

Safer Sefton Together – Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Foreword by Councillor Trish Hardy

Welcome to Safer Sefton Together Strategy 2023-2026. Creating strong, safe, and resilient communities is a key priority for the Council and I am proud to chair the Safer Sefton Together partnership in delivering effective crime prevention and reduction programmes.

The past three years has seen significant unheralded challenges such as the pandemic, Welfare Reforms, severe reductions in public sector funding and significant ongoing change to criminal justice policy. With the cost-of-living crisis beginning to take effect in our communities it is essential that we work together effectively and flexibly as a partnership in order to meet the changing environment in which we work.

This strategy outlines our priorities over the next 3 years, but we are also mindful of the need to be flexible to meet new challenges should they emerge as well as respond to changing demographics and more culturally diverse communities. We will review this strategy and the work we do annually to ensure we are delivering against our priorities and those of the Merseyside Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

We have achieved so much as a partnership over recent years but there is so much more to do.

Introduction

Safer Sefton Together, in its capacity as the local statutory Community Safety Partnership (CSP), brings together the key agencies involved in crime prevention and community safety work. It includes Sefton Council, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Sefton's Integrated Care Partnership and a range of other public, private and third sector delivery partners. Together these partners address issues associated with crime reduction and community safety.

The aim of the partnership is to ensure that Sefton is a safe place to live, work and visit. Each year we undertake a Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment (SSNA) where we analyse local, regional, and national data as well as listen to feedback from our communities to identify local needs and priorities for our communities that helps with strategy and service planning.

This document identifies the priorities for Safer Sefton Together over the next 3 years, what work the partnership is already undertaking in these areas and what work is planned. Many of our priorities do not change substantially from year to year as they follow long term trends and whilst our strategic priorities will be established for a three-year period we recognise that we may, however, need to re-focus our priorities in response to emerging or changing trends in crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), the impact of previous interventions, emerging external national or local factors, and learning gained through delivery of existing priorities. We may also need to respond to changing demographics and changes to the culturally diverse nature of our communities. Such requirements will be identified via our annual Community Safety Needs Assessment and through an annual review of this plan to ensure that work-plans and outcomes are appropriately delivered.

It is also important to recognise that our 6 priorities are not mutually exclusive of each other and as such there is significant cross over between all of the priorities.

Safer Sefton Together Priorities 2023-2026

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

- Youth ASB
- Scrambler bikes / E-Scooters/bikes
- Fear of ASB
- Prevention & Early Intervention around parks and coastal areas

Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

- Links to Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAPB) & Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Oversight
- Sexual offences
- Safe Travel
- Modern Slavery
- Night Time Economy

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Child Exploitation

- Prevent
- Hate Crime
- Migration
- Perpetrator
- County Lines
- Multi Agency Childhood Exploitation (MACE)
- Exploitation Team Around the Child (ETAC)
- Early Intervention & Prevention

Community Engagement

- Neighbourhood Teams
- Youth Engagement
- Violence Reduction Partnership

Serious Organised Crime (SOC) & Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)

- Violence Reduction Partnership
- Partnership working with Police
- Muti Agency Response to Threat Harm & Risk (MARTHUR)

Priority 1 - Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

We recognise the corrosive effect of anti-social behaviour on victims' health and wellbeing and the negative impact on the wider community. As a partnership we have strong multi-agency arrangements and interventions which are making a difference.

We know that there are seasonal fluctuations in anti-social behaviour, in particular levels rise in the summer holidays and around Halloween and Bonfire Night and we plan specific operations and events at these times. We also work closely with partners including Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service with Operation Banger and Operation Beachsafe initiatives.

Anti-social behaviour is not at the same levels around the borough. We share information between agencies so that we can respond to emerging issues in neighbourhoods and deliver local responses with place-based delivery models. We use a problem-solving approach to tailor our responses to the issue at hand, whether this is caused by an individual or by groups of people causing nuisance. Using this problem-solving approach, we are able to respond appropriately with a number of interventions.

Aside from legal powers, partner agencies work together to deliver culturally sensitive mediation interventions, including restorative justice approaches, which guide the offender to address their behaviour and the impact this has on their victims.

What have we achieved so far?

- Manage children through an out of court process to prevent further offending, including coordinating support or providing information about what is on offer.
- Operation Banger – providing diversionary activities for young people around mischief night (Halloween) and Bonfire Night.
- Scrambler bike operations & education for young people using scrambler bikes.
- Park Nights – providing diversionary activities for young people during the summer months.
- Operation Beachsafe – providing a high visibility presence around the coastline throughout summer.
- Creation of a coastwide Public Space Protection Order to provide additional powers to prevent ASB
- Sefton Young Advisors have conducted consultation work with young people about community safety
- Support provided to Asylum seekers who have experienced ASB

Areas for Development for 2023-2026

- We will fully utilise powers contained within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 to tackle behaviours which have a negative effect on communities and individuals. This will include providing mechanisms for people to report such behaviour and where appropriate bringing action against perpetrators.
- We will use a range of approaches with offenders and those at risk of offending, including early intervention and support, prevention, diversion and enforcement. We will monitor the effectiveness of our interventions and continually seek to develop and improve on our practice.
- We will involve communities, individuals, businesses and schools using a range of schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch, Crimestoppers & Pubwatch. We will work with Sefton Youth

Service to promote a robust preventative / educational programme that runs across the borough. Our approach will include education within our schools and looking to identify area based “Champions” within communities.

- Our approach will be the early identification and implementation of actions to tackle new and emerging issues such as on-line based crime and harassment. There are often certain areas which have a higher level of ASB and we will share information and use the measures available to all partners, including Registered Providers of housing to address any “hotspots” of ASB in particular locations. We will work with partners to reduce and prevent ASB which arises seasonally during school holidays and around Bonfire Night and Halloween night.
- There is a wealth of evidence available on the impact of crime and ASB on the quality of life of individuals and communities as a whole. We will ensure that we treat victims with respect and place them at the centre of our interventions. We will ensure that victims have access to support services including Victim Support, support from landlords and other third sector groups.

Priority 2 - Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG)

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent in April 2021 and became the largest piece of legislation in history in relation to Domestic Abuse (DA). The Act placed a responsibility on Local Authorities to create a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAPB). The role of the partnership board is to drive the strategic direction for Domestic Abuse in its area. In Sefton the LDAPB is chaired by Cllr Hardy who also chairs the Safer Sefton Together (SST). There is also significant cross over in membership between both partnership boards. Therefore, the strategic direction and the response to DA will be driven by the LDAPB. However, the SST will retain the overview of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and ensure there is a strategic line of sight between both boards.

Violence Against Women & Girls

Safer Sefton Together is committed to ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and is determined to ensure that Sefton is a place where women and girls are safe and feel safe to pursue their lives free from fear and harassment. We believe that with effective earlier intervention, joint working and a drive to challenge the culture and attitudes that give rise to all forms of abuse, we can make Sefton a safe place for women and girls to live, work and enjoy their leisure time.

What have we achieved so far?

- Effective strategic links between SST & Sefton LDAPB
- Effective commissioning of local services such as Sefton Women's and Children's Aid (SWACA), Sefton Women's Centre (SWAN), Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Independent Domestic & Sexual Violence Adviser (IDSVA) at Southport & Ormskirk Hospital.
- Increase of Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) cohort by 100% over the last 3 years
- Linked in with VCF organisations, such as Parenting2000, who deliver "The Girls Impression" course to build self-esteem, confidence and learn self-defence.
- The Diverse Ethnic Background Service (DEBS) is supporting asylum seekers at risk of honour-based violence and sexual harassment of East European females in the workplace.
- Coordination of Home Office "Street Safe" referrals.

Areas for Development for 2023-2026

- Education for Girls that violence towards them is not acceptable in any circumstance also covering issues such as consent and healthy relationships
- Education for Boys that VAWG is not acceptable in any circumstance also covering issues such as consent and healthy relationships
- Training for Teaching and support staff in spotting violence issues (sexual harassment, sexual violence and online sexual abuse) and delivering anti-misogyny training as well as such as consent and healthy relationships
- All responses to VAWG should be victim-led and that further roll out of trauma informed training for front line practitioners and delivering intervention programmes such as A Diverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) is critical.
- A culture of safe disclosure is created, and frontline staff exercise robust professional curiosity where abuse is suspected.

- Training for staff on public transport and taxi drivers to recognise signs of sexual harassment and violence
- Providing well-lit routes
- Providing an adequate and robust CCTV network
- Developing the learning from completed DHRs and ensuring this reaches frontline workers across the partnership workforce.

Priority 3 – Vulnerable People

Partners in Sefton have developed effective practice to support our most vulnerable residents including effective use of multi-agency information sharing, risk assessment and case conferencing processes. Although our approach to addressing the needs of our most vulnerable residents is strong, partners recognise that more can be done in terms of early intervention and prevention to ensure victims do not suffer re-victimisation.

What have we achieved so far?

- Merseyside Offender Mentoring Service supports the Building Better Relationships programme by supporting ex-offenders with this and referring ex-offenders to the course.
- Developed a relationship with Liverpool Pride to help explore needs and gaps for LGBTQ+ people in Sefton.
- Operation Lamprey (cuckooing) work with partners.
- Hate Crime Joint Action Group
- The Development of Safe Spaces and Hate Crime Reporting Centres
- Use of civil orders such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders, Stalking Protection Orders, Police Protection Orders and Stalking Protection Orders.
- Repeat victim reviews & action plans with partners.
- Merseyside Offender Mentoring Service delivers mentoring support as part of the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) programme to prevent offending and reduce re-offending while working with violent offenders and those involved in organised crime aged between 18 to 30.
- Commission health services for those involved in the criminal justice system
- Coordinate Learning from the Lives and Deaths for those with Learning Disability and autistic people (LeDeR)
- Sefton Multi Agency Partnership

Areas for Development for 2023-2026

- The population of people over the age of 64 continues to rise in Sefton. Evidence shows as well as being susceptible to exploitation, older people are less likely to report. We will ensure the stigma of being victim to such exploitation is challenged and enable people to speak out and feel protected. We will work with partners to raise awareness around this issue and how to access help and support.
- This will include people who have mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disability, are homeless and/ or from a range of ethnic backgrounds or the refugee community. This will include promotion of reporting mechanisms where there is evidence of under reporting from within some of these groups.
- We will develop a Prevent action plan in order to work with partners to safeguard and support those people most at risk of radicalisation to stop them becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- We will develop, in association with the LDAPB a range of perpetrators and behaviour change programmes – not just for those involved as DA perpetrators but for wider more harmful behaviour.
- Take appropriate enforcement action and ensure victims have access to support. We will use all powers and resources at our disposal including taking action through the Criminal Justice

system where appropriate. We will make sure we adopt a victim centred approach, and that support is available.

Priority 4 – Childhood Exploitation

We know that Children and Young people make up a significant proportion of both victims of crime and offenders in Sefton. We know that there is a clear relationship between members of Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs) and younger associates in street gangs. As well as childhood criminal exploitation (CE) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is an area that has gained national prominence over the last few years and work has been undertaken over the last year to further develop our local understanding of the nature and prevalence of this form of exploitation.

What have we achieved so far?

- Support vulnerable children through a variety of means including direct work and intervention, coordinate other services to support including stat and voluntary agencies
- Develop safeguarding, welfare and management discussions as a partnership as part as the Multi Agency Childhood Exploitation (MACE) safeguarding framework. Sefton Children’s Services will be introducing a team that will focus solely on children who are victims of exploitation. This is known as Exploitation Team Around the Child (ETAC)
- Commission health service for young people under youth justice team and criminal justice liaison.
- Home Office funding for County Lines work
- Carry out investigation, disruption and safeguarding activity around CE & CSE
- Commissioning GANGS project as part of the Early Intervention & Prevention approach.

Areas for Development for 2023-2026

- Invest in early intervention and prevention services, to ensure young people are identified sooner and offered services to prevent them from being drawn into antisocial behaviour, exploitation, and criminal behaviour.
- Educate children and young people on the risks and dangers of criminal and sexual exploitation, violence, and being drawn into terrorism.
- Continue to offer young people access to specialist services, such as Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which provides much-needed wellbeing and treatment services for young people. Offer a whole-family approach to support those who have witnessed or been subjected to violence or exploitation.
- Ensure that, during all transition stages (for instance primary to secondary school, child to adult), young people have access to the support they need to prevent them from being excluded from education and becoming at risk of being drawn into criminality.
- Increase the awareness and understanding of the threats from cyber-crime and online abuse, criminal and sexual exploitation, and bullying and hate crime, by working with parents and carers to raise awareness of the dangers of these types of crime

Priority 5 – Community Engagement

Working with our Communities to understand the issues they are facing with regards to Community Safety and how the partnership can support them to become more resilient is a priority that underpins all of the other priorities within this strategy.

We need effective engagement mechanisms to be able to communicate with a wide range of groups such as young people, local leaders, friends of groups, tenants and resident's groups among many others. This will help us understand how our communities feel about living in Sefton.

What have we achieved so far?

- Safer Schools Officers supporting schools throughout the borough.
- Community activities such as bike marking, mobile police station deployments, participatory budgeting programmes.
- Youth service involvement in youth engagement.
- Supported the development of a new Sefton Youth Voice Strategic Steering Group
- Working with Violence Reduction Partnership on Hope for Sefton with Young Advisors.
- Diverse Ethnic Background Service (DEBS) working with the hate crime Joint Action Group (JAG) to target hot spots of criminality towards non-White British people and also with local schools when incidents of hate crime are reported.

Areas for Development for 2023-2026

- Work with Councillors and residents to build Neighbourhood plans that will support partnership working and ensure the voice of the resident is heard.
- Establish, where requested, local operational groups that can offer a forum for Councillors, partners and officers to problem solve local issues
- Continue to support community groups to develop and react to emerging issues. Encouraging collaborative working and a cooperative approach to funding applications and bid writing
- Ensuring newly elected councillors are supported during their induction into their wards, and offering advice and guidance

Priority 6 – Serious Organised Crime (SOC) & Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)

Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) presents a significant national threat due to links to drug trafficking, fraud, firearms offences, and other forms of serious violence. The changing nature of the threat posed by Serious and Organised Crime in Sefton and the links to child exploitation (CE) has focussed partnership attention in recent years on the relationship between child exploitation and serious organised crime in the Borough.

Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC) presents a more local threat with both domestic and commercial burglary, robbery, theft of and from motor vehicles all linked to the supply of drugs and is intrinsically linked to SOC. It has an equally harmful impact to victims and our communities.

What have we achieved so far?

- Weekly Multi Agency Response Threat Harm & Risk (MARTHUR) meetings
- Home Office funding around County Lines / Serious Violence, Organised Crime Group (OCG) Management
- Overt and Covert policing operations.
- Reassurance around victims & neighbours of burglary including burglary prevention kits.
- Operation Pelican - Proactive SOC work.
- Partnership attendance at Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Areas for Development for 2023-2026

- Further develop Sefton's multi-agency response to Serious and Organised Crime in order to deliver against regional and local priorities in this area.
- Improve use of data through development of a Local Organised Crime Profile
- Develop a common understanding among local partners of the threats, vulnerabilities and risks relating to serious and organised crime
- Provide information on which to base local programmes and action plans
- Support the mainstreaming of serious and organised crime activity into day-to-day policing, local government and partnership work
- Allow a targeted and proportionate use of resources
- Improving the use of data to improve understanding of the nature and prevalence of SOC & SAC
- Continue work with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership in embedding a public health approach to violence reduction through early intervention.

Strategic Coordination

The SST world does not and cannot operate in isolation from other strategies and boards. How this strategy links into these other strategies and boards is integral in its delivery. Other strategies and boards are:

- Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board & Sefton's Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Sefton's Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP)
- SSCP Contextual Safeguarding sub-group
- Sefton Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board
- Sefton Multi Agency Partnership
- Merseyside VRP Steering Group
- Health & Well Being Board
- Strategic Domestic Violence and Abuse Group
- Merseyside Criminal Justice Board
- Safer Merseyside Partnership
- Youth Justice Partnership Board
- Children and Young People Partnership Board
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

Outcomes

Based on the objectives outlined above, this strategy seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- A reduction in serious violent crime (youths and adults, including Child Exploitation)
- A reduction in violence against women and girls (including domestic abuse and sexual violence)
- A reduction in all property crime
- A reduction in repeat offending (Crime and ASB)
- An effective response to anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- An increase in public engagement, confidence and satisfaction
- A reduction in the fear of crime
- A reduction in repeat victimisation, especially of vulnerable people

Monitoring & Measuring the Impact

Safer Sefton Together Partnership will be responsible for the monitoring of the Strategy and will oversee the development of a Strategy Action Plan which will set out the detail of how the priorities will be delivered.

The Partnership will also review the strategy on an annual basis and will consider:

- Progress made against the strategy's objectives.
- The overall impact and effectiveness of the strategy measured through the strategy outcomes
- New legislation or government directives for incorporation in the strategy.
- Local need and any other emerging priorities.

Summary & Next Steps

Tackling and reducing crime and the fear of crime is a long-term aspiration and will not be achieved overnight. Crime is often linked to other social issues such as poverty, lack of education, substance misuse amongst others. It is important therefore that the Safer Sefton Together Partnership work strategically across other partners and with our Sefton communities in order to achieve long term, sustainable, positive behaviour change.

The action plan that will accompany this strategy will be ambitious yet realistic with key milestones contained within. We still have a lot to learn and we need to be flexible enough to respond to opportunities and challenges as they emerge. Most importantly we need to work together, now more than any time before, in order to make Sefton a better place to live, work or visit.