

SAFER SUNDERLAND ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to share the progress made by the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) in 2023-24. This added value multi-agency activity is contributing towards achieving the long-term outcome of making Sunderland a city which is, and feels, even safer and more secure, where people can enjoy life without the concerns of being a victim of crime or being harmed.

2. Background

2.1 The Safer Sunderland Partnership is statutory. Membership of its Board consists of 6 responsible authorities:

- Sunderland City Council (including TFC)
- Northumbria Police
- Sunderland Integrated Care Board (ICB) (Previously CCG)
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)
- Probation Service (PS)
- Northumbria Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

2.2 The Safer Sunderland Partnership continue to have 2 strategic priorities:

- i. **Prevent crime and disorder, reduce re-offending, support community cohesion and maintain high levels of feelings of safety.**
- ii. **Protect and support our most vulnerable people and places from harm so that Sunderland can be a safe, dynamic, healthy and vibrant city.**

2.3 The Safer Sunderland Partnership has 6 key work areas:

- i. **Citywide and local area problem solving** with a focus on responses to crime, community safety and cohesion issues
- ii. **Serious & Organised Crime**
Disrupt serious organised crime (SOC) activity by prosecuting and disrupting individuals and SOC groups
- iii. **Other Exploitive crimes**
Prevent people from engaging in modern slavery and ensure traffickers and slave masters have no easy place to hide in Sunderland
- iv. **Serious Violence and Serious Violence Duty** that impacts on safeguarding and feelings of safety such as serious organised crime; sexual exploitation; modern day slavery; trafficking; cyber-enabled crimes; and preventing violent extremism and radicalisation.

- v. **Preventing radicalisation and countering terrorism**
Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism
- vi. **Partnership working** which covers new and existing statutory duties and strengthening partnership working and collaboration.

3.0 Citywide and local area problem solving with a focus on LMAPS and responses to crime, community safety and cohesion issues

Key current and forthcoming issues include:

3.1 Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving continues to be delivered in locality areas. LMAPS meetings have been operational in Sunderland for a number of years. They bring together several internal Council services and external partners on a bimonthly basis to discuss place-based issues. Membership includes:

- Northumbria Police
- Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue
- Council Neighbourhood Enforcement
- Gentoo
- Council CCTV
- Cllr rep nominated via Area Committee
- Council Environmental Services

3.2 Issues currently discussed at LMAPS include:

- Local crime and ASB update from Northumbria Police
- Hotspot locations for Partners
- Camera locations and proposed moves
- Use of Drones
- Forthcoming Events

3.3 The remit of LMAPS meetings has been broadened to give partners a platform to discuss problematic and vulnerable individuals.

4 National and emerging threats and harms that impact on safeguarding and feelings of safety.

Identified as 'Serious Violence', 'Serious Organised Crime', 'County Lines', 'Modern Slavery', 'Exploitation', 'Cyber Crime' and Preventing Radicalisation.

4.1 'Serious Violence', 'Serious Organised Crime', 'County Lines', 'Modern Slavery', 'Exploitation', 'Cyber Crime'

These are viewed as **exploitative crimes** on the basis that often the vulnerabilities and the methods used to exploit are the same. Sometimes they look like sexual exploitation, sometimes like modern slavery, sometimes like serious violence and sometimes like county lines etc. There is almost always a link and cross over between these crime types and so to avoid tackling them in silos, they could be grouped under 'exploitative crimes'.

Three types of serious and organised crime to prioritise:

- Reduce the number of victims of exploitation
- Reduce the impact of SOC on communities
- Reduce the harm to individuals, the UK economy and institutions from economic crime

Reduce the number of victims of exploitation

- By working with international partners to prevent more criminality at source, had more success in tackling human traffickers and the modern slave trade than the year before
- Ensure local based systems are in place to identify modern slavery and reduce risks of exploitation.

Reduce the impact of SOC on communities

- Seek assurance local partners are working together to tackle Serious Organised Crime
- Identify SOC and links to Urban Street Gangs

Reduce the harm to individuals, the UK economy and institutions from economic crime

- Work with Local Authority and other partners to tackle the threat of cyber crime.

4.2 Prevent and Counter Terrorism

The Home office updated their Factsheet on Prevent & Channel 2023 to reflect current themes and trends [FACTSHEET](#)

Since the introduction of the Prevent duty in 2015, over 4400 referrals have been supported through the Channel Programme. Channel aims to move individuals away from extremist ideology that could have resulted in harm to themselves or others.

6,817 referrals to Prevent were made in the year ending on 31 March 2023. This is an increase of 6.4% compared to the year ending March 2022 (6,406).

Of those in custody for terrorism connected offences in Great Britain as at 30 June 2023, 65% were categorised as holding Islamist-extremist views, 27% were categorised as holding Extreme Right-Wing ideologies, and the remaining 8% were categorised as holding beliefs related to other ideologies.

These figures include both those that had been convicted and those being held on remand (that is, held in custody until a later date when a trial or sentencing hearing will take place).

- a. The number of referrals discussed at a Channel panel (1,333) and adopted as a Channel case (688) saw smaller reductions compared with the previous year, decreasing by 7% and 0.6% respectively.
- b. Of the 688 Channel cases, the most common were cases referred due to concerns regarding Extreme Right-Wing radicalisation (317; 46%), followed by those with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology (205; 30%) and concerns regarding Islamist radicalisation (154; 22%).

Prevent addresses all forms of terrorism. Of all the Channel cases adopted in 2022/2023:

46% were related to extreme right-wing radicalisation (296)

18% were linked to Islamist radicalisation (115)

16% related to individuals with conflicted concerns (103)

3% for school massacre concerns (18)

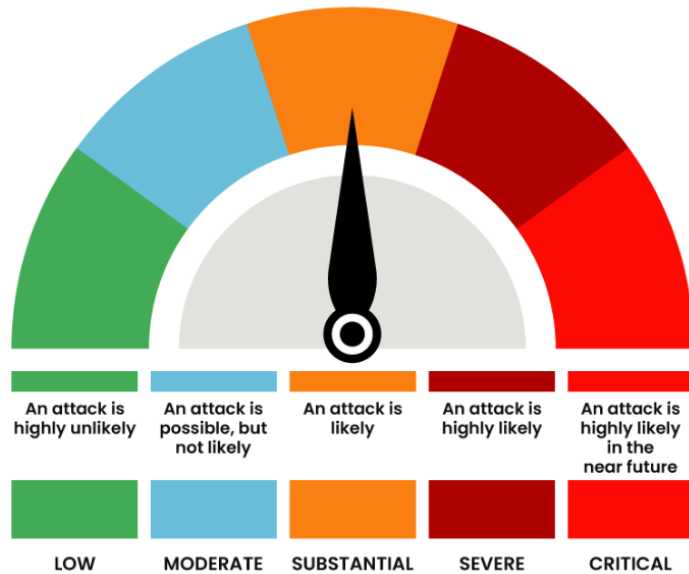
2% for incel related concerns (13)

Individuals aged 15 to 20 accounted for the largest proportion (32%) referrals, with individuals aged 14 and under accounting for 31%, followed by individuals aged between 21 and 30 (14%)

Locally delivered Prevent & Channel

Work has continued around the **PREVENT** agenda involving a wide range of partners across Sunderland and the wider Northumbria area during 2023-24. Staff training has continued to be progressed across agencies to help staff spot signs of radicalisation and how to respond to it.

We regularly receive the Counter Terrorism Local Profile that informs local and national threat level. The Current UK National Threat Level remains - SUBSTANTIAL AN ATTACK IS LIKELY. Self-Initiated Terrorists (S-ITs) are the primary threat across the Northumbria Police force area. It is considered a realistic possibility that a S-IT inspired by either an Islamist or Extreme Right-Wing terrorist ideology could carry out a low sophistication attack without warning. The use of bladed or blunt force weapons are the most likely form of attack methodology due the ease of access and concealment. Other more complex methodologies, such as the use of vehicles and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) cannot be ruled out.



The Local Authority works with Counter Terrorism Policing considering referrals into Prevent. We have a joint Children & Adults **CHANNEL** panel which sits monthly looking at support to children, young people and adults at risk of exploitation and being drawn into Extremism. There are currently two individuals being discussed at this monthly panel and we are working with the individuals and their families.

A snapshot for **December 2023** for Northumbria Police area, there were 17 cases, 8 managed in Channel (2 of which were in Sunderland Channel).

Sunderland at the **Regional CONTEST Board** continues to operate to provide governance for Prevent and is chaired by Durham LA. Advice from the Home Office lead and the Northumbria lead for counter terrorism indicates that meetings for Sunderland CONTEST should mirror the cycle of the Northumbria Board which is in place.

5. Hate Crime and Tension Monitoring

5.1 Reported Hate Crime

Sunderland			
	October 1 st - December 31st		
	2022	2023	Variance +/-
Race	108	112	+4
Faith	8	5	-3
Disability	19	13	-6
Homophobic	37	25	-12
Transphobic	6	2	-4

5.2 Hate Crime/Incident Action Plan

1. Develop local targeted campaigns to support hate crime

2. Case Management

- Ensure partners are fully aware of the graded response, tools and powers and other interventions e.g. Youth Crime Education Programme
- Ensure regular liaison between Communities to ensure community cohesion
- Development of Safe Havens who have staff trained in Hate Crime Awareness

3. Prevention through Education

- Improve the use of promotional and media opportunities to raise awareness of hate crime and consequences
- Deliver targeted education and training programmes to groups
- Ensure a consistent and regular dialogue with key groups

6 Partnership working which covers new, existing statutory duties whilst strengthening partnership working and collaboration

Summary of current and forthcoming issues include:

- a. There is a planned review this year of the role and remit of all core multi-agency meetings that support SSP work, including new or proposed statutory requirements. With partner agreement, this will involve the **introduction of multi-agency operational tasking groups**. We will consider cross cutting themes with SSAB, SCB, Domestic Abuse group as well as Serious Violence Duty.
- b. Strategic assessments, and scrutiny reports continue to be provided as required.
- c. Information Sharing Protocol is reviewed annually to ensure it is GDPR compliant.
- d. **Training, awareness raising and workforce development** cuts across all of the partnership's work areas. **7-minute briefings** have been introduced with recent sessions on Preventing Fire Deaths, Professional Curiosity & Domestic Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, Prada Willi Syndrome

7 Cross Cutting Issues – Exploitation, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Homelessness

Partners have recognised cross cutting themes across Safer Sunderland Partnership, Health & Wellbeing Board, Domestic Abuse and Violence against women and girls DA & (VAWG) Strategic Partnerships

The effects of cost of living is an ongoing concern to enhancing feelings of safety, this is felt greatest in our homeless support team.

Homeless service data

As of November 2023

- 603 Current open Homeless support cases
- 21 Duty to Refers awaiting assessment.
- 269 people have contacted Customer Service Network for assistance from Housing Options
- An additional 140 households have provided documentation and are now awaiting allocation of a Homeless Reduction Officer
- An additional 66 households awaiting urgent allocation.
- In November there were 224 Street Homeless appointments up to 27th November.
 - An ave. of 11.79 per day
 - On 27th November there were 25 street homeless appointments (in 1 day)
- 62% of applications present with a mental health support need.
- Average support need per case is above 3.

The city continues to be a place that welcomes. The Home Office returns demonstrate at the 30th September 2023 for Sunderland, we were supporting the following individuals:

Homes for Ukraine	Afghan Resettlement Programme	Supported Asylum	All 3 pathways
174	5	771	950

8. Public Perceptions of Crime

8.1 Northumbria Police completed a Safer Communities Survey for the 12 months rolling to December 2023. Residents living in the Northumbria Force area were contacted by telephone and asked about their perceptions of the local neighbourhood, police visibility and the services delivered by the police and council. The sample is chosen at random to ensure that it is representative of the overall population. A total of 2,883 residents took part across Northumbria Force area.

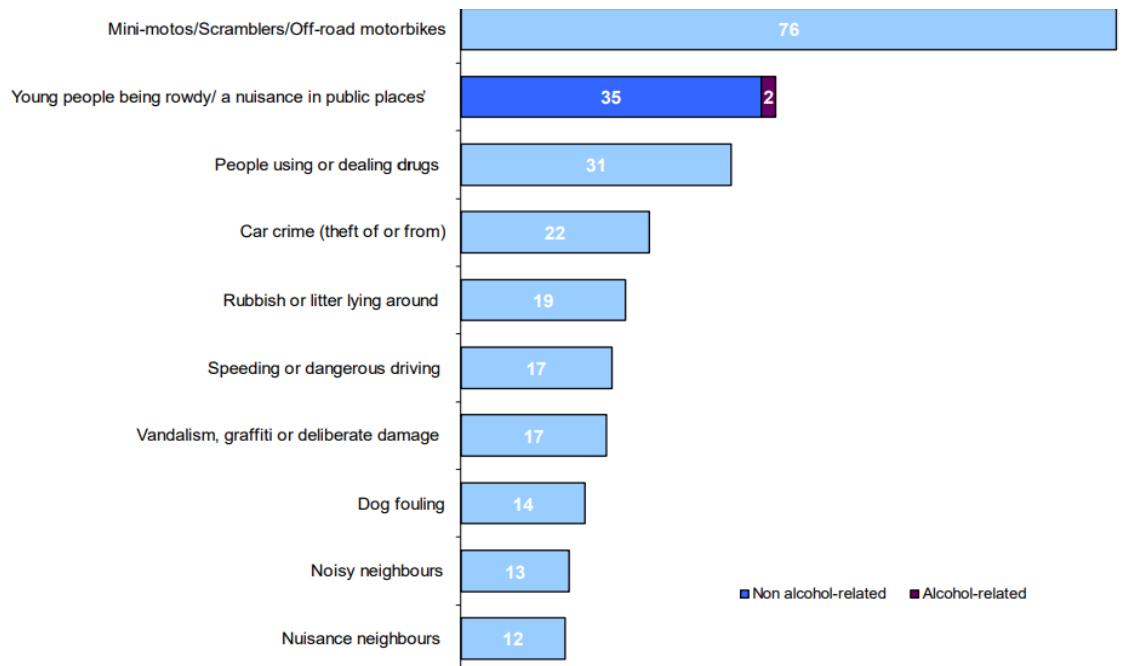
8.2 Perceptions of Neighbourhood

Across the Force, there has been a significant decrease in the percentage of residents who were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live compared to the same period last year. Over 65s and individuals without a disability reported higher levels of satisfaction with their neighbourhood than younger generations and disabled residents. Females were more likely than males to report that their neighbourhood had got worse in the last 12 months.

Perceptions of Neighbourhood The percentage...	Force		Gateshead		Newcastle		North Tyneside		Northumberland		South Tyneside		Sunderland	
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous
who say their neighbourhood has got better in last 12 months	6%	9%	5%	7%	7%	12%	7%	9%	7%	8%	4%	8%	6%	9%
	+/- 1%	+/- 1%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 3%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 3%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%
who say their neighbourhood has got worse in last 12 months	30%	26%	36%	31%	30%	27%	25%	23%	25%	21%	39%	23%	33%	30%
	+/- 2%	+/- 1%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 6%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%
who think ASB is a very or fairly big problem in their neighbourhood	26%	22%	32%	25%	26%	22%	23%	23%	21%	17%	30%	19%	28%	26%
	+/- 2%	+/- 1%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%
who think crime is a very or fairly big problem in their neighbourhood	18%	15%	21%	21%	20%	18%	17%	16%	13%	10%	18%	13%	24%	17%
	+/- 1%	+/- 1%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 2%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%
who are completely, very or fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	81%	85%	78%	83%	79%	82%	84%	88%	85%	90%	78%	86%	81%	81%
	+/- 1%	+/- 1%	+/- 4%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 2%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%
who feel very or fairly safe living in their neighbourhood	94%	95%	94%	93%	92%	94%	95%	96%	95%	98%	95%	96%	95%	93%
	+/- 1%	+/- 1%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 1%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%	+/- 2%

9.3 Sunderland Public Priorities

544 Residents were surveyed across the local authority area; of these, 120 (22%) identified at least one problem in their neighbourhood. The chart below shows the top ten public priorities for Sunderland in descending order, along with the score for each priority :



9 Recorded Crime

9.1 Northumbria Police recorded Serious Violence Crime Types by Local Authority (October 2022-September 2023)

Sunderland:

4,568 total recorded violent crimes, an increase of 147.

190 knife related crimes (+33)

1 homicide (-6)

16 hospital admissions for assault with a sharp object.

202 robberies, 48 knife related.

5,809 domestic abuse crimes (+2.4%)

9.2 Risk factors for Sunderland

9.3 There are a number of factors shown to increase the risk of being a perpetrator or a victim of violence. Prevalence of these factors differs significantly, within a regional footprint.

9.4 These factors will identify higher risk sections of the population and successful interventions that may reduce violence will include:

- a) Reducing the number of people within these population groups, e.g. reducing homelessness or drug use.
- b) Interventions to reduce the risk of offending or victimisation of people within higher risk groups, e.g. youth mentoring

9.5 Alcohol/Drugs

T24 - Offenders of Serious Violence Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs in Northumbria (October 2022-September 2023)

	Under the Influence of Alcohol	Under the Influence of Drugs	Total
Gateshead	730	304	1,034
Newcastle	1,196	402	1,598
North Tyneside	591	237	828
Northumberland	802	287	1,089
South Tyneside	592	240	832
Sunderland	1,117	421	1,538
Total	5,045	1,897	6,492

9.6 Drugs Offences

The link between substance misuse and violence in Northumbria has been identified and highlighted in recent data. In Northumbria, data showed that 39 percent of all violence admissions to hospital related to substance misuse (NHS Digital, 2022b). ONS data also shows that the North East had the highest rate of drug misuse of any English region for eight consecutive years.

9.7 Alcohol

The Sunderland Drug and Alcohol Partnership is established and they produced their first Alcohol Strategy to address alcohol harms across the city [ALCOHOL STRATEGY](#)

9.8 City Centre Youth Violence

The SAIL (Sunderland Altogether Improving Lives) scheme between police, VRU, the city council and private companies was launched in December 2022 after concern from residents and businesses. In the first 6 months, Youth related anti-social behaviour was reduced by 40%, street drinking and drunken behaviour both fell by 48%, and begging dropped by 20%. During the same period, vehicle crime in the city centre came down by 63%, public disorder by 26% and burglary by 56%.

9.9 Motorcycle Disorder

In November 2023 Sunderland City Council joined forces with Northumbria Police and South Tyneside Council to tackle the issue of motorcycle disorder and criminality, which has resulted in a dedicated multi agency pilot taskforce set up to robustly tackle this issue.

As part of the new approach of the team, so far there has been:

27 people arrested or reported for an offence by Northumbria Police

49 Vehicles seized

165+ Intel submissions

4 stop searches

20 community/housing orders issued in joint partnership

135 incidents reported to the police and contact made by the Operation Capio team

10. Organisational Changes, Funding and Resources

- **OPCC** elections for crime commissioner take place in May, the **VRU** continues to be funded by Home office. The VRU have funds to look at 'teachable moment' style interventions for young people involved in serious violence. This looks to capitalise on important moments when they are likely to be most receptive (for example, admission to A&E or in police custody), connecting them to a package of support enabling a more positive life course. Quarterly updates are received at every Board.
- **Safer Streets Funding:** available for PCCs to bid for funding . This is Round 5 of the fund and we were successful as one of the six LA's in bidding for a securing £1m of funding for work around Transport Hubs, Women's Safety in Public Places and ASB. Funding commenced in 2023 unfortunately the government have now announced for 2024/5 this funding is reduced by £180,000. We are working with partners considering the impact of this.
- The costs of the current 2 DHRs in Sunderland will exceed £20,000. The Council, has to date funded these costs. There have previously been some financial contributions from the ICB. The duty to carry out DHRs sits with the SSP (i.e. all the responsible authorities). The financial implications to the Partnership going forward may need to be revisited with partners if any increased volume of reviews was to be experienced in the coming year.

11. Conclusions and Impact on the Safer Sunderland Work Programme

- a) The PSIA reflects that we are not seeing significant changes in crime patterns and impact in the 12 months since the Board last considered this.
- b) We would suggest, subject to Board agreement, that the overall strategic priorities should be retained. Based partially upon recent national policy development and local knowledge, we should perhaps expand and define more clearly the way we present the priority areas for work programming and propose an Action Plan to look at:
 - **Retaining tackling violence against women and girls as a distinct area** – Reflecting the extensive work undertaken by Public Health in this area and working in collaboration with partners ensuring Sunderland is a Safe City. Focusing on responses to perpetrator, public and community awareness are also continuing areas for development.
 - **Citywide and Neighbourhood Problem Solving should be retained though expanded to reflect a proposed focus at city level on problem solving and tasking.** Continuation of multi-agency working to operationally develop new approaches to service delivery, targeting of our most deprived and high crime locations.
 - The **new priority this year to tackle serious violence** the focus on governance of this work will be via Community Safety Partnerships.
 - **Whilst CONTEST and PREVENT should be retained further work is required on PROTECT Duty and Public Accessible Locations.** The CONTEST Board chaired by Durham has been reconvened which Sunderland attends. Partnership working has been improved in relation to PREVENT. A regular standing CHANNEL joint Adult & Children's panel has been implemented in line with both national and regional best practice.
 - The Far-Right threat still remains although it is not as prominent as previously encountered locally. A further focus is required regarding **Community Cohesion** reflecting the changes in Sunderland demographics.
 - **Serious and Organised Crime should be retained and perhaps made more distinct.** Building on the work currently with Organised Crime Gangs & Urban Street Gangs.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1 The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are asked to note the key multi-agency improvement activity and achievements contained in the annual report and agree to accept the next annual report in March 2025

Annual Report produced by Adult Social Care Directorate February 2024

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