

Annual Report 2024-25



Braintree District Community Safety Partnership

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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 2024-25.

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:

- **Protect the vulnerable**
- **Promote healthy relationships**
- **Keep safe online**
- **Build community resilience**
- **Promote safety in our communities**

These efforts are designed to raise awareness, educate, and prevent issues, complementing the daily work of local agencies. We take pride in the Partnership's achievements and are committed to continuing our impactful work.



Cllr Mary Cunningham

Chair, Braintree District
Community Safety Partnership

Tracey Parry

Community Services Manager
Braintree District Council

Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities
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, NHS Mid & South Integrated Care Board, Eastlight Community Homes and Essex County Council (Education).

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 2024-25 were:

- Protect the vulnerable
- Promote healthy relationships
- Keep safe online
- Build community resilience
- Promote safety in our communities

Funding

The Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (OPFCC) allocated grants from its 2024–25 Community Safety Fund to all Community Safety Partnerships across the county. As in previous years, the OPFCC set aside a proportion of this funding for Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (formerly Domestic Homicide Reviews). This fund supports the coordination of the review process, panel administration, funding for independent chairs, lesson learning seminars, and monitoring and reporting on the implementation of recommendations.

The allocation of funding is determined by a formula that takes into account population size, levels of deprivation, and crime rates. For the fiscal year 2024-25, the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership was awarded a funding allocation of £17,739.

Action Plan 2024-25

The Braintree District Community Safety Partnership is committed to producing an annual Action Plan that serves as a foundational document outlining the priorities and strategies for partner organisations.

This comprehensive plan details how these agencies will coordinate to achieve the specified actions. The formulation of the Action Plan is a collaborative effort, incorporating ideas and projects derived from extensive discussions with all involved partners. These actions encompass specific projects and initiatives proposed by partner agencies, which are subsequently reviewed and collectively agreed upon by the Responsible Authority Group. This inclusive approach ensures that the plan is robust, well-informed, and reflective of the collective expertise and insights of all stakeholders.

Key Achievements 2024-25

Safer Streets Halstead

The Community Safety Partnership, together with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, secured Home Office Safer Streets funding for Halstead.

The programme focused on key areas in Halstead and aimed to improve people's perception of safety, with a primary focus on reducing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The Partnership delivered several activities including anti-social behaviour and crime prevention police patrols; a Street Warden employed by Halstead Town Council; outreach sports programme for young people; extended the CCTV network; free self-defence classes for women and girls; a Dog Day event; and specialist counselling sessions for victims of sexual violence.

Since the start of the Safer Streets project in Halstead - CARA has delivered 116 specialist sexual violence counselling sessions for women and girls from Halstead. 87 sessions were for 19 adult women (18+), 26 sessions for 5 girls aged 13-17 and 3 sessions for 1 girl under 12. The outreach sports programme delivered by Fusion delivered 108 classes with 568 attendees. Some of the activities included boxing, football, drama workshops, wall ball, dodge ball and bootcamps.

Support for people at risk or experiencing domestic abuse

The CSP continues to support identified individuals through the Braintree District Community Safety Hub and other dedicated sub-groups, with the aim of providing multi-agency support and intervention for individuals at an early stage.

The Domestic Abuse Sub-Group is for domestic abuse cases where the individual has contacted the local authority or been referred by a partner agency. The group allows joint working between relevant agencies to support an informed assessment of risk levels and enable evaluation of appropriate measures and interventions to manage any risks.

"J9 Domestic Abuse Awareness Training" was facilitated by the Community Safety Partnership and provided to 23 participants within the district.

Safeguarding vulnerable young people on public transport

Braintree actively participated in the countywide Operation Henderson campaign, a collaborative initiative orchestrated by the Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board in conjunction with British Transport Police, Essex Police, the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, various rail operators, Essex Youth Service, and other Local Authorities. This Operation is designed to raise awareness about the vulnerability of young people to exploitation and abuse within stations and transport networks across the various regions of Essex. The campaign underscores the importance of safeguarding measures and aims to educate the public and relevant stakeholders about the risks faced by young individuals in these environments. Through coordinated efforts and strategic partnerships, Operation Henderson seeks to create a safer and more secure transit experience for all young people.

Research and local data obtained from the Strategic Assessment indicate that transport networks are frequently utilised by vulnerable young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and trafficking. These individuals often gravitate towards stations due to their busy, anonymous nature, which offers some degree of shelter and access to food and drink. Additionally, bus and rail networks can be exploited by offenders to traffic young people for the purposes of sexual and criminal exploitation. In addition to the general public, all staff working within and around a station (ticket collectors, engineers, coffee shop workers etc) play a crucial role in safeguarding these vulnerable young individuals.

Crucial Crew for school children

Braintree District Council organised a Crucial Crew event, which was attended by 492 Year 6 pupils from across the district. Crucial Crew is an initiative that educates children on critical topics such as personal safety, healthy relationships, internet safety, exploitation, and road safety. This event was designed to impart essential knowledge on various aspects of personal safety and wellbeing to those in attendance. The project aimed to deliver potentially lifesaving information that would benefit students throughout their lives. During the event, pupils were encouraged to express their feelings, identify situations where they felt less safe, and discuss potential strategies to enhance their sense of security.

The impact of this event on students was profound, as it equipped them with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate their environments safely and confidently. By fostering open discussions about their feelings and safety concerns, the event helped students develop a greater awareness of personal safety and empowered them to take proactive measures to protect themselves. The Crucial Crew initiative not only provided immediate educational benefits but also contributed to the long-term wellbeing of the participants by instilling valuable life skills and promoting a culture of safety and awareness.

Fire service delivers education and support

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service (ECFRS) conducted 601 Safe and Well/Safeguarding visits to offer personal safety advice and signpost residents to appropriate support services.

Sessions focused on key themes including Cyber Safety; Firework/Halloween Campaign; Gang Awareness and Knife Crime; Hate Crime; Healthy Relationships and road traffic and pedestrian safety, among others.

ECFRS' Community Safety Officer attended dedicated engagement events throughout the year including home fire safety talks at libraries, shopping centres, parish councils, nursing and residential care homes. They also worked with social prescribers to contact socially isolated people in the community.

Fraud prevention awareness

The Fraud Prevention Coordinator at Essex Police has played a pivotal role in supporting victims of fraud throughout the Braintree District. Their efforts include providing comprehensive advice, implementing additional safeguarding measures and in some cases, assisting in the recovery of funds lost to various scams. This proactive approach has been instrumental in helping victims navigate the complexities of fraud and regain financial stability.

In addition to direct victim support and education, the Coordinator has actively engaged with members of the community by attending 26 community events, which collectively attracted 1,176 attendees. At these events, the coordinator delivered informative fraud prevention talks, offered practical advice and distributed fraud deterrent items. These initiatives have significantly contributed to raising awareness about fraud and educating the public on how to protect themselves.

In addition, the Coordinator collaborates regularly with community and voluntary sectors such as Neighbourhood Watch and Housing Associations to enhance fraud awareness across all areas of the Braintree District, including rural areas. This partnership aims to create a more informed and vigilant community that is capable of recognising and preventing fraudulent activities. Through this work, Essex Police is supporting a safer environment for all residents.

999 Football tournaments for young people

The Braintree District 999 Football Tournament served not only as a platform for friendly competition among local year 8 students, but also as an important opportunity to engage with young people about their feelings of safety in the community. 6 schools from across the Braintree District participated in the annual event, with a total of 76 students taking part in the tournament.

As part of the initiative, students were asked a series of questions aimed at understanding their perceptions of safety in their daily lives. Encouragingly, 71 students reported that they felt safe in the areas where they live. Furthermore, 96% of participants stated that they felt safe when travelling to and from school.

In addition to the sporting activities, the event included educational sessions where students were informed about key safety issues, including the risks and signs of child exploitation. These discussions aimed to raise awareness, empower students with knowledge, and encourage them to speak up if they ever feel unsafe or concerned.

These insights are invaluable for local authorities and community safety partners, helping to shape future initiatives and ensure that young people continue to feel secure and supported in their environments.

The event highlighted the importance of listening to youth voices and using their feedback to inform positive change.

Drug & Alcohol street support service

The Braintree District Community Safety Partnership continues to work collaboratively with Open Road and Phoenix Futures to deliver vital support services for individuals affected by drug and alcohol dependency. As part of this ongoing commitment, a drop-in service is available to provide accessible and non-judgmental assistance to those seeking help with substance misuse. This initiative plays a crucial role in early intervention and long-term recovery by offering tailored advice, harm reduction strategies, and pathways into structured treatment. In the Braintree area alone, Phoenix Futures has received 26 referrals for

individuals presenting with complex needs, highlighting the growing demand for specialist support. These referrals reflect the importance of multi-agency working in addressing the wider social and health challenges associated with substance dependency and ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the comprehensive care they need.

Child Criminal Exploitation & Child Sexual Exploitation

A total of 6 'Spot It, Stop It' training sessions focusing on child exploitation and child sexual exploitation have been successfully delivered to a range of professional organisations. These sessions were attended by representatives from Housing Associations, Open Road, Phoenix Futures, and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. Across the six sessions, 79 professionals participated, enhancing their awareness, knowledge, and ability to identify and respond to signs of exploitation. This training forms a key part of the wider strategy to safeguard vulnerable individuals and strengthen multi-agency responses to exploitation across the community.

Essex Youth Service

A total of 20 detached engagement sessions focusing on child exploitation have been delivered across identified hotspot areas within the district. These sessions were designed to reach young people in informal settings, allowing for meaningful, trust-based interactions outside of traditional service environments. Through consistent outreach, practitioners were able to build stronger relationships with the young individuals engaged, fostering a sense of trust and openness. During these sessions, young people were provided with vital information about the risks and signs of child exploitation and were made aware of the relevant support services available to them.

In addition to raising awareness, the sessions offered practical guidance on a range of personal development topics which included personal safety, healthy relationship building, emotional resilience, and mental health support. Where appropriate, referrals were made to further opportunities such as an employability course being delivered in Braintree which is also joined with the work of the CSP. This is aimed at helping young people develop skills and access pathways into education, training and future employment. These targeted interventions form a key part of the Braintree District CSP priorities ensuring that vulnerable young people are supported, informed, and empowered.

Community Engagement

Braintree District Council's Community Services Team along with other partners of the Community Safety Partnership actively participated in and supported over 50 community engagement events across the district. These events included outreach visits to local villages, towns, and skate parks, as well as the successful delivery of three 'Wealth and Health' Fairs.

Collectively, these initiatives enabled direct engagement with thousands of residents, providing valuable opportunities to raise awareness, offer support, and strengthen community relationships.

A wide range of important topics were addressed during these events, including personal safety, violence against women and girls (VAWG), the promotion of safer streets, and the dangers of drink spiking. Officers also provided education around Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), delivered careers workshops, and offered practical advice and support relating to the cost of living crisis. In addition, the team worked closely with local foodbanks to ensure residents were aware of available support services.

To enhance the impact of these engagements, a variety of practical resources were distributed to members of the public. These included cigarette butt litter boxes, anti-drink spiking kits, anti-theft purse bells, credit/debit card defender pouches, car key signal-blocking pouches, and reflective wristbands. Educational materials, such as leaflets and

flyers, were also provided to reinforce key messages and signpost individuals to relevant services.

Schools across the district also played a vital role in supporting community engagement. The Community Safety Partnership collaborated with local educational institutions to deliver targeted sessions aimed at raising awareness among young people about key safety and wellbeing issues. Engagements at Alec Hunter Academy and Hedingham School included participation in interview days and careers-focused events, where students received guidance on personal development, employability, and community safety. These school-based interactions provided an important platform to educate students on topics such as healthy relationships, resilience, and the risks associated with exploitation and anti-social behaviour. By working closely with schools, the CSP continues to strengthen its preventative approach, ensuring that young people are informed, supported, and empowered to make positive choices.

Events attended by the Community Services team included:

- Ashen Community Garden
- Braintree Museum
- Community Marketplace
- Braintree Library
- Black Notley Community Garden
- Wealth and Health Days in Braintree, Witham, and Halstead
- Halstead Leisure Centre
- Alec Hunter Academy
- Hedingham School Interview Day
- Crucial Crew
- United in Kind Cream Tea
- Creative Careers Workshop
- Teachers Speaking Workshop
- Woman Networking
- Dementia Friendly Christmas Tea
- Braintree Village Community Market Place

In addition to the Council's efforts, Essex Police PCSOs and PCs also played an active role in community engagement. Their involvement included attendance at coffee mornings and participation in Operation Dial Community Engagement Days, working alongside partner organisations to promote safety and wellbeing across the district.

Anti Social Behaviour Case Review

The ASB Case Review gives victims of persistent anti-social behaviour the ability to demand a formal case review to determine whether there is further action that can be taken regarding a case they have reported to the appropriate services.

Victims of ASB can use this tool if they feel that agencies have not taken action in respect of their complaint. Where the Essex Countywide threshold is met in any ASB case review requests, relevant agencies including the Local Authority, Police and Housing Providers have a duty to undertake a review to take a more collaborative, problem solving approach aiming to find a solution for the victim.

Between 2024 -2025, a total of 16 requests were submitted for an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) case review within the Braintree District. Out of the 16 requests received during this period, 11 met the established threshold criteria, meaning they qualified for a full multi-agency review. These thresholds typically include factors such as the number of complaints made, the time frame in which they occurred, and the perceived impact on the victim.

Following the reviews, it was determined that in 3 of the 11 qualifying cases, the response from the agencies involved such as the Police, Local Authority and Housing Providers had not been appropriate or sufficient in addressing the concerns raised by the victims. These findings often lead to recommendations for improved practices or further action to support the individuals affected.

Additionally, it was noted that 2 of the 16 requests were duplicates, meaning they were repeated submissions concerning the same incidents or individuals and therefore did not proceed as separate reviews.

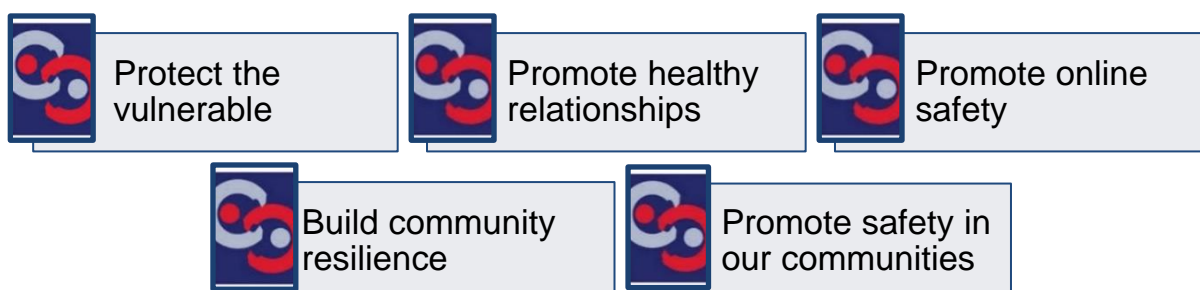
This data highlights both the importance of the ASB case review process in holding agencies accountable and the ongoing need to ensure that victims of anti-social behaviour receive timely and effective support.

Individuals, businesses or community groups can apply online for a review by searching for the 'Braintree ASB Case Review' section of the Braintree District Council website or by contacting Braintree District Council directly.

Moving Forward

Braintree District Community Safety Partnership has received a funding allocation of £14,111 for 2025-26 from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC).

In 2025-26 the Strategic Priorities of the 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 2025-26.

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

Contact us

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