

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 27 September 2022

By: Director of Adult Social Care & Health

Title: Annual Review of Safer Communities Performance, Priorities, and Issues

Purpose: To update the Committee on performance in relation to safer communities in 2021/22, and priorities and issues highlighted in the Partnership Business Plan 2020 - 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To consider and comment on performance across the Safer Communities Partnership during 2021/22**
-

1. Summary Performance Highlights 2021/22

1.1. While there were notable decreases in reports of Anti-Social Behaviour during 2021/22 compared to the previous year, overall reported crime increased during this period. The most significant increases were in reports of Serious Violence (public space) crimes due to the reopening of the night-time economy; and significant increases of reports of rape and sexual violence offences, reflecting the national picture.

1.2. There has been an increase in people seeking treatment for alcohol dependency and for non-opiate drug use, while numbers of people seeking treatment for opiate dependency have remained stable despite the additional focus and investment of Project ADDER in Hastings. The percentage of people completing treatment successfully has improved through 2021/22, although is still lower than it was in 2019/20.

2. Background Information

2.1. The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) is responsible for developing a [Community Safety Business Plan](#) which addresses shared strategic priorities for community safety across its members. This enables the Partnership to make use of economies of scale in tackling priorities across Districts and Boroughs, identify regional changes in the activities and resources of criminals or vulnerable people, and access opportunities for county-level funding. In East Sussex local drug and alcohol strategies have formed part of the Safer Communities Business Plan to date, although going forward, a separate 'From Harm to Hope' Strategy will be produced in line with statutory guidance.

2.2. The County Council's priorities for community safety are informed by the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership business planning process in a three-year business planning cycle.

2.3. The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan is refreshed on an annual basis following a strategic assessment of community safety; the partnership is in its third and final year of the current business planning cycle. The Business Plan third year refresh is attached at **Appendix 1** of this report and sets the direction for Partnership work for 2022/23.

2.4. The Partnership is focused on keeping communities safe, identifying those at risk of harm, and protecting vulnerable people. These priorities reflect and complement the individual priorities of the four District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships (Eastbourne and Lewes having a single Partnership), the County Council, Sussex Police, Sussex Probation Service, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Office who are members of the Board.

2.5. Other priority areas, such as managing the impact of street communities, are addressed through other partnership structures, with support from the wider partnership as appropriate.

2.6. In addition to the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership, there are four local Community Safety Partnerships in East Sussex. Each of these partnerships publish a plan to address the issues raised in their local area and as defined by their own members.

2.7. The Safer Communities Partnership priorities are interconnected and crosscutting, aligning with the priorities of other Partnerships to keep East Sussex safe. A Joint Partnership Protocol between the Safer Communities Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Children and Young People's Trust facilitates the identification of shared priorities and joint working.

3. Community Engagement

3.1. The East Sussex Reputation Tracker Survey is carried out annually to gather information from a cross-section of approximately 1,000 East Sussex residents. Part of this survey asks residents to select three Community Safety Priorities and three types of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) that they feel are most important for the Safer Communities Partnership to tackle (residents were given a pre-defined list of 14 priority areas and asked to rank from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important). These results are used to inform the Partnership's Strategic Assessment and selection of its ongoing priorities. No survey was completed in 2020 and the 2021 edition was completed in June/July 2021 during a time in which COVID-lockdowns were undergoing national review.

3.2. Community Safety areas most chosen by East Sussex residents as first, second or third priorities were Sexual Violence & Abuse (39.5%), Serious Violent Crime including Knife Crime (37.6%) and Online Safety, Harassment & Abuse (32.3%). The most significant increases in areas being chosen were in Online Safety, Harassment & Abuse (increasing from 19.5% in the 2019 survey to 32.5% of respondents), Fraud & Scams (7.6% to 14.3%) and Reducing Reoffending (12.9% to 17.5%). Online Safety, Harassment and Abuse was the first choice for 12.6% of respondents, a rise from 7.0% in 2019, and the second most-chosen priority area after Serious Violent Crime (19.8%; 19.0% in 2019).

3.3. The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) areas most chosen as first, second or third priorities were Drug Dealing in Public Places (33.6%), Underage Drinking (32.4%) and Aggressive Street Begging (26.8%). The most significant increases in areas being chosen were in Verbal Abuse / Intimidation in Public (increasing from 15.2% of respondents in 2019 to 24.3% in 2021) and Fly-Tipping (from 10.4% to 18.1%).

3.4. There was a significant decrease in respondents choosing Anti-Social Driving/Speeding as a priority (from 25.1% to 17.9%) which is most likely a reflection of the decreased use of cars and motorbikes during the county's COVID-related lockdowns in 2020 and 2021.

3.5. From across the available options more respondents chose their priorities as a result of having themselves or their relatives directly experience them (63.1% vs. 50.0% in 2019),

with the most significant increases in Online Safety, Harassment & Abuse (from 22 respondents to 97 in 2021), Road Safety (from 46 to 109 respondents), and Serious Violent Crime (from 64 to 83 respondents).

3.6. Verbal Abuse & Intimidation saw a significant increase in the number of respondents reporting direct experience (104 respondents vs. 69 in 2019) as did Vehicle Crime (60 respondents vs. 26 in 2019), Drug Dealing in Public Places (117 respondents vs. 87 in 2019) and Littering (81 respondents vs. 50 in 2019).

4. Headline Activity Sussex Police Data 2021/22

4.1. Over the last few years new challenges and new types of crime have surfaced. There has been a notable shift away from traditional crime types to emerging threats such as cyber-crime, human trafficking, child criminal exploitation and serious organised violence related to County Lines.

4.2. Total crime: in the year to end of March 2022 Sussex Police recorded 35,188 notifiable crimes, an increase of 8.6% from the 32,398 recorded the previous year.

4.3. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Incidents have decreased by -39.1% as there was a reduction in Covid-related ASB being reported throughout the latter half of 2021 and into 2022. This is from 17,606 incidents reported in East Sussex in 2020/21 to 10,723 in 2021/22.

4.4. With increased use of the night-time economy, there has been a 15% increase in the number of serious violent public space crimes, from 299 to 344 crimes.

4.5. Modern Slavery crimes are small in volume but do show a decrease from 62 offences recorded in 2020/21 to 54 recorded in 2021/22.

4.6. 417 children and adults who were potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking were referred by Sussex Police through the National Referral Mechanism in 2021, compared to 282 in 2020. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

4.7. The number of reports of fraud by East Sussex residents to Operation Signature has decreased by 16% from 1,194 in 2020/21 to 1,007 in 2021/22. Over the past 12 months courier fraud, doorstep crime, dating & romance, and investment are the top four most common types of fraud affecting the vulnerable in East Sussex with people most commonly being contacted initially by telephone or in person on the doorstep.

5. Domestic Violence and Abuse

5.1. The number of domestic abuse crimes reported to Sussex Police has marginally increased 0.7% from 6,099 in 2020/21 to 6,141 offences in 2021/22. Domestic abuse incidents have seen a relatively small decrease of 4.7% from 4,307 in 2020/21 to 4105 records in 2021/22. Overall domestic abuse has seen a 1.5% decrease from 10,406 records in 2020/21 to 10,246 recorded in the last year.

5.2. During 2021/22, 1,105, high risk domestic violence and abuse cases were discussed at the East Sussex Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). This is an increase of 10.8% compared to the previous year when 986 cases were heard. Nationally, SafeLives report a 6% increase in MARAC referrals compared to the same period last year. Both the MARACs in East Sussex continue to be over the SafeLives expected 40 cases per

10,000 population (Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden 43 and Hastings and Rother 59). Comparisons across MARACs within the three Sussex local authorities demonstrate a similar pattern in Brighton and Hove:

| Referrals per 10,000 population: | West Sussex | Brighton Hove | East Sussex |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Average across the area | 40.5 | 60 | 51 |

5.3. Repeat referral rates in 2020/21 accounted for 24% of all cases discussed in Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden MARAC, and 38% of cases discussed in Hastings and Rother MARAC; both within the SafeLives' recommended range of 28% to 40%.

5.4. The (Multi-Agency) Victim Hub enables early triage of new cases across the breadth of vulnerabilities (Domestic Abuse, Rape and Sexual Violence, Stalking and Harassment, and Harmful Practices).

5.5. Change, Grow, Live (CGL) East Sussex Domestic Abuse Service (the specialist domestic abuse service commissioned in East Sussex) received 2,482 referrals during 2021/22. This represents an 8.3% decline compared to the previous financial year, when the total figure was 2,707. This decline in referrals is due to the Victim Support multi-crime service supporting with medium (as well as standard) risk referrals.

5.6. Referrals per quarter have been steady across the year, between 603 and 644 referrals per quarter. Eastbourne remains the area with the highest number of referrals followed by Hastings. Rother continues to see lower referral numbers. Physical abuse was listed as the most common primary abuse type for quarter four, although for 2021-22 as a whole, emotional abuse was the most common primary abuse type.

| Areas | Q1 Apr-Jun | Q2 Jul -Sept | Q3 Oct-Dec | Q4 Jan-Mar | Annual Total |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Eastbourne | 180 | 252 | 164 | 217 | 755 |
| Hastings | 165 | 205 | 164 | 140 | 642 |
| Rother | 62 | 57 | 62 | 68 | 227 |
| Lewes | 98 | 58 | 82 | 92 | 308 |
| Wealden | 98 | 72 | 154 | 92 | 403 |
| Quarterly Total | 603 | 644 | 626 | 609 | 2,482 |

5.7. There were 29 referrals to CGL during 2021/22 from the over-60s age group, with only 26 the previous financial year. Given the demographics of East Sussex, older people are under-represented in this data (and indeed to domestic abuse services nationally). Local needs assessments and national research found that generational norms can impact on older victims not framing their experience as domestic abuse and/or not feeling comfortable reporting to the Police; that older victims are less likely to know where to seek support, and that older people are also more likely to seek support from 'older people's services' than a domestic abuse organisation.

5.8. Adult Social Care (ASC) safeguarding reporting consistently evidences a higher number of safeguarding concerns and enquiries under the category of domestic abuse. Despite this, there are a low number of referrals from ASC to CGL. Work is underway between ASC and CGL to determine the reason(s) for the disparity and to ensure that older people who are victims of domestic abuse and who are known to ASC are being referred and sign-posted to specialist support appropriately.

5.9. Hourglass, an organisation committed to ending the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK, have received funding from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), via the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) for an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service that commenced in Q2 of 2021-2022. Hourglass have extended their Community Response hub structure with a dedicated IDVA team who will be assisting with case work and support for domestic abuse victims aged 65+ across East Sussex.

5.10. Other categories of victims with protected characteristics accessing specialist domestic abuse support are also disproportionately low when compared with demographic data for East Sussex. This includes low levels of reporting from: LGBTQ+ groups and Black and minoritised groups. The Ministry of Justice have awarded CGL, via the OSPCC, funding for three Full Time Equivalent IDVA posts to specifically focus on accessibility for underserved communities.

5.11. Specialist training and support provided by a 'by and for' organisation supporting black and minoritised groups will be offered to staff working in refuge during the current financial year.

5.12. Clarion Housing Group were awarded the contract for the provision of refuge services in East Sussex, with a contract commencement of 1st November 2021. As a result of issues transferring the services during the mobilisation period from the previous provider, including staffing levels, referrals were paused into East Sussex refuges during Q3 of the financial year, re-opening when a full staffing complement was achieved on 3rd January 2022. Following the re-opening of referrals, over 80 referrals were received with 42 refuge placements provided in Q4. The yearly referral and placement data is incomplete due to incomplete contract reporting from the previous provider and the pause in referrals during Q3.

5.13. Clarion Housing Group is working with commissioners to identify new premises for a refuge in Hastings, as the previous building (10 units) was decommissioned in October 2021 due to safety concerns, with a commitment to acquire alternative premises this financial year. There is a further commitment to increase the number of refuge units in East Sussex, which should result in a total placement offer of 56 units at any given time across the county by the end of the year.

5.14. Works have been completed for one of the existing refuge units to accommodate a wheelchair user.

5.15. Clarion is actively engaging with the ESCC funded, trauma-informed 'virtual team' which has been separately commissioned to provide capacity-building support to supported housing providers. This team, incorporating substance misuse, employability, mental health and move on specialists, supports staff (and any volunteers) working in refuges and providing the outreach service, to enable their clients to work through their trauma and move towards more positive outcomes, wellbeing, and independent living. Support is being provided through regular training, supervision, and team meetings.

6. Sexual Violence and Abuse and Violence

6.1. Reports of rape and sexual violence offences in 2021/22 increased significantly by 25.6% overall compared to 2020/21, with a 34.8% increase in reporting of rape and 21.2% increase in reporting of sexual violence offences. This increase is in line with the national figures recorded by police, with a 26% increase in rape from 55,678 to 70,330 (Source: Office for National Statistics). Despite the increase in reporting, only 1 in 100 rapes (1.3%)

recorded by police nationally in 2021 resulted in a charge that same year (Source: Home Office).

6.2. Rape and Sexual Violence Services are co-commissioned with the OSPCC and provided by Survivors Network. In Q4 2021/22 there was a 19% increase in referrals from East Sussex in comparison from the previous quarter due to increased promotion of the service.

6.3. Rape accounts for just under a third of all sexual offence crimes reported, with an even split between Sexual Violence in a Domestic Abuse context where the perpetrator is a partner or ex-partner, a family member, or an acquaintance. There continues to be an increase in complexity of vulnerabilities of peoples accessing support from specialist services. This includes an increase in referrals of those with mental health needs and suicidal ideation.

6.4. An update on the implementation of the Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support and the work to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is included in Appendix 2.

7. Drug and Alcohol Related Harm

7.1. The table below shows the data from the commissioned adult drug and alcohol treatment service for the last 3 years with comparison data for England:

| | 2019/20 | | 2020/21 | | 2021/22 | |
|-----------------|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Treatment Group | Numbers in treatment | Successful Treatment Completions (England) | Numbers in treatment | Successful Treatment Completions (England) | Numbers in treatment | Successful Treatment Completions (England) |
| Opiates | 1043 | 5.2% (5.7%) | 1043 | 4.2% (4.9%) | 1094 | 4.4% (5%) |
| Alcohol | 594 | 32.3% (37.9%) | 678 | 24.3% (35.3%) | 689 | 27.9% (36.6%) |
| Non-Opiates | 151 | 30.7% (34.2%) | 239 | 24.4% (32.5%) | 228 | 27% (34.5%) |

7.2. There have been a stable number of people in treatment for opiate dependency in East Sussex over the last three years, with a decline over that period in the number of successful completions, meaning that more people are leaving treatment in an unplanned way. This is thought to be due to the number of people presenting for treatment who have increasingly complex needs. The slight rise in opiate completions between 2020/21 and 2021/22 is likely to be due to increased investment in this area due to Project ADDER in Hastings.

7.3. The focus for the coming year will see a further rise in opiate completions as the highly complex cohort engaged with Project ADDER progress through the system.

7.4. The treatment populations for non-opiates drug users and those with alcohol dependency have risen due to increased alcohol use during the pandemic and a rise in 'recreational' use of drugs such as powder cocaine. There have been fluctuations in the successful completions from treatment rates for these groups and East Sussex is significantly below the national rate; this is likely due to the provider having focused predominantly on the needs of opiate users. The treatment provider, Change, Grow, Live is now developing and delivering an enhanced offer for these groups.

7.5. The treatment provider is working to an improvement plan for alcohol related services, which has seen a rise in the number of successful completions from treatment during 2021/22 compared to 2020/21, while not yet returning to 2019/20 levels.

7.6. There will also be an increased focus on preventing alcohol related deaths and a working group has been convened to guide this work.

7.7. Continued investment, using funding from the Public Health Grant, will be made into the recovery community with a number of new services starting delivery in July 2022.

7.8. A new governance mechanism has been co-ordinated to implement the aims of 'From Harm to Hope' – the new 10-year government drug strategy.

8. National Drivers influencing Safer Communities Work

8.1. Over the coming year, partners will work together to plan new strategies for community safety, in response to several national initiatives:

- a) The Beating Crime Plan 2021 - setting out the Government's plan to deliver the 'change that Britain needs', with less crime, fewer victims, and a safer country.
- b) The Police, Crime Sentencing & Courts Act 2022 - placing new duties on schools, police, councils, and health authorities to prevent serious violence.
- c) The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - aiming to reform how the justice system and partner agencies work with victims of domestic abuse.
- d) New recommendations arising from an independent review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which concluded in 2020 and looked at the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, transparency in supply chains, Independent Child Trafficking Advocates and legal application of the Modern Slavery Act.
- e) The Modern Slavery (Amendment) Bill - which aims to enhance the efforts in tackling modern slavery in supply chains and to further strengthen support measures for victims of human trafficking.
- f) The Counter-terrorism and Border Security Act 2019 and the Independent Review of Prevent - which will consider the UK's strategy for protecting people vulnerable from being drawn into terrorism, and will make recommendations for the future.
- g) Changes to the Channel management process under the Government's Prevent anti-extremism programme - giving more responsibility and autonomy to local government safeguarding panels.
- h) The counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST 2018 - which aims to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.
- i) The Protect Duty Bill, previously known as 'Martyn's Law' - which aims to enhance national security by introducing new security requirements for certain public locations and venues to ensure preparedness for and protection from terrorist attacks.
- j) The Dame Carole Black Review - which provides an analysis of the challenges posed by drug supply and demand, including the ways in which drugs fuel serious violence.

- k) The new National Drugs Strategy - [From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives' - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).
- l) The Online Safety Bill - which establishes a new regulatory framework to tackle harmful content online.

9. Supporting Information – Funding and Finance

9.1. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Income secured for community safety initiatives in East Sussex in 2021/22 (and current year) above and beyond core investment into services, is outlined in Appendix 3.

9.2. Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (SPCC) funding for community safety is allocated to District and Borough Council Community Safety Partnerships through the Council.

10. Priorities for 2022/23

10.1. The Safer Communities Partnership has committed to continuing its focus on identifying those at risk of harm, protecting vulnerable people and keeping communities safe.

10.2. This will be achieved through a focus on:

- Preventing Violent Extremism
- Work in Schools and Contextual Safeguarding
- Improving Outcomes for People who have experienced Severe Disadvantage
- Drug and Alcohol-Related Harm and new Project ADDER interventions
- Reducing drug and alcohol related deaths
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG
- Hate Crime
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Public Place Serious Violence
- Reducing Reoffending
- Fraud, Scams and Online Safety

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

11.1. The East Sussex Safer Community Partnership continues to focus on keeping communities safe; protecting vulnerable people and identifying and responding to risk of harm, in the context of legislative parameters, including the application of new legislation in the Domestic Abuse Act and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. A partnership priority is to effect system change to improve outcomes for people who experience severe and multiple disadvantage, which relate to intersectional needs relating to substance misuse, homelessness, contact with the criminal justice system, domestic violence and abuse, and mental health needs.

11.2. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the performance and achievements of the Partnership and their plans for 2022 to 2023 which can be found at page 19 onwards of the attached Partnership Business Plan (Appendix 1).

MARK STANTON

Director of Adult Social Care & Health

Officer Contact: Justine Armstrong-Smith, Safer Communities Manager
Email: Justine.Armstrong-smith@eastsussex.gov.uk