

Equality Impact Assessment – Safer Sefton Together Strategy 2023-2026

Details of proposal:

Safer Sefton Together (SST) Partnership have produced a 3-year strategy. The strategy reflects the priorities of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the priority themes contained within the annual Sefton Strategic Needs Assessment (SSNA) as well as local knowledge gained from staff, elected members and community groups.

Ramifications of Proposal:

By adopting the strategy, the Council can bid for additional funding streams that will serve to address the priorities contained within. The strategy places the priorities for Community Safety on a more realistic 3 year timetable that allow for longer term projects, that will affect significant change, to be commissioned.

The Strategy contains 6 themed priorities

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women & Girls
- Vulnerable People
- Child Exploitation
- Community Engagement
- Serious Organised Crime & Serious Acquisitive Crime

Are there any protected characteristics that will be disproportionately affected in comparison to others?

It is accepted that crime can affect anyone irrespective of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and Maternity. This is an important message to impart. Crime does not happen to a certain type of person.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- *Age*
- *Disability*
- *Gender Reassignment*
- *Marriage and Civil Partnership*
- *Race*
- *Religion or Belief*
- *Sex*
- *Sexual Orientation*
- *Pregnancy and Maternity*

Activities to prevent and reduce crime, support victims and deal with perpetrators need to be designed to meet the legitimate and particular considerations of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy and Maternity.

Sex

The Safer Sefton Together Strategy recognises that both men and women can be both victims and perpetrators of crime. The Strategy has a particular focus around Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and there is a particular synergy with the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Female victims accounted for 73% of domestic abuse related crimes recorded by the police 2020/21 and 74% in 2021/22 (Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2021 and November 2022, Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

There were 373 victims of domestic homicide aged 16 and over in England and Wales between March 2019 and March 2021. 72% of these victims (269) were female. (Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2022, Office for National Statistics (ONS)).

Age

There is no upper age limit to being a victim or perpetrator of crime. We know that the fear of crime is more prevalent in older people and those that have been victims before. Organisations representing older people will be made aware of this strategy. Crime has a detrimental impact on children, as this strategy has emphasised. The strategy aims to deal with concerns about:

- The impact on children in organised crime / county lines / childhood exploitation
- Young people become involved in gangs and violence including carrying knives and guns.

There will be a focus on work in schools, especially with primary age children.

Race

The strategy has a particular section on dealing with hate crime as we know ethnic minority communities are particularly vulnerable to this sort of crime.

A recent Crime Survey for England and Wales revealed that minority ethnic communities have a greater fear of physical attack because of their skin colour than white communities, and that victims of hate crime overall are more likely to say that they are emotionally affected by the incidents than victims of many other types of crime.

Sexual Orientation

The hate crime section also covers the LGBT+ community who are particular susceptible to this sort of crime.

Religion & Belief

The hate crime section also covers those that may suffer hate crime due to religion or belief.

Gender Reassignment

The hate crime section also covers those that may suffer hate crime due to gender reassignment.

Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?

The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
- *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- *Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
- *Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.*
- *Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.*

It is the intention of the strategy to make a positive impact across the protected characteristics in terms of experiences of crime and fear of crime.

What actions will follow if proposal accepted by cabinet & Council?

Include details of any mitigating action and ongoing monitoring to address any of the equality impacts highlighted above

Next steps will include the completion of an action plan to accompany the priorities identified within the Strategy. Part of the wider Merseyside Strategic work will be to engage with Communities around their experiences of crime and the fear of crime. We will use this information to further understand if the needs of any particular group are not being met.

The annual review of the Community Safety Strategic Needs assessment will be another tool we will use to engage with Sefton Communities about their experiences of Crime and the fear of crime. Any groups whose need are not being met will be identified and their needs addressed.