

Reading's Community Safety Partnership update

Health & Wellbeing Board
20th January 2023



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

Our Community Safety Partnership

Reading's Community Safety Partnership is driven by an executive group, which is chaired by Reading's Local Police Area Commander, with the deputy chair being the Council's portfolio holder for Community Safety. The 'Responsible Authorities' who form part of the Partnership are:

- Reading Borough Council
- Thames Valley Police
- National Probation Service
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System.

Reading's Community Safety Partnership has welcomed a wider range of partners in recent years and is continuing to develop improved links with other boards and partnerships operating in Reading, including the One Reading Partnership, Reading's Youth Justice Partnership Board and Health and Well Being Board.



Requirements of Community Safety Partnerships

- Community Safety Partnerships are required to produce a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder following the completion of a comprehensive strategic assessment to understand the levels and patterns of crime and disorder in the local area.
- Further to this, the introduction of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 has placed further requirements on partnerships in the form of a Serious Violence Duty, which sets out that partnerships must formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in their local area and produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those issues.



Our Strategy Priorities 2023 - 2026

- Reduce crime in the top crime-generating neighbourhoods
- Improve the way the CSP works with communities to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime.
- Reduce community-based drug related activity.
- Reduce knife violence, including the carrying of blades and their use in crime.
- Tackle organised crime gangs transporting illegal drugs across Reading's borders, also known as 'county lines' offending.
- Improve safety for women in public places and reduce sexually focused crimes and anti-social behaviour.
- Develop a strategy and plan to reduce persistent offending.
- Communications and Engagement



Our Approach

Public Health Approach	<p>Reading's Community Safety Partnership adopts the World Health Organisation's definition of a public health approach to reducing violence:</p> <p>'Seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. By definition, public health aims to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. Programmes for primary prevention of violence based on the public health approach are designed to expose a broad segment of a population to prevention measures and to reduce and prevent violence at a population-level.'</p>
Improved Community Engagement and Communication	<p>The partnership is committed to improving how it communicates and engages with local residents in relation to crime and serious violence, ensuring information about how to report crime, anti-social, what action is being taken to tackle these issues and how local communities can be part of the problem solving approach is readily available.</p>
Effective partnership collaboration	<p>The partnership will ensure effective collaboration and information sharing to tackle issues of crime and serious violence and have in place problem solving forums to allow for this approach.</p>
Victim Support	<p>The partnership is committed to ensuring victims are supported and that signposting to support services is clear and accessible.</p>
Continuing to be a Trauma Informed Town	<p>The partnership will continue to support the aim to make Reading a Trauma Informed Town, ensuring that staff across the agencies are aware of the wider impact of trauma and that all efforts are made to prevent the re-traumatisation of individuals in service settings that are there to support and heal clients.</p>



Developing and Delivering the plan

- The Strategy will be accompanied by a Community Safety & Serious Violence Plan, which will be developed and implemented by a number of partnership delivery groups.
- It is acknowledged that this Strategy is being launched at a time when public finances are considerably impacted and when there are resourcing challenges across the partnership, both factors of which impact on its response to tackling crime and disorder across Reading. In response to these challenges, the Partnership is committed delivering a realistic and achievable plan and to ensure more effective and efficient use of the resources each agency has to tackle crime and disorder collaboratively.
- Underpinning the priorities is the need to embed a strong communication strategy to ensure that residents feel well informed about what is happening to tackle issues of crime and disorder and promote reporting mechanisms and make best use of data available to the partnership to ensure resources are effectively utilised to achieve successful outcomes for these outcomes.



Reading's Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Strategy

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new statutory requirements on local authorities to:

- Assess the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all victims who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those from outside their area.
- Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area having regard to the needs assessment.



Reading's Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Strategy

In addition to these requirements, a duty was placed upon local authorities to form a Local Partnership Board, to act as a consultation board for specified functions. Reading's existing Domestic Abuse Steering Group was formally renamed to become Reading's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board at the beginning of 2022 and set new terms of reference to ensure compliance with the Act. The Board is a subgroup of Reading's Community Safety Partnership, which provides scrutiny over the board's activities.



Reading's Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Strategy

A comprehensive Needs Assessment was undertaken in the spring of 2022 to understand the needs of victim survivors in relation to safe accommodation and support. The identified needs have shaped the priorities, which are set out as follows:

- Effectively commission refuge and other Safe Accommodation spaces.
- Raise awareness about Domestic Abuse.
- Engage with those in diverse communities experiencing abuse with a view to encourage trust to remove barriers to access support services and supporting victim survivors to view seeking help early.
- Develop and support a multi-agency approach to working with an array of groups, inclusive of perpetrators, victim survivors (irrespective of gender/sexuality identity).
- Continue to safeguard and advocate for all children who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse



Reading's Domestic Abuse and Safe Accommodation Strategy

- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is currently writing an action plan to accompany the strategy and will be overseen by the Community Safety Partnership.
- In addition to this, the current refuge and non-refuge support contracts have expired. An interim contract is in place with Berkshire Women's Aid, whilst a commissioning and procurement exercise is undertaken to ensure the needs identified by the needs assessment are met.



Next Steps

- How do these strategies interlink with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?
- Are there any areas of duplication that need to be addressed?

