



## **Safer Harlow Partnership Annual Achievements Report**

**1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026**

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 managed by Harlow Council and led by responsible authorities (Harlow Council, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and the Probation Service). The Partnership is also supported by a range of local private, community and voluntary sector agencies.

Membership includes:

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

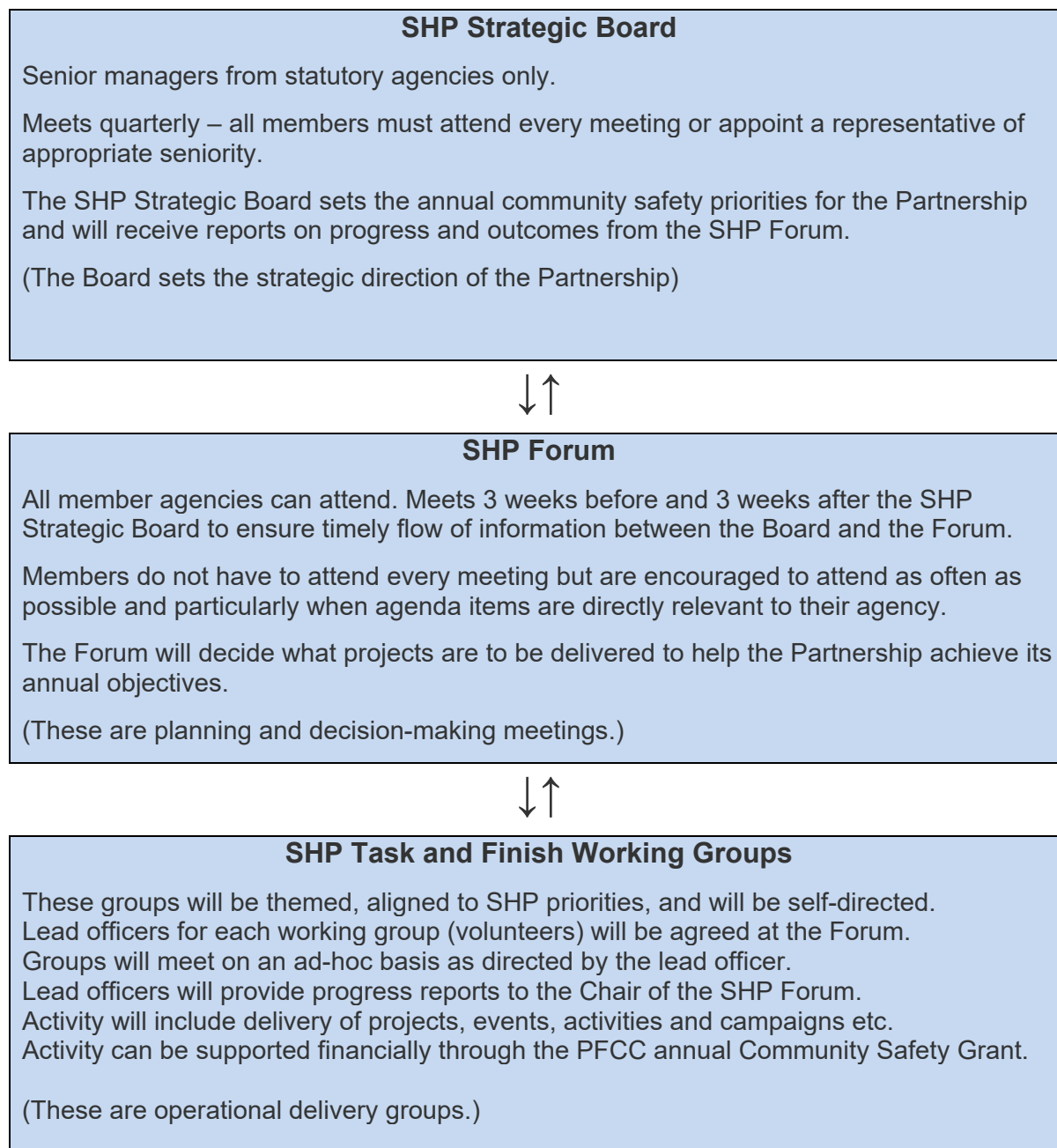
### **Partnership Structure**

Historically the Chief Executive of Harlow Council chaired the Partnership; however recent changes have included the introduction of a Co-Chair arrangement between Harlow Council and Essex Police. Current Chairs are the Council's Director for Public Protection and the District Commander for Essex Police (Harlow area).

Following a recent review of the Partnership, we have seen the introduction of a new structure which includes a streamlined SHP Strategic Board; a new multi-agency SHP Forum and new SHP Task and Finish Working Groups.

The aim is to further build on existing partnership working to ensure resources are targeted where they will have maximum community benefit. The new streamlined SHP Board allows responsible authorities to focus on setting the Partnership's strategic direction and monitoring performance, allowing the Forum and Task and Finish Working Groups to concentrate on designing and delivering frontline projects and interventions to help reduce crime and ASB across all areas of the town.

The new structure, effective from 1 March 2026, is set out below.



## Funding

The SHP is awarded an annual Community Safety Partnership Grant by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC). This fund is utilised to drive activity to address identified priorities.

Statutory, non-statutory, community and voluntary groups can apply to the SHP 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 required 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 are encouraged to pursue additional funding opportunities, such as the Safer Streets fund and Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) funds.

### SHP priorities for 2025/26

Local priorities are identified through the annual Community Safety Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA); local and county-wide surveys and consultations; 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.

Where relevant, the Partnership's strategic objectives are aligned to the Essex Police and Crime Plan. The 2024 – 2028 plan can be seen here <https://essex.pfcc.police.uk/police-and-crime-plan>

The Partnership's priorities for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 were:

- acquisitive crimes
- county lines
- serious violence
- violence against women and girls (includes domestic abuse)

For the early part of 2025, SHP priority subgroups were still in existence, but these were phased out as the review and restructure of the Partnership progressed through the year.

These subgroups consisted of:

**The Harlow Domestic Abuse Forum** - the group's main aim was to raise awareness and understanding of Domestic Abuse; support professionals to access training opportunities that would 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 to access support services. The group promoted perpetrator behaviour change programmes to help reduce the number of repeat offenders and victims and promoted 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 delivered 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) and is an opportunity for SHP partners to come together to engage businesses and members of the public to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the impact it can have on individuals, families, and communities. The SHP fund allows partners to purchase resources that can be shared at community engagement events.

**Serious Violence and Violence Against Women and girls (VAWG) Priority Subgroup** – attendance was inconsistent although participation was good from those that did attend regularly. The group supported a range of activity and interventions, including the identification of potential locations for ‘safe spaces’ for women and girls by utilising Essex Police, Community Safety Team, and Minerva Project data.

The group supported development of the Harlow Women’s Safety Charter (WSC) with a public launch of the initiative at Harlow Playhouse in June 2025. By 31 March 2026, the scheme had a membership of 25 agencies and businesses, and 17 accredited ‘safe spaces’ for women and girls. Harlow Council leads on development and delivery of the WSC and in 2026/27 will focus on growing the membership and ensuring greater community visibility through a presence at community events, on social media and by utilising other marketing and publicity opportunities.

**County Lines Priority Subgroup** - previously known as the Harlow Gangs Advisory Group. This group aimed to help raise awareness and understanding of child criminal exploitation and promote better understanding of the links between county lines, knife crime, local drug supply and serious youth violence.

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

## **2025/26 Achievements**

This report highlights just some of the excellent partnership work that took place between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. 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 2025/26 PFCC annual Community Safety Grant was used to support the following projects and initiatives:

### **Essex Police and Harlow Council Community Safety Team:**

Project: Community Engagement

The fund supported the purchase of a range of crime prevention resources for distribution at community engagement events, activities and multi-agency days of action. 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 anti-social behaviour. Officers also use these engagement opportunities to ask residents to complete a local community safety survey and 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 to ensure maximum benefit to the community. This work has been supported by the development of an ASB Report and Support leaflet. Resources have included educational leaflets, purse bells, window and garage security locks, personal attack alarms, bank and ID card defenders and Faraday Pouches to help prevent car theft.

During the period 1/4/2025 – 31/3/2026 Community Safety Officers delivered around 90 Community Safety engagement events. The availability of crime prevention resources helps

raise awareness and understanding of crime and ASB and can help to increase feelings of safety at home and in the community.

Essex Police have also used these resources at 'Street Meets' and at targeted engagement events following more serious crimes in the community to promote public reassurance and, whenever possible, the Community Safety Team and Essex Police work together to deliver high-visibility community engagement events and patrols.

### **Harlow Domestic Abuse Forum**

Project: Domestic Abuse Awareness week

In November 2025 a 'Red Shoe' art installation was displayed in the Harvey Centre, which prompted awareness and discussion about the harm that domestic abuse can cause and how that can resonate through whole communities. Each pair of red shoes represented the tragic death of a person in Essex as a result of domestic abuse. The display is emotional and impactful and generates meaningful discussion with members of the public. Funded through the SHP, a range of resources were purchased and shared with members of the public – these included leaflets in other languages, personal attack alarms, white and purple domestic abuse awareness ribbons, wristbands, and leaflets raising awareness of Clare's Law and the COMPASS helpline. The council's Community Safety Officers also held community engagement stalls at various locations. Around 200 members of the public were engaged throughout the week.



### **Harlow Council – Community Safety Team**

Project: Women's Safety Charter

As part of our commitment to improve safety for women in our town, the Partnership has supported development of the Harlow Women's Safety Charter which brings together members of our community to deliver safe spaces for women and girls around the town. These spaces have trained staff members who can signpost people to relevant support services and help cultivate a safe and respectful environment for all.

The scheme involves local businesses and agencies pledging to prioritise women’s safety by ensuring their space is a welcoming, safe, and inclusive place to be. Signing up to the charter includes pledging commitment to a range of tasks, training, and continued professional development to help ensure their staff and service users feel safe and respected at all times.

The team held an event to launch the scheme to partners in March 2024, and a public launch was held at Harlow Playhouse in June 2025 which was attended by around 60 professionals and members of the public.

SHP funding has allowed the team to purchase a sign-written gazebo that can be used at multi-agency days of action and community events to help promote the Women’s Safety Charter and at the same time provide a safe space, with trained staff present, for people to go if they feel vulnerable or at risk while attending the event. Visitors to the stall can obtain information about local support services.



### **Harlow Council – Youth and Citizenship Team**

Project: Crucial Crew

Crucial Crew, held at the Latton Bush Centre in Harlow, 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.

1278 year six pupils, from 30 Harlow primary schools participated in a range of informative and interactive scenarios where they learned about issues that affect children and young people. Scenarios included 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 targeted for the purposes of criminal exploitation through gangs. Scenarios were delivered by Harlow Council, Essex Police, Changing Pathways and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and were focused on the following topics:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Arson/deliberate fire setting
- Drink spiking
- Gangs/Drugs/County Lines
- Healthy relationships
- Online safety

This year, Essex Police worked in collaboration with Harlow College and we were able to offer Public Service Course students the opportunity to be involved in delivery of the gangs/drugs scenario to demonstrate how children can be groomed by older young people for the purposes of criminal exploitation. We were also able to provide a demonstration by ECFRS fire dogs to highlight the important role that the dogs play in the fire and rescue service.

Changing Pathways joined the event for the first time this year to deliver an interactive session based on healthy relationships.



## **The Livewire Trust**

Project: Music and drama focused workshop sessions.

This project was delivered from the Safe to go Stow (STGS) Community Hub and supports desired outcomes of the Home Office 'Clear Hold Build' initiative. The number of sessions initially funded by the SHP was extended due to popular demand by young people.

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.

This project 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 having attended these sessions, the children and young people will continue to engage with similar positive activities and Livewire 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 Harlow Partnership review and restructure**

Project: Multi-agency Away Day

This event brought SHP partners together to discuss the current structure, priorities and performance of the Partnership and consider ways in which partnership working and overall effectiveness of the Board could be improved. The event was well attended by a wide range of partners, and those present actively participated in discussions and workshops. As a result of the event, partners have been able to influence the restructure and will hopefully feel a greater sense of ownership and involvement in the work of the Partnership going forward.

## **Harlow Council and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service**

Project: White Ribbon resources

Harlow Council and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service are White Ribbon accredited organisations. The SHP fund supported the purchase of magnetic White Ribbon signage that can be used on Community Safety Team vehicles and fire service appliances to promote

commitment to ending violence against women and girls. These vehicles are highly visible in the community and are often used at community events and activities.



## Safer Places

Project: Domestic Abuse Engagement event

Tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls continues to be a top priority for the Partnership. The fund enabled local domestic abuse support service Safer Places to deliver a conference at the Latton Bush Centre called 'Giving A Voice to Survivors'.

The event was attended by 55 practitioners from a range of partner agencies including probation, education, housing services and the Women's Institute. Members of the public also attended. The event gave survivors of domestic abuse an opportunity to share their personal experiences and explain what help and support was of most benefit to them.

The event closed with an award ceremony and a networking lunch, creating space for connection, reflection and celebration of the work happening locally to support survivors of domestic abuse.

## Rainbow Services

Project: Firebreak courses (x2)

The Rainbow Services Youth Project works primarily with children and young people aged 14 to 17 who are:

- At risk of exclusion from education
- Have been excluded from education
- Are not engaging with statutory education
- Have committed an offence (referred via the Youth Offending Team)
- Are at risk of committing an offence/being involved in gangs/drugs/ASB

The primary aim of the project is to re-engage the young people with education, positive role models and their local community and, at the same time, gain Gateway qualifications in health and safety and basic carpentry skills. The project demonstrates to young people that they are valued in the community and provides pathways to a positive future with employment prospects and a realistic career path. This will reduce the likelihood of them continuing to be involved with (or becoming involved with for the first time) ASB, gangs and crime to provide them with a financial resource and a sense of community and belonging.

Participation in Firebreak courses adds another dimension to the Youth Project and provides opportunities for participants to learn new skills that can be utilised now and in the future. These skills include how to follow instructions; effective communication; teamwork; conflict resolution; problem solving and also promotes active citizenship. The course also helps build greater confidence and self-esteem and develop a growth mindset.

The funding has supported 30 young people to attend Firebreak courses. All of the young people selected have completed the course in full and have gained a qualification, some have gone on to join the Fire Cadets.

At the request of the Partnership, courses focused on County Lines, Hate Crime, Serious Violence and VAWG to reflect and support SHP priorities.

### **Success stories**

Alison (not real name) was referred to Rainbow Services in January 2025 due to a high risk of school exclusion, with the aim of helping her rebuild positive relationships and reconnect with her family and community. Alison took part in the Firebreak programme, which focuses on teamwork, discipline, and resilience.

Throughout her time with Rainbow Services, Alison has grown significantly in independence and self-belief. She now works confidently both in groups and on her own. She also became the first young woman to complete the Firebreak “Leap of Faith” challenge, demonstrating courage and determination.

Alison has expressed a strong interest in mentoring others, hoping to share the skills and life lessons she has gained. Her family has noticed a positive change in her attitude, highlighting the impact of the Youth Project and Firebreak scheme.

Aaron (not real name) joined the Rainbow Services Youth Project after nearly two years out of formal education. He arrived with low self-confidence and initially found daily attendance challenging. Despite this, he set himself the goal of completing his Gateway qualifications and reconnecting with others.

Aaron quickly began to re-engage and, with consistent encouragement from staff and volunteers, he completed his Gateway qualifications; his daily attendance increased and marked a major turning point in his attitude toward learning.

Aaron also took part in the Fire Break programme, which added to his growing confidence and created lasting positive memories and he is now considering a return to full-time education—something that once felt impossible. Aaron’s personal journey shows the powerful impact of practical learning, encouragement, and a nurturing environment.



### **Active Essex Foundation**

Project: Girls Inspired Programme

The fund will support delivery of two twelve-week courses for up to 15 girls on each course.

The programme aims to work with partner agencies, young people, families, schools and community groups to support the reduction and prevention of youth anti-social behaviour, youth criminality and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the community to help keep young girls safe.

The Girls Inspired Programme consists of in-school courses, post course individual sessions and after-school activities. Each element of the programme uses a blend of sports and physical activities, mentoring, group discussions, achieving awards and becoming youth volunteers (known as Sports Plus). The Girls Inspired programme aims to highlight key risks and challenges facing young girls in the community and/or at school to give them the vital tools and confidence they need to make positive choices. Elements of the programme include knife crime, gangs, drug driven crime, coercive control and exploitation both from the perspective of female perpetrators and victims. Young people completing the course will gain an ASDAN accreditation and other additional training awards.

### **Harlow Council**

Project: Community Safety Summit

Harlow Council's Community Safety Team led on delivery of a Community Safety Summit which gave members of the public and representatives from local groups and businesses the opportunity to share their views about community safety and how crime and ASB directly affects them.

Attendees received presentations on local police crime data; the SHP priority setting process; Women's Safety Charter and roles and responsibilities of the council's Community Safety Team. There was a facilitated workshop session where attendees had the opportunity to share their feelings of safety in the community both during the day and at night and highlight areas of concern where they felt police and council resources should be targeted.

Residents highlighted off leash dogs, drugs (sale and use), groups of youths hanging around, vehicle crime, ASB and violence against women and girls as some of their top concerns. Most attendees said they generally feel safe during the day but that their fear of crime increases after dark. Fear of crime after dark was a particular concern for females and older people (male and female). Residents suggested that better lighting, CCTV and the presence of uniformed officers (police, community safety, private security company's etc.) can contribute positively to feelings of safety in the community.

Attendees feedback was taken into consideration when setting SHP priorities for 2026/27. It is hoped that this will become an annual event to help increase meaningful engagement opportunities with residents and businesses.



### **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>