Safer Harlow Partnership

Achievements 2017-2018

The Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP) is supported by four groups - each focused on one of the SHP priorities.

The SHP priorities for 2017-18 were:

- crime and antisocial behavior (ASB)
- domestic abuse
- hate crime
- tackling gangs and gang crime

Below are just some examples of effective partnership working during 2017-18 that has helped make a real difference to Harlow communities.

Crime and ASB

**Operation Bang out of Order** – partnership work to reduce ASB on Halloween and Bonfire Night and work with Trading Standards looking at retail premises in respect of underage sale of fireworks. In addition, a multi-agency operation ensured that the Harlow Bonfire Night event took place without incident. This work resulted in a significant reduction in ASB related incidents over the Halloween and Bonfire Night period when compared to 2016/17 and with neighbouring policing districts.

**Paddling Pools** – partners worked together to reduce ASB and damage at Harlow’s six paddling pools which are made available free of charge to Harlow children and families throughout the school summer holidays. The Council’s Community Safety Team undertook regular patrols ensure families could enjoy the pools in a safe and relaxing environment.

**Crucial Crew** – Harlow Council led on the planning and delivery of this event and worked in partnership with Essex Police, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Safer Places and a range of other partners to deliver Crucial Crew to over 1,100 year six students from Harlow primary schools. This event delivers important personal and community safety messages to children and supports their transition to secondary school. Safety messages included topics such as on-line safety, alcohol awareness, road safety, gangs, healthy relationships, fire safety and healthy lifestyles. Feedback from schools evidences the effectiveness of the event and the high value that schools place on having the opportunity for their pupils to attend.
**Vehicle Crime** - partnership work has used funding to provide crime prevention in relation to vehicle crime. Prevalent offences included theft of tools from vans and theft of index plates from cars and vans. Working with Halfords, the group was able to purchase and distribute tamper proof number plate screws to victims to prevent further offences and also the opportunity to create hard notices for display in area’s subject of vehicle crime advising residents that offences have occurred and giving crime prevention advice.

**Horses** – in order to reduce continual reports of horses straying onto the highway and the dangers that this represents, the SHP has worked hard to identify the owners and put a horse tagging system in place. All stables and yards that are currently owned by the Council have been checked with a view to ensuring that they are correctly used and paid for. This initiative resulted in a reduction in the number of calls made to Essex Police by members of the public.

**Sheltered Housing** – partners worked to ensure that visits were made to sheltered housing schemes to raise awareness and give advice to occupants and staff on reporting methods for ASB and crime prevention.

**12 Week Plan** – a successful 12 week action plan was delivered in The High during October, November and December 2017 - traditionally the busiest time of the year for commercial premises and the night time economy.

Other highlights of the group’s work throughout the year include:

- meetings with local business owners
- increased patrols by Essex Police
- enhancements made to CCTV by purchasing new equipment and signs
- delivery of town centre events – Neighbourhood Watch, crime prevention
- distribution of Purse Bells to vulnerable and older people
- environment changes – repairs to lighting and fencing
- Trading Standards operation targeting the sale of illicit cigarette sales

All of the above activity has triggered very positive feedback from the local community and compared to 2016-17 the partnership saw a reduction of 4.4% in ASB (162 less calls). In relation to crime, there was an increase of 8.2% against the force wide average increase of 11.4% and partners continue to work hard together to address this.
Domestic Abuse

Each year members of the Harlow Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) promote and support a range of activity during Domestic Abuse Awareness Week. This provides an opportunity to work alongside partner agencies to raise awareness and understanding of what domestic abuse is, the devastating harm that it can cause to victims, their families and local communities and where victims can get information, advice and support. Activity also includes promotion of the J9 Domestic Abuse initiative.

Activity during 2017 Domestic Abuse Awareness Week included the following:

- information and advice stands at ASDA, Harvey Centre and Harlow College
- distribution of a range of promotional items highlighting domestic abuse support services and the J9 initiative
- awareness raising using the Council’s social media platforms
- delivery of ‘Smack That – A Conversation’ at Harlow Playhouse - a dance/theatre show that highlights human resilience, survival and how people care for one another

In addition, throughout the year the HDAF achieved the following:

- Development and publication of a leaflet targeting perpetrators of domestic abuse encouraging them to consider the impact of their behaviour and to seek help to make positive changes to their behaviour and lifestyle. This leaflet is given to offenders by police officers in the Custody Suite at Harlow Police station.
- Delivery of two J9 multi-agency training events to raise professional’s awareness of domestic abuse; know how to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and feel confident in signposting and supporting victims of domestic abuse.
- Supporting Harlow Playhouse and Princess Alexandra Hospital to become J9 registered venues so that victims of domestic abuse can discreetly access information and signposting to support services in a comfortable and understanding environment.
- Partnership working with Safer Places to deliver a ‘Healthy Relationships’ scenario to over 1,100 year six pupils from Harlow schools at the annual Crucial Crew event. The session raises awareness of both healthy and unhealthy characteristics within friendships/relationships and helps children understand why certain behaviours are unacceptable and who they can go to for help and support if they feel worried about their own or other people’s relationships.
Hate Crime

In 2016-17 there were 238 incidences reported from June 2016 to May 2017.

- Hate non crime: 64
- Hate crime recorded: 174
- Solved: 26

In 2017-18 there were 176 incidences reported from June 2017 to May 2018

- Hate non crime: 26
- Hate crime recorded: 150
- Solved: 22

It appeared that hate crime was being under reported and it was therefore important to reach groups that were not engaged to raise awareness of hate crime and how to report. In response to this, the group prioritised the establishment of Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRC) and worked with partners to identify and secure easily accessible sites. There are now twelve HIRCs in Harlow:

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Harlow Council
- Harlow Jobcentre Plus
- Harlow Save Credit Union
- Integration Support Services
- Harlow Library
- LUMINUS Group
- Mind in West Essex
- Pink Chix – The Annexe
- PALS Princess Alexandra Hospital
- Harlow Playhouse
- Streerts2Homes

In addition, 260 Hate Crime Ambassadors have been trained and Hate Crime and Citizenship talks have been delivered by Harlow Council, Community Safety Team staff to over 1,000 year six pupils in 30 Harlow schools.

Hate Crime Awareness stalls were positioned in the Harvey Centre, Water Gardens and Asda on a number of occasions and information was shared with members of the public to raise awareness of how and where they can report hate crime. This approach was felt to be very successful.
Gangs Advisory Group

This priority subgroup was set up in response to partners increasing concerns about the rise in gang activity locally and the increase in the supply of drugs in Harlow and across Essex via County Lines. It was recognised that London gang nominals are travelling to Harlow with the intention of grooming/recruiting new members and establishing new drug lines by exploiting children and vulnerable adults.

Partners agreed membership and Terms of Reference for the group and committed to work together to achieve:

- better understanding of the ‘local picture’ and context in relation to gangs and County Lines by undertaking mapping and sharing relevant data and intelligence
- safeguarding vulnerable adults and children
- prevention through training, community engagement and awareness and education
- development of awareness raising, early intervention and prevention provision to reduce the likelihood of children and young people becoming involved in gangs
- enforcement and Cross Border working

In November 2017, led by Harlow Council and funded via the SHP, Gangs Awareness training was delivered by Gangsline Ltd to 21 safeguarding professionals from 23 Harlow schools to ensure school safeguarding leads have a good understanding of gangs, gang culture, ‘street’ language and know what signs to look for and how to support children and young people that are vulnerable to being groomed into gangs or are already involved in gang activity.

In response to rising concerns, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) developed the Gangs Prevention Service which aims to identify and support children and young people at high risk of becoming involved in gangs. Schools and other agencies are able to refer children and young people to the project and YOS Gangs Prevention Workers aim to engage the young person in early intervention and prevention activity to raise awareness, ensure safety, effect a positive change in behavior and attitude and, ultimately, stop the child being exploited and entering the criminal justice system in the future.

More multi-agency Gangs Awareness training is planned for professionals in 2018-19 alongside workshops in schools for children and young people and awareness raising sessions for parents and carers.