



Safer Harlow Partnership Achievements Report

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

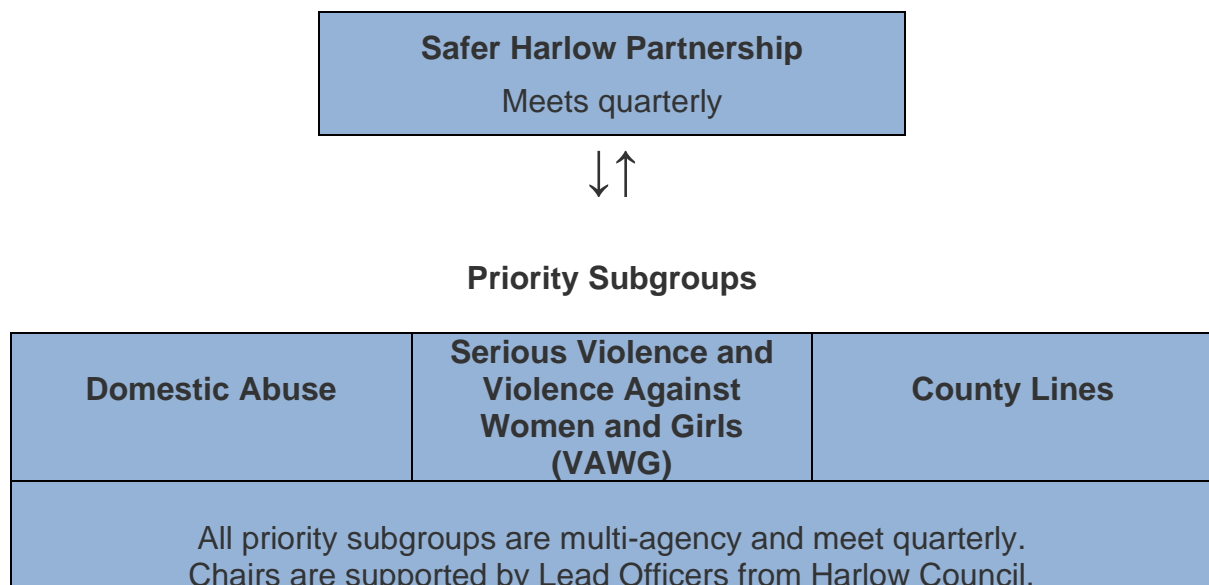
The Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP) is the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for Harlow. It is a statutory partnership of agencies and groups working together to reduce and prevent anti-social behaviour (ASB), crime and disorder to help improve the lives of residents and those that work here and visit the town. The partnership is led by the responsible authorities (Harlow Council, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board and the Probation Service) and also includes many other local private, community and voluntary sector agencies (see end).

Harlow is part of the West Essex Local Policing Area, along with Epping Forest, Brentwood and Thurrock.

Partnership Structure

The Chair of the SHP has historically been the Chief Executive of Harlow Council but in January 2025 Superintendent Timothy Tubbs took over the role which will be shared with Julie Ellis, Executive Director at Harlow Council.

In 2024/25 the work of the SHP was led by three multi-agency priority subgroups. Each subgroup had an operational action plan detailing what work would be undertaken throughout the year to help achieve the partnership's objectives.



The partnership no longer has a stand-alone Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) but there is an opportunity at the end of each SHP Board meeting for responsible authority agencies to come together exclusively or in-between board meetings if necessary and appropriate.

Funding

The SHP is awarded an annual Community Safety Partnership Grant by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC). This fund is used to drive activity to address identified priorities. Local priority issues are identified by the annual Community Safety Strategic Intelligence Assessment and by working together with our partners and residents to identify and understand what matters most to them in terms of creating a safer Harlow.

The partnership's strategic objectives are also aligned to the Essex Police and Crime Plan where possible. The new 2024 – 2028 plan can be seen here <https://essex.pfcc.police.uk/police-and-crime-plan>

Statutory, non-statutory, community and voluntary groups can apply for up to £3,000 funding per application if they can demonstrate how their application supports the partnership's current priorities. Recipients of this funding are asked to provide monitoring information to demonstrate positive outcomes as a result of receiving the funds. Applications can be made online here <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/safety-and-crime/community-safety-information/safer-harlow-partnership>

Members of the partnership also actively pursue additional funding opportunities such as through Safer Streets and the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU).

Safer Harlow Partnership priority subgroups in 2024/25 were:

Domestic Abuse

This priority subgroup is known as the Harlow Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF). The group's main aim is to raise awareness and understanding of Domestic Abuse; support professionals to access training opportunities that will help them work safely and effectively with victims and perpetrators; ensure victims and members of the public know how to report concerns about domestic abuse and how they can access support services. The group promotes behaviour change programmes for perpetrators to help reduce the number of repeat offenders and victims and promotes greater awareness of Clare's Law which can help prevent people getting into relationships with partners that have a known history of abusive behaviour.

Each year in November the group delivers a range of activities and events to mark the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence. In Harlow this is known as Domestic Abuse Awareness Week (DAAW).

Activity during DAAW in November 2024 included:

- 234 practitioners attended domestic abuse themed webinars, and 31 local practitioners attended J9 training, delivered by Safer Places
- 195 members of the public were engaged at a 'Red Shoe' art installation in the Harvey Centre which prompted awareness and discussion about the harm that domestic abuse can cause to individuals, families and communities. A range of resources were shared with people and included leaflets in other languages, personal attack alarms, white and purple awareness ribbons, wristbands and information leaflets raising awareness of Clare's Law and the COMPASS helpline.
- 250 members of the public were engaged at a stall in a town centre supermarket. Again, a range of resources were distributed, and opportunities were taken to raise awareness of the support that is available to people that are affected by domestic abuse.
- 50 members of the public were engaged by Harlow Council Community Safety Officers at a stall in the town centre. Officers took the opportunity to raise awareness of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse and advised people where they can go to get help and support.

Serious Violence and Violence Against Women and girls (VAWG)

The group met three times during the year. Attendance was inconsistent although participation was good from those that attended regularly.

The group supported a wide range of activity and interventions, including those summarised below:

- Potential locations for 'Safe Spaces' for women and girls were identified by utilising Essex Police, Community Safety Team and Minerva project data. Suggestions from the group were considered during development of the Harlow Women's Safety Charter which was launched to partners in April 2024. Work to further develop the Charter is ongoing and a public launch is planned for June 2025 when agencies that have signed up to the Charter will be showcased and a robust media campaign will be launched.
- Multi-agency support for the 'Clear' phase of the 'Clear Hold Build' initiative in The Stow. Positive outcomes included a decrease of 71% (46 incidences) in crimes committed in public spaces; a decrease of 53% (18 incidences) of violence with injury, and the criminal activity of sixteen core nominals disrupted resulting in charges and remands. The delivery of positive diversionary activities to young people, as an alternative to involvement in criminal or anti-social behaviour, included self-defense sessions, art and play work and theatre/drama focused workshops.
- Delivery of a range of police led operations including Op Shopper, Op Grip, Op Dial and Op Sceptre, resulting in 72 stop and searches; 28 arrests; 3 weapons seized; 3 live facial recognition deployments and more than 5 knife arch operations.

- Educational inputs to schools and colleges to raise awareness of ASB and crime issues and the impact it can have on individuals, families and communities. This work has included Essex Police Domestic Abuse Investigation Team (DAIT) and Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) inputs around healthy relationships, sexting and sexual image sharing. The knife arch was deployed in four secondary schools and Harlow College which has enabled conversations with young people about serious violence, knife crime legislation and the opportunity to promote Fearless Anonymous, an online resource that enables young people to pass on information about crime 100% anonymously.
- Op Makesafe – included work with local hotels to ensure staff are sighted on the importance of being able to recognise situations that may indicate the exploitation of children and young people in their establishment.
- Op Henderson – working with a range of partners, including the council's Licensing Team, taxi and bus company employees and local businesses to raise awareness and understanding of the potential for children and young people to be both criminally and sexually exploited; how to spot the signs of actual or potential exploitation and how to report concerns.

County Lines

Previously known as the Harlow Gangs Advisory Group, this group helps raise awareness and understanding of criminal exploitation and promotes better understanding of the links between county lines, knife crime, local drug supply and serious youth violence. The group helps tackle and reduce drug driven crime; detect and disrupt County Lines activity and identify and tackle the exploitation of children and young people through gangs and organised crime groups.

Regrettably the group did not have a Chair this year so progress in this area of work stalled somewhat. However, Essex Police continue to achieve positive outcomes in terms of identifying and disrupting County Lines in Harlow and ECFRS continue to deliver educational packages in schools to help raise awareness and understanding to help prevent children and young people being drawn into gangs and criminal activity.

2024/25 Achievements

This report highlights just some of the excellent partnership work that took place between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. Positive outcomes from projects, awareness raising campaigns, staff training and priority focused initiatives have all contributed to a safer Harlow where people can live, work and visit in a safe and pleasant environment.

The 2024/25 PFCC annual Community Safety Grant was used to support the following projects and initiatives:

Essex Police:

Project: Community Engagement

The fund supported the purchase of a range of crime prevention resources for distribution at community engagement events and activities. Resources have included educational leaflets, purse bells, window and garage security locks and personal attack alarms.

During the period 1/4/2024 – 31/3/2025 around 1,500 members of the public were directly engaged through these events. The availability of crime prevention resources helps raise awareness and understanding of crime and ASB; helps people better understand how and where to report community safety concerns and can help increase feelings of safety at home and in the community.

Feedback from these events indicates that the distribution of personal attack alarms to women and girls has helped them feel safer when out and about in the community, particularly when out alone after dark.

Harlow Council – Community Safety Team

Project: Women's Safety Charter

As part of our commitment to improve the experiences of women in our town we have created the Harlow Women's Safety Charter which brings together members of our community to deliver Safe Spaces for women and girls around the town, with trained staff members who cultivate a safe environment for all.

Local businesses and organisations pledge to prioritise women's safety by ensuring their space is a safe, respectful, and inclusive place to be. Signing up to the Charter includes pledging their commitment to a range of tasks, training, and continued professional development which ensures staff and members prioritise women's safety.

The funding has allowed us to work with partners to develop the Charter and purchase resources that will support a robust media campaign to raise awareness of gender based violence issues and encourage people to reflect on, and change, their own behaviour in an effort to help women and girls feel and be safe when they are out in the community and using local facilities and spaces.

The scheme was launched to partner agencies in April 2024, and a public launch will take place in May/June 2025 when there will be an opportunity to showcase some of the agencies and businesses that have already signed up to the Charter.

Harlow Council – Youth and Citizenship Team

Project: Crucial Crew

Crucial Crew, held at the Latton Bush Centre, is delivered each year in March and aims to raise children's awareness about how they can keep themselves and others safe at home and in the community. This event is led and co-ordinated by Harlow Council and supports children's transition from primary to secondary school when they are much more likely to be out and about in the community without adult supervision.

Over 1,300 year 6 pupils from Harlow primary schools participated in a range of informative and interactive scenarios where they learned about a range of issues that affect children and young people. Scenarios also include discussions about who children can talk to if they feel frightened or concerned about their own or someone else's safety – a prime example of this may be where vulnerable children are being targeted for the purposes of criminal exploitation through gangs.

Scenarios were delivered by Harlow Council, Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Safer Places and focussed on the following topics:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Gangs/Drugs/County Lines/Knife Crime
- Healthy Relationships
- Water Safety

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Harlow Council – Community Safety Team

Project: Community Engagement

One of the team's top priorities this year was to increase levels of meaningful engagement with residents across the whole of the town.

The fund supported the purchase of a range of crime prevention resources which were distributed to members of the public during community safety engagement events at various locations across the town. These events provide an ideal opportunity for Community Safety Officers to speak with members of the public and better understand any concerns they have about safety in the community or at home, and how their lives can be affected by crime and antisocial behaviour. The team also uses these engagement opportunities to promote the most appropriate way for residents to report crime and anti-social behaviour to Harlow Council or Essex Police so that resources can be targeted effectively and appropriately to ensure maximum benefit to the community. This work has been supported by development of a ASB Report and Support leaflet.

It is anticipated that around 350 direct contacts were made with members of the public and around 450 crime prevention resources were distributed between 1/4/2024 and 31/3/2025 via community engagement stands; with over 1,000 resources used to support community safety campaigns, such as drink spiking and vehicle theft prevention.

Where possible, the Community Safety Team and Essex Police work together to deliver high visibility community engagement events.

Harlow Council and Essex Police

Project: Clear Hold Build (Safe to go Stow)

The Stow area in Harlow is the first in Essex to benefit from the Home Office national 'Clear, Hold, Build' pilot initiative, which aims to tackle crime and regenerate impacted neighbourhoods. The project brings together police, district council, statutory and non-statutory agencies to address crime and the underlying issues affecting the community. The initiative hopes to produce sustained, long-term change in places that have been blighted by serious and organised crime by pursuing offenders, breaking up and dispersing gangs, and creating strong, resilient neighbourhoods.

The initiative is now known as 'Safe to go Stow' (STGS) following a competition for local children to design a name and logo for the project.

An integral part of the initiative is the opening of the STGS Community Hub which is now open to the public Monday to Friday and is a place where residents can drop in for advice on ASB, crime and safety related matters and speak to Housing and Community Safety practitioners and staff from various support agencies. The Hub also hosts a range of activities and events designed to bring residents together and help build a strong, connected community.

The fund was utilised to kick start the initiative and has supported the following activity:

- Public and stakeholder launch events
- Community Christmas tree, lights and decorations
- Roller Banners and equipment for the STGS Community Hub
- Crime prevention resources for public engagement events in The Stow
- STGS logo creation and wall painting of the logo at the Hub
- STGS bin stickers
- Leaflet and poster printing
- Crimestoppers campaign

The Livewire Trust

Project: Theatre workshop sessions

This project was delivered from the STGS Community Hub and supports the outcomes of the Home Office 'Clear Hold Build' initiative.

In the development stages of the STGS project, residents said that there was very little for young people to do in the area, and they felt that this may be a contributing factor to why some young people get involved in ASB and criminality. The project was therefore actively targeted towards young people in school years 7, 8 and 9 who live in or near The Stow area. Sixteen individuals were engaged with an average of eight attending each weekly session.

The Livewire Trust project has provided young people with weekly opportunities to engage in positive diversionary activities where they can learn new skills, meet new people and create performances, both live and through recorded digital media. They have had the opportunity to use their own experiences and stories to help them understand the world around them and their role in the future of the community.

As a result of participation in the project, young people have evidenced increased confidence and self-esteem and acquired transferable social, communication and organisational skills which will undoubtedly be of great value to them both now and in the future. It is hoped that after the projects ends, the children and young people will continue to engage with similar positive activities and project staff play a role in signposting them on to other local providers.

The project has provided a consistent, supportive, and engaging environment where young people have learned that there are positive alternatives to the negative influences of county lines, gangs, serious violence and hate crime. This holistic approach helps them build a brighter future and contributes to a safer community in Harlow.

Safer Places

Project: J9 Domestic Abuse Training

Tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls remains a top priority for the partnership. As well as delivering a Healthy Relationships scenario at the Crucial Crew event, Safer Places has supported the work of the partnership by delivering J9 training to Harlow Council Ward Councillors and practitioners in statutory, non-statutory, community and voluntary organisations.

The J9 Domestic Abuse initiative aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse and assist those who may be experiencing domestic abuse to safely access support by

training professionals and members of the community to recognise domestic abuse and how to respond to domestic abuse disclosures.

This year the fund has supported the delivery of J9 training to more than 65 individuals.

Rainbow Services

Project: Youth Project – Gangs and County Lines Workshop

Based on feedback from the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VUU) Youth Listening Project; Rainbow Services collaborated with Essex Youth Service, Essex Police, Harlow Council and St Giles Trust to deliver three awareness raising sessions on county lines, knife crime and gangs for up to 800 young people selected from Harlow secondary schools. The event took place at Harlow Playhouse and included a teatime session for parents and carers.

The event aimed to raise awareness and understanding of youth violence issues and help young people, education providers, parents and carers recognise the signs of exploitation and who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Around 600 people attended and were asked to complete an event evaluation to which around 590 people responded (not everyone answered every question).

- 100% of respondents said they gained a better understanding of county lines
- 100% of respondents said they better understand the relationship between county lines and other forms of criminal activity
- 80% of respondents said they feel better equipped to recognise key signs that a young person is being exploited or is at risk of county lines involvement
- 78% of respondents said they think there is a knife crime problem in Harlow
- 51% of respondents said they thought Harlow was a safe place for young people while 49% said they felt it was not a safe place for young people

Rainbow Services

Project: Support to vulnerable residents via the Harlow Community Hub

The Community Hub offers support to Harlow residents in crisis situations and is often contacted by victims of crime and/or domestic abuse and people affected by homelessness who are in need of practical support and essential items. The fund has enabled the purchase of essential items that victims often say they need as part of the support given by the Hub in emergency or crisis situations.

Examples of items that have been provided to people in emergency situations includes:

- Smartphones (SIM free)
- Clothing (adult and children)
- Bedding
- Toiletries and basic household cleaning items
- Hot meal vouchers

The support that people receive on their initial approach to the Hub often paves the way for further engagement. This gives staff the opportunity to explore with them the root cause, or drivers, of their current circumstances and create opportunities for wider, longer-term support by working with statutory, non-statutory, community and voluntary partners.

The project did not start until late 2024 and at the time of writing, 23 individuals had received direct support. This funded support will continue to be offered until June 2025 and Rainbow Services will continue to work with a range of agencies including Harlow Foodbank, Citizens Advice Harlow, and Integration Support Services (ISS) to ensure those in crisis or an emergency situation can access essential support in a timely way.

The Safer Harlow Partnership is actively supported by the following organisations:

- Active Essex
- Changing Pathways
- Essex County Council
- Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
- Essex Police
- Essex Probation Service
- Harlow Council
- Harlow Ethnic Minority Umbrella (HEMU)
- NHS
- Open Road
- Rainbow Services
- Streets2Homes
- Victim Support



Contacting the Safer Harlow Partnership

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You can also visit the Safer Harlow Partnership page on Harlow Council's website
<https://www.harlow.gov.uk/safer-harlow>