

Herefordshire

Community Safety Partnership

COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

2024- 2027

Our plan to keep you safer



FOREWORD

Chair of Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Superintendent Helen Wain presents the Herefordshire CSP Strategy 2024 – 2027. The Partnership consists of a number of organisations that work together to tackle crime and disorder.

The Strategy focusses on priorities by committing partnership resources to deliver valuable outcomes to make a difference to those affected by crime and disorder, ensuring Herefordshire remains a safe place to live, work and visit.

HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2024- 2027

This document describes how the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will work to address crime and disorder in Herefordshire.

The Community Safety Partnership consists of a number of organisations working together to tackle crime and disorder in Herefordshire. The Partnership undertakes a number of statutory responsibilities working on the basis that no single agency can deal with these issues on their own, and crime can be tackled effectively by working together.

Community Safety Partnerships were set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The statutory agencies that comprise the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership are; Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Integrated Care Board (health representative), and the Probation Service. The CSP works alongside the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Plan.

All agencies are committed to making a difference over the next three years and to work with the community to tackle crime in Herefordshire. Everyone in the county should be safe and feel safe. The CSP is committed to make a difference to improve outcomes and life opportunities for all, irrespective of characteristics, locality, needs, or circumstances.

As an overview of crime and disorder in Herefordshire, the Herefordshire CSP Strategic Assessment 2023 states:

- Herefordshire recorded offences have largely returned to pre-COVID 19 levels.
- Around three quarters (73%) of residents say they feel safe when outside after dark, which is a significant 12 percentage point decrease since reported in 2021. The proportion of people saying they feel unsafe has significantly increased (from 9% to 15%), as has the proportion who provide a neutral response (from 7% to 12%)*.
- Feelings of safety in Herefordshire are in line with the rest of Britain, with 74% stating they feel very or fairly safe in the October 2022 Local Government

Association survey. Following an increase in feelings of safety during the COVID 19 pandemic, figures have returned to those recorded in 2012.*
(*Source: Health and Wellbeing Survey: 8771 Herefordshire Council March 2023 - DJS Research.)

- All crime within Herefordshire between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2023 totalled 11,060.

With these statistics in mind, this strategy sets out the Partnership's priorities based on needs assessment evidence, and how the CSP will achieve them.

Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2024-27

The CSP uses a number of strategic needs assessments including the Herefordshire CSP Strategic Assessment 2023 to identify strategic priorities.

As a result the CSP Board have agreed the following four strategic priorities for 2024 to 2027 with four underlying and cross cutting themes:

Strategic Priorities:

- 1) **Domestic Abuse**
- 2) **Violence Against Women and Girls - Sexual Violence**
- 3) **Misuse of Drugs**
- 4) **Neighbourhood Crime**

Cross Cutting Themes:

- 1) **Serious Violence**
- 2) **Serious Organised Crime**
- 3) **Prevention**
- 4) **Community Engagement**

1) Priority – Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime and whilst domestic abuse is no more prevalent in Herefordshire than anywhere else, it is a concerning crime category challenging Herefordshire agencies. In some cases domestic abuse includes violence (including homicide) and multiple forms of controlling behaviour. Whilst domestic abuse crime figures are high we know it is significantly under reported and victims are suffering in silence.

The definition of Domestic Abuse according to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is:
The behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

'Abusive behaviour' is defined as any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour

- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

'Personally connected' is defined in the act as parties who:

- are married to each other
- are civil partners of each other
- have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child

The Herefordshire CSP Strategic Assessment 2023 states:

- Whilst offences with domestic abuse markers have been decreasing throughout 2022 and 2023 there were 1,854 offences with domestic abuse markers (01 July 2022 to 30 June 2023).
- The number of Herefordshire referrals to West Mercia Women's Aid have increased over a three year period (up to June 2023), despite a decrease in the levels of domestic abuse related crime.
- Referrals from women over 60 is rising significantly quarter on quarter, plus the number of perpetrators who are suffering from dementia are rising.
- The use of technology is increasing and includes apps such as Snapchat. Abusers are also making use of trackers such as 'Ring' door bells to exert control upon victims even when an abuser is not present.

How will the CSP address this priority?

- The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB) will deliver the [Herefordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy](#) supported by the Domestic Abuse Sub-group that sits below the DALPB.
- The priorities for the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021/24 are:
 - Prevention
 - Provision
 - Partnership
 - Perpetrators
- To measure progress of the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy, a work programme has been developed in order to enable the monitoring and evaluation of progress against the outcomes detailed in the strategy. This backed up by performance indicators in commissioned contracts and via an annual performance monitoring update. The strategy is being reviewed in full during 2024.

2) Priority – Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) – Sexual Violence

The Herefordshire CSP Strategic Assessment 2023 states:

- There were 311 sexual offences and 107 rape offences recorded in Herefordshire during 2022/23 (01 July 2022 to 30 June 2023)
- Women and girls are disproportionately victims of sexual offences:
 - 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult*

- 1 in 20 men have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult*
 - 98% of adults prosecuted for sexual offences are men*
- (*source Rape Crisis England and Wales)

How will the CSP address this priority?

- The Sexual Violence Sub-group will deliver the Herefordshire Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-28 – see the Herefordshire Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-28 on [Herefordshire Council's Sexual Violence Information page](#).
- The Herefordshire Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-28 vision is for a County where everyone lives free of the fear, threat, or experience of sexual violence. The strategy focuses on three priority areas: prioritising prevention, supporting victims and survivors, and pursuing perpetrators.
- An action plan overseen by the Sexual Violence Sub-group of the Community Safety Partnership, involves all system partners and there will be a relentless focus on implementation.

3) Priority – Misuse of Drugs

The Herefordshire Council Substance Misuse Needs Assessment April 2023 brings together data about substance misuse in Herefordshire with the overall aim of preventing and reducing its harmful effects. It is part of a refreshed approach to tackling substance misuse, building on the [‘From Harm to Hope’](#) 10 year government strategy, published in 2022.

The Herefordshire CSP Strategic Assessment 2023 states:

- Although crime data is decreasing, there have been more people accessing services and receiving treatment.
- Most drug offences within Herefordshire relate to possession of cannabis.
- It was suggested that the younger community use cannabis as opposed to Class A drugs.
- Class A, opioids are on the decline, and are mostly used by older people.
- It was identified that there is a lack of interventions for initial recreational use before it turns to a more serious addiction, such as young people choosing to use cannabis. Interventions are only available when more serious addiction starts.

Although substance misuse in Herefordshire is estimated to be lower than it is elsewhere, there are areas with room for improvement, and these are highlighted here. Both treatment and prevention interventions should be strengthened and a system approach to this across the whole life course will be needed in order to secure a drug free Herefordshire. Many of the risk factors which draw people into substance misuse, such as poverty, domestic abuse, or adverse childhood experiences, are increasing and it is important to effectively mitigate these risks to avoid a worsening pattern of substance misuse in the future.

The key areas to improve are:

- To reduce the number of drug related deaths in Herefordshire
- To improve treatment outcomes for those in treatment
- Focus on addressing the length of time in treatment appropriate to each individual

- Support those transitioning from prison to community based services
- Increase the numbers of people engaged with services
- To provide an early intervention - before crisis

How will the CSP address this priority?

- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Combatting Drugs Partnership chaired by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner will strategically deliver the [‘From Harm to Hope’](#) 10 year government strategy, published in 2022.
- Locally in Herefordshire the Tackling Substance Misuse Group will deliver the local plan to address substance misuse in the County, led and Chaired by the Public Health Consultant responsible for substance misuse in Herefordshire.
- The Tackling Substance Misuse Group will report into the CSP Board.

4) Priority – Neighbourhood Crime

For the purpose of this strategy neighbourhood crime includes anti-social behaviour, acquisitive crime, and hate crime.

4.1 Antisocial Behaviour:

Antisocial behaviour is a range of issues that can cause nuisance and annoyance, or harm and distress to a person. It is a wide range of unacceptable activity, and includes but is not limited to:

- Noise - including loud music, banging, DIY at unsocial hours, loud parties, frequent visitors at unsocial hours
- Shouting, swearing and fighting
- Intimidation through threats or actual violence
- Harassment
- Verbal abuse
- Abusive behaviour aimed at causing distress or fear to certain people; for example, elderly or disabled people
- Driving in an inconsiderate or careless way; for example, drivers congregating in an area for racing/car cruising
- Dumping rubbish
- Animal nuisance, including dog fouling, dogs barking
- Vandalism, property damage and graffiti
- Antisocial drinking
- Arson

If left unreported or unresolved, it can escalate into more serious crimes which can have devastating effects.

4.2 Acquisitive Crime:

Acquisitive crime includes burglary, robbery, theft and shoplifting. Figures for these police offence groups listed in the Herefordshire CSP Strategic Assessment 2023 are:

- 2020/21 = 1,934 (COVID 19)
- 2021/22 = 2,397
- 2022/23 = 2,863

There is also a need to combat fraud, in particular online fraud and scamming/scammers.

4.3 Hate Crime:

Hate crime involves any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. Hate crime can be motivated by disability, gender identity, race, religion or faith and sexual orientation. West Mercia Police, as with most police forces, also recognises hate crimes against those with 'alternative lifestyles'. Hate crime is unacceptable and must be monitored and addressed, even though the relative incidence of hate crime in Herefordshire is low.

- Most police recorded hate crime within Herefordshire is racial, with some in relation to the exploitation of vulnerable people with learning disabilities as well as physical disabilities.
- The data shows that most types of hate have remained consistent over the three year period. There were no increases in the types of hate crime when comparing 2022/2023 to 2021/2022.

How will the CSP address this priority?

The CSP Board will continue to be provided with crime data and appropriate matters will be escalated to board level. The Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination group (MATAC) will continue to meet monthly to operationally tackle issues of anti-social behaviour, acquisitive crime and hate crime in Herefordshire. MATAC attendees include the 5 CSP responsible authorities joined by a wider group of voluntary and community organisations that work in our communities such as; housing associations, charities, community groups and key public sector service providers.

Reducing neighbourhood crime is a priority for the West Mercia Crime Reduction Board of which Herefordshire is a member.

The underpinning and cross cutting themes listed below will apply to all the CSP Strategic Priorities but especially neighbourhood crime, when one considers Serious Organised Crime (SOC). SOC affects communities and on that basis SOC will be a strong theme discussed at MATAC.

5) Underpinning and Crosscutting Themes

When devising a strategy to tackle crime and disorder in Herefordshire it is clear that individual crime types and priorities cannot be addressed in isolation. For example, we know that substance misuse can be a factor in domestic violence, sexual violence and acquisitive crime.

Similarly, there are important cross cutting themes that have to be considered and Herefordshire has four crosscutting and underpinning themes. These are:

- 1) Serious Violence
- 2) Serious Organised Crime
- 3) Prevention
- 4) Community Engagement

5.1 Serious Violence

The CSP has signed up to the West Mercia Serious Violence Strategy (2024) and this strategy outlines how Herefordshire will tackle the most prevalent and risky forms of serious violence.

The West Mercia Serious Violence Strategy (2024) and Herefordshire Serious Violence Needs Assessment (2023) states:

- Serious violence levels in Herefordshire decreased by 13% in the year to 31 August 2023 compared to the previous year
 - 52% of serious violence over the three year period was linked to domestic abuse whilst 31% of serious violence was of a sexual nature
 - 30% of serious violence was youth related which has increased over the three year period* (*we know that the majority of these crimes were sexual related)
 - 35 knife related offences were committed in Herefordshire between 01 April 2023 and 30 November 2023*
 - Most offences recorded a knife being used to administer violence (57%, n=20)*
- (*Knife Crime Problem Profile – Herefordshire 2024)

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board will be the local Serious Violence Partnership Board. The West Mercia Crime Reduction Board is the West Mercia Serious Violence Partnership Board. Herefordshire has signed up to the West Mercia Serious Violence Strategy 2024 and is an active member of that group.

Domestic abuse and sexual violence are the two main serious violence categories challenging Herefordshire. From a serious violence perspective; these will be picked up as CSP Strategic Priorities reporting into the CSP Board.

Knife crime is a concern for the whole of the UK and the Herefordshire CSP will maintain oversight of offences involving sharp implements and work with the West Mercia Crime Reduction Board to deliver regional campaigns.

5.2 Serious Organised Crime

Crime from outside Herefordshire including serious organised crime and county lines will continue to be tackled and Herefordshire has a good track record of closing down county lines.

Serious organised crime (SOC) will be tactically addressed at the Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination group (MATAC) and the CSP Board will oversee SOC from a strategic perspective. The SOC problem profile will inform SOC interventions.

5.3 Prevention

All CSP priority sub-groups have action plans and overarching objectives. All have actions to prevent criminal activity and abuse escalating. Long term prevention is key to reducing the impact of these priority crime types in Herefordshire.

5.4 Community Engagement

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the CSP's to engage with communities and seek opinion as to what concerns residents and businesses around crime and anti-social behaviour.

During 2024/27 the CSP will strengthen its engagement activity with neighbourhoods and the wider community. This will be done by consolidating and using existing engagement tools utilised and carried out by single agencies. An objective is to

move towards a participatory approach to engaging with the community and victims of crime. Each CSP sub-group overseeing a CSP priority area will be required to demonstrate to the CSP Board how it has sought and listened to the views of community members.

By engaging with communities and listening to what is said the CSP will be able to monitor the impact it is having on tackling local crime and disorder issues in neighbourhoods. This will be a key indicator as to whether or not the CSP is making a difference.

There is a strategic intention for the CSP Board to measure the impact of interventions and in addition to enhanced community engagement, all crime and CSP priority strategies and work plans will include 'measures of success' to evidence impact.

Appendix 1

A number of other Strategic Partnerships and sub-groups have responsibility for an area of community safety business with the CSP having an overview to ensure strategic priorities are addressed.

Regional Groups:	Herefordshire Strategic Partnerships and strategic sub-groups*: (*with the prefix of 'Herefordshire')
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Mercia Crime Reduction Board – (West Mercia Serious Violence Strategy) • West Mercia CSP Summit • Herefordshire & Worcestershire Combatting Drugs Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling Substance Misuse Group • Sexual Violence Sub-Group • Reducing Re-Offending Board • Safeguarding Adult Board (<i>Adult exploitation amongst other matters</i>) • Safeguarding Children Partnership (<i>Child exploitation amongst other matters</i>) • Health and Wellbeing Board • Prevent Strategic Group <p><i>(other 'operational' and tactical groups not listed also meet to achieve objectives)</i></p>