

COMMUNITY SAFETY BRIEFING PAPER

Community Connections (Community Safety)



1. Introduction

This briefing provides an annual overview of community safety activity in Plymouth and is intended to support Scrutiny Committee oversight of partnership delivery, governance, and emerging risks. It outlines key areas of work across anti-social behaviour, serious violence prevention, safeguarding within the evening and night-time economy, modern slavery, Prevent and Channel, and community engagement.

The report highlights how a focus on prevention, early intervention, and trauma-informed practice continues to shape local responses, supported by strong multiagency partnership working. It also sets out current pressures, including evolving risk profiles and funding challenges, and identifies areas of ongoing development and future focus.

2. Community Safety - PCC Performance and Delivery

In January 2025, Plymouth City Council (PCC) and key partners, including Devon and Cornwall Police, housing providers, and Plymouth Against Retail Crime (PARC), held an in person MoRiLE workshop to review anti-social behaviour (ASB) activity over the previous year. This provided an opportunity to assess demand, risk, and the effectiveness of current responses.

ASB continues to be reported at consistently high levels across the city. PCC data shows a slight increase in reports from **742 in 2023/24 to 755 in 2024/25**. Despite ongoing staffing pressures and vacancies, the Council has maintained enforcement activity, issuing **42 Community Protection Warnings during 2024/25**, an **increase of 18%** compared with the previous year. The Community Safety team's emphasis on early intervention, underpinned by a trauma informed approach, has reduced reliance on high-level enforcement measures such as Closure Orders. These measures can have significant cost implications and wider impacts on other service areas, including homelessness.

Victim focused practice remains a priority. **Twenty ASB Case Reviews** were completed in 2024/25, representing a **5% increase** on the previous year and demonstrating continued commitment to ensuring that victims' voices are central to multiagency responses.

The **Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)**, introduced on 12 November 2025, has been positively received by both PCC teams and the police. Significant work has been undertaken to improve safety and perceptions of safety within car parks, alongside a programme of engagement and education. A small number of individuals displaying persistent ASB have been identified for formal enforcement, with Community Protection Notice Warnings issued or in progress.

3. Community Safety – Partnership Performance and Delivery

3.1 Evening and Night-time Economy (ENTE)

In September 2025, Plymouth was awarded the **Purple Flag** accreditation for the sixth consecutive year, recognising the city's safe, vibrant, and diverse evening and night-time economy. This accreditation highlights effective partnerships, including the **Safe Bus, taxi marshals, CCTV, help points, Plymouth City Pastors, Pub Watch, and Best Bar None** accredited venues. A **citywide consultation** was launched in August 2025 to gather public views on safety within the evening and nighttime economy, including awareness and use of existing safety initiatives. This engagement will be complemented by a series of targeted focus groups, after which a report will be produced in March 2026 setting out key findings and recommendations to inform future improvements to Plymouth's response.

The **ENTE Predatory Behaviour Prevention Partnership** meets monthly to review intelligence gathered through Project Nighteye in relation to individuals whose behaviour raises concerns about predatory behaviour and the risk of sexual violence. This includes situations where behaviour causes victims to feel harassed, alarmed, or distressed, such as being followed home or subjected to unwanted sexual advances, but where the criminal threshold has not been met or evidential challenges limit formal enforcement. Through a preventative and trauma-informed approach, targeted engagement is undertaken to manage risk and intervene early. The Council's Serious Violence Prevention Officer leads engagement with identified individuals and, where appropriate, uses civil tools to disrupt harmful behaviour, including issuing Community Protection Warnings to restrict access to the ENTE area.

During 2025, **17 Community Protection Warnings** were issued in response to predatory behaviour within the ENTE. In addition, a number of individuals received informal interventions, such as words of advice, aimed at challenging behaviour, preventing escalation, and signposting to support where appropriate. In some cases, matters progressed through police-led criminal justice processes, including the pursuit of Sexual Risk Orders where relevant.

3.2 Street-attached Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Partnership (SARP)

The **Street Attached Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Partnership (SARP)** meets on a fortnightly basis to review shared intelligence relating to street attached individuals engaged in persistent antisocial behaviour, with a particular focus on the city centre. The partnership is chaired by PCC's Community Safety team and brings together a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners, including Housing, Devon and Cornwall Police, homelessness services, drug and alcohol treatment providers, rough sleeper outreach, and PARC. Partners collaboratively review intelligence and agree trauma-informed, multiagency action plans, identifying opportunities to address underlying needs associated with behaviour, such as substance misuse or homelessness. A support-led approach is prioritised wherever possible. Where engagement and support interventions are unsuccessful or risk remains high, proportionate enforcement action is used. In these circumstances, a number of individuals have been issued Community Protection Warnings, including exclusions from the city centre area, in response to persistent ASB. This partnership approach supports timely information sharing, coordinated decision making, and a consistent response to street-attached ASB, helping to manage risk and improve safety in the city centre.

3.3 Youth Anti-Social Behaviour

During the summer months of 2025, an **increase in youth related antisocial behaviour** was identified across the waterfront area. In response, a coordinated partnership approach was implemented to identify the young people involved and intervene. Partners involved included Devon and Cornwall Police (Child Centred and Neighbourhood Policing teams), the Harbour Master, Youth Justice Service, PCC Community Youth Service (including detached youth workers), Community Safety, Children's Social Care, and the Plymouth Waterfront Partnership. The response focused on identifying individuals, undertaking home visits, and offering appropriate support and diversionary interventions.

In a small number of cases where behaviour or risk remained high, proportionate enforcement action was taken. This was complemented by increased high visibility presence from detached youth workers and police officers in the area, alongside reassurance and engagement with local businesses. Learning from this activity has informed early planning for summer 2026. Partnership meetings have already taken place to strengthen preventative measures and ensure a more proactive response ahead of the peak period.

4. Safer Plymouth (Community Safety Partnership)

Safer Plymouth continues to provide the strategic framework for multi-agency community safety delivery in the city. Over the past year, the Partnership has brought together statutory partners, voluntary and community organisations, and wider stakeholders to align priorities, share intelligence, and coordinate activity across prevention, enforcement, and recovery. Safer Plymouth is in the process of setting priorities within its **Strategic Crime Assessment** for the upcoming year.

The Partnership is operating within a changing national policy context. This includes the publication of **Freedom from Violence and Abuse: A Cross Government Strategy to Build a Safer Society for Women and Girls**, which places increased emphasis on prevention, early intervention, perpetrator focused approaches, and whole system responsibility. Safer Plymouth and the DASV Strategic Board will consider how local delivery aligns with this national direction.

The Partnership is also preparing for anticipated reform to the policing and community safety landscape, including proposals expected within the forthcoming **Policing White Paper** and the **Crime and Policing Bill**. Once national direction is confirmed, partnership governance and accountability arrangements will be reviewed to ensure continued effectiveness and strong leadership.

Funding remains a challenge for the Partnership, as there are no centralised funding arrangements and no direct financial contributions from statutory partners. Rising costs, including an **increase in Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs)**, continue to place financial and resource pressures on the Council, which has a statutory duty to undertake this work. There is also ongoing uncertainty regarding future grant funding, with a number of initiatives currently supported through Serious Violence funding and no confirmation at this stage that this funding will continue beyond existing allocations. These financial challenges will be explored further during 2026 to understand sustainability and potential mitigation options.

Looking ahead, Safer Plymouth will continue to prioritise effective governance, alignment across safeguarding and prevention activity, and a systems based, intersectional approach that recognises how multiple disadvantages shape experiences of harm and safety.

5. Preventing Crime and Serious Violence

Delivery under the Serious Violence Duty continues to support a whole system response. Partnership activity over the past year has included:

- **Primary prevention**, including the delivery of workshops within schools, city-wide workforce development in areas such as Prevent and domestic abuse, and targeted projects designed to challenge harmful and misogynistic attitudes and behaviours, including initiatives such as Man Culture.
- **Secondary prevention**, including targeted activity within the evening and night-time economy to prevent sexual violence, delivery of the Stop It Now campaign, progression of Project Guardrail, and the establishment of a dedicated Serious Violence Prevention Officer role within the Council.
- **Tertiary prevention**, including programmes aimed at behaviour change, such as AHIMSA and the pilot of MATAAC, alongside support provided to victims of serious violence.

A 'Preventing Crime' MoRiLE assessment was undertaken in early 2026 to inform understanding of current and emerging crime risks. These findings will inform the next Strategic Crime Assessment and support prioritisation across the Partnership. The assessment confirms that shoplifting remains a priority risk for Plymouth. While individual incidents typically involve low harm, the sustained volume of offending has a cumulative impact on businesses, local environments, and public confidence. Knife crime and the possession of offensive weapons have also been identified as emerging risks. Although current volumes remain relatively low, the potential harm associated with knife enabled violence is significant, reinforcing the importance of early intervention and preventative approaches.

Preparation is currently underway for Plymouth's hosting of the **Knife Angel** from 2–30 March 2026. The installation forms a key part of the city's approach to the prevention of serious violence, supporting awareness raising, early intervention, and community engagement around the risks and impacts of knife crime. The programme will include schools, community and public engagement activity throughout March, followed by evaluation to inform future preventative work.

6. Modern Slavery and Exploitation

Considerable progress has been made in strengthening Plymouth's response to modern slavery. Local practice has been aligned with national standards through engagement with other local authority leads and sharing of best practice.

A comprehensive rewrite of the **Modern Slavery Toolkit** has been completed and is awaiting final signoff. This provides clear, practical guidance for frontline practitioners. Supporting flowcharts have been developed to improve consistency and confidence in decision-making.

A new **Antislavery Partnership** has been established for the city, comprising over 25 agencies and attracting strong attendance at in person meetings. Work is underway to introduce a monthly **Slavery and Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (SERAC)** to review National Referral Mechanism

submissions, improve shared awareness, and coordinate victim support. A citywide training programme will commence in March 2026.

7. Prevent and Channel

Prevent is a key strand of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy and aims to safeguard individuals from being drawn into terrorism or extremist ideologies. Locally, delivery of Prevent focuses on early intervention, partnership working, and building resilience within communities, ensuring that concerns are identified and addressed proportionately and in line with statutory duties.

The local Prevent offer has been strengthened through a **fully revised Prevent Delivery Plan and updated risk assessment**. Governance has been enhanced through the reinstatement of the **Education and Young Person Subgroup** and expanded Prevent Partnership meetings.

Engagement with national and regional partners has increased, and work is underway to map progress against national Prevent Benchmarking criteria. A structured **12-month training programme** is being developed, alongside new policies to strengthen communications, embed Prevent into staff induction, and guide the use of public spaces.

Channel is the multiagency safeguarding process that sits within the Prevent duty and provides early support to individuals identified as being susceptible to radicalisation. Plymouth City Council chairs the local Channel Panel. In recent months, there has been an increase in referrals meeting the Channel threshold, reflecting changes in national practice following the Prevent Learning Reviews arising from the Southport and Sir David Amess cases. The primary risk identified locally relates to **extreme far right radicalisation**. A significant proportion of referrals continue to involve **children and young people with complex and overlapping needs**, including neurodiversity. The Channel Panel is well attended and includes representation from a broad range of statutory partners, supporting effective information sharing, robust decision making, and appropriate oversight.

8. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) & Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV)

The statutory PCC VAWG Team and the statutory DASV Partnership Board continue to coordinate multi- agency work across the city. Key developments include progress toward Coordinated Community Response accreditation by June 2026, involvement in the SafeLives Whole Picture pilot, and continuation of trauma stabilisation training into 2026/27. Activity across operational groups remains extensive: the Communications Group delivered a strong 16 Days of Activism programme, while DA & Children's work has progressed regional and national good practice, advanced the JTAI action plan, and developed a business case for specialist co- located workers and implementation of the Safe & Together model. Workforce Development remains a major strength with 31 trainings delivered to 2,157 attendees in 2025, alongside high- impact city- wide sessions such as Homicide Timeline training reaching over 1,200 participants. Commissioning activity is also significant, including procurement of safe accommodation (ongoing), the new community DA and behaviour change service commencing April 2026, and the imminent launch of the new sexual violence therapeutic service in February 2026. Additionally, the second round of VAWG Community Funding in partnership with the Devon Community Foundation will launch in February, with a total funding pot of £74k including matched funding to be allocated to community projects to tackle VAWG.

Despite this strong progress, system capacity to respond to domestic abuse remains a core concern across Plymouth. Rising volumes of domestic abuse are placing sustained pressure on multi- agency

forums including Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDs), MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference for high-risk victims of domestic abuse) and MATAC (Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination for high-risk/high-harm repeat perpetrators) with MARAC experiencing 35% rise in referrals in 2025 and incomplete recording of protected characteristics and insufficient responsiveness to multiple disadvantage cases. Critical operational issues include delays caused by insufficient feedback loops, lack of adequate authority among agency representatives, and limited perpetrator- focused interventions. To address these pressures, upcoming priorities include finalising the needs assessment process, completing procurement for workforce development, progressing the DA & Children business case, completing Lot 1 of DA commissioning (safe accommodation), mobilising Lot 2 (community-based DA services) and launching the MANTA case management system to enable the shift to weekly MARACs. Safer Plymouth have been asked to make key decisions on MATAC continuation post June 2026 (pending) and the city's position on self- swabbing (agreed), with a further update on the future of Plymouth SARC expected in February.

9. Police Community Engagement

Local Policing Teams (LPP) continue to deliver a broad and proactive programme of community engagement across the city. This includes regular **Coffee with Cops** sessions at pre-advertised locations, giving informal opportunities for residents to speak directly with officers, alongside **Have Your Say** meetings that enable the public and local councillors to discuss local issues and community safety concerns. The **DC Alert system** is routinely used to share timely updates on incidents and community information, supported by **high visibility foot patrols** in hotspot areas to increase visibility and face-to-face engagement. LPP teams also use **social and traditional media**, including the **Herald and local radio**, to share updates and promote safety messages, and maintain a strong presence at **community events, schools, faith centres, family hubs, and community hubs**. **Police Cadets** further contribute to local visibility and engagement through their involvement in community activities.