survey respondents reported feeling safe where they lived during the daytime. The proportion who felt safe has remained consistent over recent surveys. However, there was a noticeable increase, although still a minority, of respondents who felt unsafe locally after dark.

Another survey conducted by Dorset's Police and Crime Commissioner in October 2025 asked residents how safe they believed Dorset to be compared to other English and Welsh counties. Their replies, with corresponding results from 2024, are summarised below:

<i>Compared to the rest of England and Wales, Dorset is...</i>	2024	2025	% Point Change
<i>...The safest county</i>	1.9%	0.6%	-1.3%
<i>...One of the safest counties</i>	54.2%	49.0%	-5.2%
<i>...Neither one of the safest or less safe counties</i>	36.2%	43.0%	+6.8%
<i>...One of the less safe counties</i>	6.8%	6.7%	-0.1%
<i>...The least safe county</i>	0.9%	0.8%	-0.1%

Almost half of the respondents believed that Dorset was among one of the safest counties in England and Wales, although this proportion had fallen 5.2 percentage points during the previous year.

The survey also asked residents to state which of a list of crimes they felt affected them in their local areas. Their responses, again with comparative data from 2024, are shown on the table below.

Crime	2024	2025	Diff
Antisocial behaviour	63.2%	69.8%	6.6%
Dangerous driving	52.5%	54.7%	2.2%
Burglary and theft	53.9%	50.2%	-3.7%
Drug crimes	42.8%	49.2%	6.4%
Fly tipping	45.3%	47.6%	2.3%
Shoplifting	41.0%	39.9%	-1.1%
Criminal damage	34.9%	38.2%	3.3%
Vehicle theft	31.2%	29.0%	-2.2%
Illegal E-scooter use	25.7%	29.0%	3.3%
Cyber crime	31.3%	26.3%	-5.0%
Machine theft	26.7%	22.7%	-4.0%
Poaching, etc	18.7%	19.8%	1.1%
Unauthorised encampments	14.4%	18.4%	4.0%
Domestic abuse	17.3%	16.8%	-0.5%

Violence and assault	15.4%	16.3%	0.9%
Knife crime	11.3%	11.4%	0.1%
Robbery	10.2%	10.1%	-0.1%
Pet theft	13.0%	9.2%	-3.8%
Sexual offences	8.8%	7.6%	-1.2%
Hate crime	6.5%	7.6%	1.1%
Drink spiking	5.7%	4.3%	-1.4%
Stalking	6.0%	4.1%	-1.9%
Murder	3.4%	2.8%	-0.6%

Antisocial behaviour was, again, highlighted as the issue which caused the greatest concern to residents, with over two-thirds of respondents regarding it as a problem locally. This figure showed the greatest increase (+6.6% points) of all crimes compared to the results gathered in 2024.

The crimes where greatest increase in the amount of concern expressed was seen when compared to 2024 were antisocial behaviour, drug crimes and unauthorised encampments. There was a drop in the level of concern in relation to cyber crimes.

In 2025, a Young People's Safety Survey was conducted by the Pineapple Project based in Dorset. Findings from the survey included:

- 68% of respondents (where sex was female) reported feeling safe or very safe in their communities in the summer months.
- 6% of respondents (where sex was female) reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe in their communities in the summer months.
- In the past year, 68% of girls and young women aged 11-21 had changed their everyday behaviour to avoid sexual harassment.
- 1 in 10 girls aged 11-16 had missed school to avoid sexual harassment.
- More than half of girls and young women aged 11-21 didn't feel safe on public transport on their own.
- 48% said they avoid going out when it's dark to keep themselves safe.

CSP partners also work with the victims of crime and people who use services to help inform and develop their response to issues. A report into domestic abuse services across the pan-Dorset area by the organisation SafeLives conducted in 2024:

- Estimated that 45% of victims in Dorset did not tell anyone about their abuse.
- The principal barrier to seeking help was the fear of provoking an unwelcome response from the perpetrator of their abuse.
- Other barriers included concerns about the financial problems victims might face by reporting their situation and uncertainty about what processes would result from seeking advice.
- Rurality and disability were both identified as barriers to accessing domestic abuse services.
- Victims felt local services could be improved by increasing awareness of domestic abuse and its related issues.

CSP partners intend to further develop their approach to engaging communities to help understand community safety issues and what they should prioritise. This will include building on individual partners' consultation and engagement mechanisms, conducting surveys and working with the users of services.

Partners will look to hold at least one public meeting each year and engage with a wide range of people, including those who are likely to be particularly affected by the Community Safety Plan.

In addition, partners will continue to promote ways in which members of the public can help reduce crime and disorder including through specific initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch, Farm Watch and Dorset Alert.

Community Safety Priorities

Partners carry out an annual Partnership Strategic Assessment (PSA) using information and data from a variety of sources to assess crime and disorder issues in the area. The assessment is used to set and review partners' priorities. When setting and reviewing priorities consideration is also given to the local Policing objectives in the area. Priorities are reviewed regularly.

Partners' priorities for 2026-2029 are:

- Domestic Abuse and Stalking
- Sexual Offences
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Rural Crime
- Serious Violence

They are complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Complex cases / multiple need
- Violence against women and girls
- Hate related crime

A hate crime is when a criminal offence, for example, an assault or harassment, is perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice. Although reports of hate crime in the Dorset CSP area are low, they have a devastating impact on victims and communities.

Partners undertake work to address hate related crime including raising awareness and signposting victims to support services. Including hate related crime as a cross cutting issue for the CSP ensures partners respond to the prevalence and impact of issues and link with related areas of work including community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism.

There is a strong correlation between the CSP's priorities and those set out in the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Police and Crime Plan 2021/29 which commits to tackling, amongst other issues, rural crime, violent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Reducing re-offending remains a cross cutting area of work for partners. Details are set out in the [Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024 to 2027](#).

In accordance with recent legislation, there are separate partnership arrangements, plans and strategies for dealing with substance misuse through the pan-Dorset Combating Drugs Partnership.

Although CSPs are legally required to undertake annual needs assessments to set their priorities, in recent years legislation has been placed on specific partners directing them to tackle domestic abuse and serious violence. In Dorset, partners have chosen to use the CSP as their partnership mechanism to meet these duties and ensured their [Domestic Abuse](#) and [Serious Violence](#) Strategies complement this Plan.

Partnership work to tackle community safety issues takes many forms. Some partnership activities and service arrangements have been in place for years and have become business as usual. Well established multi-agency partnership arrangements are in place to tackle shorter term, area specific issues.

The CSP also works closely with other partnerships on shared issues including the Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board and Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

Below is a description of broad partnership activity against priorities. This is supported by partners' various work plans which are developed, assessed and revised over the course of each year.

Domestic Abuse and Stalking	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Implement the Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy (2025–2028) recommendations. • Enhance the whole-systems approach to ensure services work effectively together and are accessible to all communities. • Develop prevention-focused initiatives, including early help and education for children and young people (e.g. healthy relationships). • Introduce and strengthen perpetrator interventions to reduce offending and prevent further harm. • Regularly assess and enhance the High Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) process to maintain effectiveness and fitness for purpose. • Strengthen responses to stalking, improving protection for those affected, and multi-agency arrangements. • Conduct targeted research into underreporting of domestic abuse in rural areas, wealthier communities, and among young people, older people and men. • Deliver communication campaigns to raise awareness of issues and available support. • Embed learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews to inform continuous improvement.	• A reduction in the annual proportion of all domestic abuse victims which are identifiable 'repeat' victims. • A reduction in the number of domestic abuse related stalking crimes reported annually. • A reduction in the annual percentage of domestic abuse perpetrators identified as 'repeat' perpetrators.

Sexual Offences	
Activities	Performance Measure
• Strengthen the response to sexual abuse against children and young people. • Deliver targeted interventions focused on male perpetrators of sexual abuse, reducing offending and challenging harmful behaviours. • Ensure information and advice for children and young people is accessible, relevant, and meets their needs. • Support initiatives that address sexual offences linked to the night-time economy, enhancing safety and prevention. • Run regular, targeted communications campaigns to increase awareness of available support, including within schools and other educational settings.	• An annual reduction in the number of sexual offence crimes recorded by the Police.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Provide a high visibility presence using Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) in priority locations to deter ASB and disorder. • Develop effective working arrangements with housing associations to help understand and tackle ASB issues. • Work closely and share data / information with youth outreach services to help direct provision. • Work with local businesses to address shoplifting that impacts directly on ASB including 'designing out crime'. • Work with Trading Standards to help direct test purchasing work in areas where ASB is an issue. • Develop close working relationships with partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector including youth centres, to develop joint approaches to tackle ASB. • Work with young people's forums and groups to better understand issues and inform effective interventions, including the Dorset Youth Association and 0-19 Youth Forum. • Support the work of the Dorset Combating Drugs Partnership's Prevention sub-group including around education in schools.	• An annual reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour crimes recorded by the police, countywide. • An annual reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour crimes recorded by the police in hotspot areas.

Rural Crime	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Take a strong collaborative partnership approach to promote opportunities for effective crime prevention initiatives. • Develop different ways of engaging and reporting issues including online platforms. • Maximise the use of social media platforms to provide crime prevention advice and ensure the community is kept informed of emerging issues. • Support the Country Watch initiative focused on increasing connectivity with our rural community. • Work in partnership with neighbouring police forces to target cross border criminality and organised crime. • Continue to develop an effective regional response to information sharing and joint working to tackle cross border rural organised criminality.	• A reduction each year in the total number of rural crimes, as defined by Dorset's Rural Crime Unit. • An annual reduction in the volume of reported incidents of fly tipping.

• Protect our environment, wildlife and heritage from organised crime and reckless or criminal individuals. • Help educate communities on the importance of addressing wildlife and heritage crime.	
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Serious Violence	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Develop and deliver interventions that meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty. • Establish interventions in response to locally identified need, reviewing annually. • Deliver programmes that enable young people to safely challenge and change inappropriate and harmful behaviours in themselves and others. • Deliver programmes that target those most vulnerable to becoming involved in serious violent crime, both as perpetrators and victims. • Establish interventions that respond to young people carrying and using knives and other sharp implements. • Support education and awareness raising activity addressing issues of serious violence • Undertake work to further develop our understanding of serious violence.	• An annual reduction in recorded violent crimes throughout the Dorset Council area. • An annual reduction in recorded violence in hot spot areas. • A reduction in the proportion of victims of serious violence that are identified as 'repeat' victims. • A reduction in the proportion of perpetrators of serious violence that are identified as 'repeat' offenders. • Number of recorded knife crimes* • Number of homicides* *Home Office requirement

Performance Management

Partners use performance information and data coupled with an assessment of progress against their agreed actions at each meeting, to determine whether they are delivering against their priorities. Current performance measures are listed in the above tables.

Partners intend to gather a wide range of information and data to complement Police statistics and develop a comprehensive understanding of community safety issues.

Governance

The Dorset CSP is the statutory Community Safety Partnership for the local area. In addition, the CSP fulfils the functions of the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board as required under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and coordinates partners' response to meeting their statutory duties relating to serious violence under the Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act 2022. It brings together senior officers and elected members from:

- Dorset Police
- Dorset Council
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
- Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset

Many other partners such as the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, the Dorset Domestic Abuse Forum and the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service are also members of the CSP.

There is a multi-agency Strategic Delivery Group that reports to the CSP and co-ordinates partners' work to tackle strategic issues and priorities.

Locality based Multi-Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) groups report into a Partnership Co-ordinating Group (PCG) which reports to the CSP. The MAPs and PCG are responsible for identifying solutions to locality based issues.