

# Braintree District Community Safety Partnership

## **Annual Report 2021-22**

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## Foreword

The Braintree District Community Safety Partnership Annual Report outlines how local agencies have worked together to make the Braintree District a safer place and reduce the fear of crime during 2021-22.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a joint responsibility upon specific agencies and other partners within the community to develop and implement strategies to protect their communities from crime and help people feel safe.

Throughout the year partners have worked together to deliver successful projects and initiatives against the identified priorities to:

- Tackle the trafficking of drugs in the community
- Increase confidence in identifying & reporting hidden harms
- Drive down violent & acquisitive crimes within the community

Many of these are aimed at raising awareness, education and prevention as we feel these add value to the work delivered by local agencies on a daily basis.

We are proud of the achievements the Partnership has made and look forward to another successful year.



### **Cllr Frankie Ricci**

Chair, Braintree District  
Community Safety Partnership

Cabinet Member for Communities  
Braintree District Council

### **Tracey Parry**

Community Services Manager  
Braintree District Council

## Responsible Authority Group

The Responsible Authority Group is the strategic group of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership and consists of strategic and operational officers who are collectively responsible for addressing crime, disorder and community safety across the Braintree District.

These organisations include Braintree District Council, Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS), Eastlight Community Homes, Essex County Council (Education) and Community360 (voluntary sector).

The group has overall strategic responsibility for making sure that the priorities identified from the annual Strategic Assessment are outlined within the Action Plan, and the projects within the Action Plan are delivered.

## Strategic Assessment

Each year the Community Safety Partnership is required to produce a Strategic Assessment report about crime and disorder levels in its area. The results of the Strategic Assessment are used by the Partnership to identify themed priorities for the coming year. The Partnership produces an Action Plan which describes how it will deliver on the identified priorities.

The Strategic Priorities for 2021-22 were:

- Tackle the trafficking of drugs in the community
- Increase confidence in identifying & reporting hidden harms
- Drive down violent & acquisitive crimes within the community

## Funding

The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (OPFCC) allocated grants from its 2021–22 Community Safety Fund to all Community Safety Partnerships across the county. As in previous years the OPFCC set aside a proportion (4%) of this funding for Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). This fund provides: co-ordination of the DHR process; administration of DHR panels; funding for independent chairs; lesson learning seminars; and monitoring and reporting on DHR recommendations implementation.

The funding formula is based on population size, deprivation and crime levels.

Braintree District Community Safety Partnership received a funding allocation of £17,739 for 2021-22.

## Action Plan 2021-22

Braintree District Community Safety Partnership produces an annual Action Plan which underpins the priorities and sets out how local agencies will work together to meet the actions within the plan.

Actions include specific projects and initiatives put forward by partner agencies, which are then collectively agreed by the Responsible Authority Group.

## Key Achievements 2021-22

### A note regarding the COVID-19 pandemic

The delivery of the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan has not been immune to the various challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This unfortunately has meant that certain projects - particularly those that rely on face-to-face engagement, or those delivered within education settings – have had to be postponed or redesigned. However despite this, positive opportunities have also arisen for closer partnership working and alternative ways to deliver projects to ensure Braintree District remains a safe place to live, work and visit.

Provided below are some examples of key areas of work that the CSP has worked on and delivered during 2021-22.

### Spot It Stop It scheme to raise awareness of Child Exploitation

Work has continued to develop and expand the CSP's Spot it Stop it scheme to raise awareness of child exploitation.

The scheme encourages businesses to sign up to receive awareness training to increase their knowledge of child exploitation including the signs to look out for and how to report concerns.

The training it delivers helps to reassure the public, parents and carers that premises are a safe place for young people to visit; that child exploitation is taken seriously and will not be tolerated.

So far more than 70 members of staff have been trained including national businesses such as McDonalds, Cineworld, Premier Inn and Pizza Hut.



### Local Exploitation Group

The partnership has continued to build upon the success of its Local Exploitation Group aimed at providing early intervention to vulnerable young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or Criminal Exploitation (CE) before it escalates to a 'high risk' level.

During the COVID-19 pandemic it became apparent that there had been a noticeable increase in cases being heard at the Mid Essex Missing & Child Exploited (MACE) meetings – these are young people identified as being high risk of CSE or CE, or going missing on a number of occasions.

A core group of key local partners - including Family Solutions, The Children's Society, Education, Essex Youth Service, Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service, Essex Police and Braintree District Council - meet regularly, prior to MACE meetings, to discuss current issues and to determine whether any intervention can be implemented to avoid young people becoming involved in CSE or CE, and to escape potential perpetrators.

Aims of the group are to coordinate partnership work and identify disruption activities; identify local hotspots and vulnerable locations where young people are associating with each other; develop tailored and effective plans to deal with local hotspots; engage with young people as to what areas feel 'safe' or 'unsafe' for them and initiate action plans for these areas; and develop and deliver awareness campaigns aimed at children and young people, parents and carers, businesses and the wider community.

This year the group provided funding to an isolated and vulnerable young person who had been criminally exploited, to enable them to take part in dog training classes with the aim of building their confidence and self-worth.

### Safeguarding Vulnerable Young People on Public Transport

Braintree took part in the countywide Operation Henderson campaign, a joint initiative being run by Essex Safeguarding Children Board, Southend and Thurrock Safeguarding Children Partnerships, British Transport Police, Essex Police, the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, Rail Operators, local councils and The Railway Children. It aims to raise awareness of the vulnerability of young people to exploitation and abuse at stations and transport networks in parts of Essex.

Research and local data have shown transport networks are used by vulnerable young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and trafficking. Young people often gravitate towards stations because they are traditionally busy, anonymous places that also provide some



form of shelter and access to food and drink. Bus and rail networks can also be used by offenders to traffic young people for the purpose of sexual and criminal exploitation.

As well as members of the public, all staff working within and around a station, from ticket collectors to engineers, coffee shop workers to cleaners, play an important role in safeguarding vulnerable young people.

### **Domestic Abuse & Healthy Relationships inputs at secondary schools**

Hundreds of teenagers have learnt to spot the signs of domestic abuse after watching a powerful play organised by Eastlight Community Homes, and funded by the CSP.

Educational theatre group, Tic Box Productions, performed 'The Bruise You Can't See' at seven secondary schools across the district.

The play was watched by more than 1,100 students in Years 10 and 11 at Notley High School, Tabor Academy, New Rickstones Academy, Honywood School, Alec Hunter Academy, Maltings Academy and also Heybridge Co-operative Academy – an alternative provision school in Maldon.

Shani Roberts, 14, was one of the first students to watch the play at Notley High School. She said: "It was interesting to see the different indicators of domestic abuse – I learned that it is not always obvious. The fact that it was a play made it really interesting – it wasn't just a lesson."

Katee Swallow, ASB Co-ordinator at Eastlight Community Homes, added: "This is such an important lesson for students and will help them to recognise any signs of domestic abuse before it is too late. I hope it will help them to sustain healthy relationships in their future and know what to do if they are faced with domestic abuse. The show was very good – it reached out to the students using language and a style they can relate to."

Cllr Frankie Ricci, Chair of the CSP said: "Domestic abuse is a very important issue and it is vital for young people to understand what a healthy relationship looks like and that they're not alone if they do experience any kind of domestic abuse.

"Support is out there and we want that to be as accessible and visible as possible."





### **'Every Contact Counts' exploitation awareness for professionals**

The CSP continues to ensure that those working within Braintree District have the necessary knowledge and awareness of 'hidden harms' in order to prevent crime and protect the vulnerable.

To this end the CSP invited frontline professionals from across the partnership to attend an 'Every Contact Counts' awareness session, delivered by Children & Young People First, and funded through the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit.

Around 50 professionals working within the Braintree District attended a 90-minute session which aimed to help them spot the signs of exploitation, gangs, county lines, modern slavery, domestic servitude and sexual exploitation; know how and where to refer concerns regarding exploitation of young people and / or vulnerable adults; and be able to respond safely to these concerns where it is appropriate to do so.

The event was very well received. One professional from Essex County Fire & Rescue Service said: "I have dealt with those at the end of the line and seen first-hand the devastating effects that can occur from the content delivered in my previous occupations as a police constable in the Met, and 15 years as a senior officer working within HM Prison Service.

"I have obviously had similar training like this in the past but having a refresher is so worthwhile. The delivery was spot on and did not shirk away from the importance of the messages and points that had to be made."



### **Mobile cameras to tackle crime and nuisance**

The CSP has continued to fund the purchase of mobile cameras to be deployed to areas where there is believed to be criminal or anti-social behaviour occurring. The cameras are installed by the Council's street-scene enforcement team following requests and discussion by multi-agency partners.

To date, useful evidence has been used by police intelligence officers to disrupt the suspected supply of Class A drugs by known gang nominals from London; target prolific shoplifters; identify and deter identified individuals from causing anti-social behaviour; and to assist in gathering evidence to put in place enforcement action such as Closure Orders.



### **BlokIt drug deterrent spray used in licensed premises**

As part of ongoing work to tackle anti-social behaviour a new anti-drug spray was launched and funded by the CSP - the first of its kind in Essex.

Officers from Braintree Community Policing Team visited licensed premises and public venues throughout Braintree and Witham's town centres in January 2022 to coat surfaces that can often be used for recreational drug taking, such as those in bathrooms.

The clear substance coats the surface with a powerful bittering agent which reacts with any powdered substance. If the substance is then ingested, it will have a foul taste which can last several hours.

PC Caroline Marsay, who led the initiative, said: "The vast majority of visitors to pubs, bars and venues do so sensibly and safely to enjoy their free time with friends and family. Unfortunately, there are still a small number of people who choose to take recreational drugs while visiting these premises, which not only poses a real danger to themselves, but has a significant impact on the wider community. It makes people feel unsafe, can lead to violence and ultimately funds organised crime.



"We're always considering new tools and initiatives we can employ to keep you safe and I'm extremely proud to have been part of this step forward to deter drug taking in our communities."

Councillor Frankie Ricci, Chair of the CSP said: "Our aim is to make the Braintree district an even safer place to live, work and visit so we are delighted to support Essex Police with the funding for this latest product to help reduce crime and drug use in Braintree and Witham town centres. We know that this product has significantly reduced drug-taking within premises in other areas across the country, so we hope that it has the same positive impact in our communities."

### **Horizon Project**

The Horizon Project, managed and delivered by Phoenix Futures Full Circle, is a multi-agency model that provides intensive support for individuals with multiple and complex disadvantages. The service involves up to 10 clients selected for participation by the multi-agency staff in Braintree District. These clients are selected based on their complex needs, involvement with the criminal justice system, and being at risk of homelessness.

The aims of the project include finding ways to improve outcomes for clients; agree multi-agency support plans for each client; use a person centred approach to improve life



chances and support the individual to secure appropriate accommodation; break cycles of established behaviour patterns to help individuals re-enter and maintain a place in their community.

Positive outcomes have been achieved for most clients on the project (*Phoenix Futures' report of the Braintree District Horizon Project, September 2019-2020*). The intensive nature of the Horizons Project meant that it was outreach based, responsive and reactive. Full Circle staff had the capacity to see clients more regularly and for longer periods of time than other specialised services, and could respond to situations when needed. On some occasions, this meant that several hours a day were spent with one individual if that was what was required. With the majority being housed and offending behaviour reduced there is a positive impact on the client and the local area.

### **Weapon awareness for school children**

The CSP arranged for a 'weapon awareness' input for 90 Year 6 children at John Ray Junior School, in Braintree.

The session, funded by St Giles Trust's SOS+ Project, and delivered in February 2021, focused on debunking myths and stereotypes around crime, weapons, gangs, county lines and related issues, challenging the messages in social media and popular culture, de-glamourising the lifestyle and exposing the realities of negative choices such as carrying a weapon.



A teacher whose class received the input, said: "The children were fully engaged and gave excellent examples of the key vocabulary; they were responsive to the teacher giving the presentation. After the session, the children said they took away a lot of facts about rules and laws. Many of the children also took away lots of top tips to keep safe what to do if they were approached by others, who they did not feel comfortable around."

The SOS+ Service delivers early intervention work in educational settings, through preventative sessions on violence, vulnerability and exploitation.

Their award-winning approach uses trained professionals with lived experience of the criminal justice system to de-glamorise gang involvement and expose the harsh realities of crime and violence. As they know these issues first-hand, they can speak from their own experiences and have high levels of engagement from the young people.

### Safe, Well & Secure visits

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service (ECFRS), supported by Braintree District Council, parish councils, Essex Police, Dementia Care, United in Kind and Community 360, visited 325 properties, with a total of 1,286 face-to-face engagements to offer personal safety advice and signpost residents to appropriate support services. 23 properties were referred for a Safe and Well visit.

During the year a total of 233 Safe and Well visits, and 50 Home Safety visits took place in the district whereby residents received home safety assessments. Officers also visited 85 vulnerable residents following concerns raised regarding potential hoarding, being bedbound or housebound, experiencing addiction issues or poor living conditions. In each of these instances officers attempted to engage with the individuals and liaised with other partner agencies where necessary to help make them safer in their own home.

ECFRS Education Officers unfortunately were unable to enter schools for some of the year, however between September and December 2021 - 2,716 students were engaged with in primary schools - 118 students received a 'People who Help Us' input, 45 received a 'Respect' Assembly, Firework and Halloween Safety talks reached 2,290 students, 158 benefited from 'Cyber Safety' inputs and 105 received 'Home Safety' inputs.

### Moving Forward

Braintree District Community Safety Partnership has received a funding allocation of £17,739 for 2022-23 from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC).

In 2022-23 the Strategic Priorities of Braintree District Community Safety Partnership will be:



These priorities, along with the core responsibilities of the CSP – to reduce crime and disorder, to reduce re-offending and combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances – will inform Braintree CSP's Action Plan for 2022-23.

The Partnership will address these priorities through the identification of agencies and resources that are best placed to respond and deliver improvements.

## Find out more

If you would like further information about us and our services, please get in touch:

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