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# *Safer Somerset Partnership Annual Report 2020-2021*

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## Foreword

I am standing down as Chair of The Safer Somerset Partnership after three years and another three years before that as a member of the Partnership. In fact, I am retiring from the police after 27 years, with many of my years' service in the County of Somerset. So what's changed? Many things have but I think the greatest improvements have been in our ability to seek out and hear those suffering in silence and in need of help. That has been made possible by many advances but the most important continues to be the power of the Partnership, which was put to the ultimate test during this last year with the Covid-19 Pandemic, the direct and indirect effects on our

community. I have been hugely impressed with the manner, resilience and steadfast dedication to duty and service I have seen from across the Partnership. I often say that partnership work is about "fixing the roof when it's not raining" by establishing common aims and positive working relationship for when the storms comes, we need to be prepared. As this report details, we work in a complex and challenging environment where many of our aims are intertwined. But it's that sense of purpose to get things done, to do the right thing and help our citizens which, when I reflect, I am most proud of. Well done Somerset.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Prior'.

Superintendent Mike Prior, Chair of the Safer Somerset Partnership

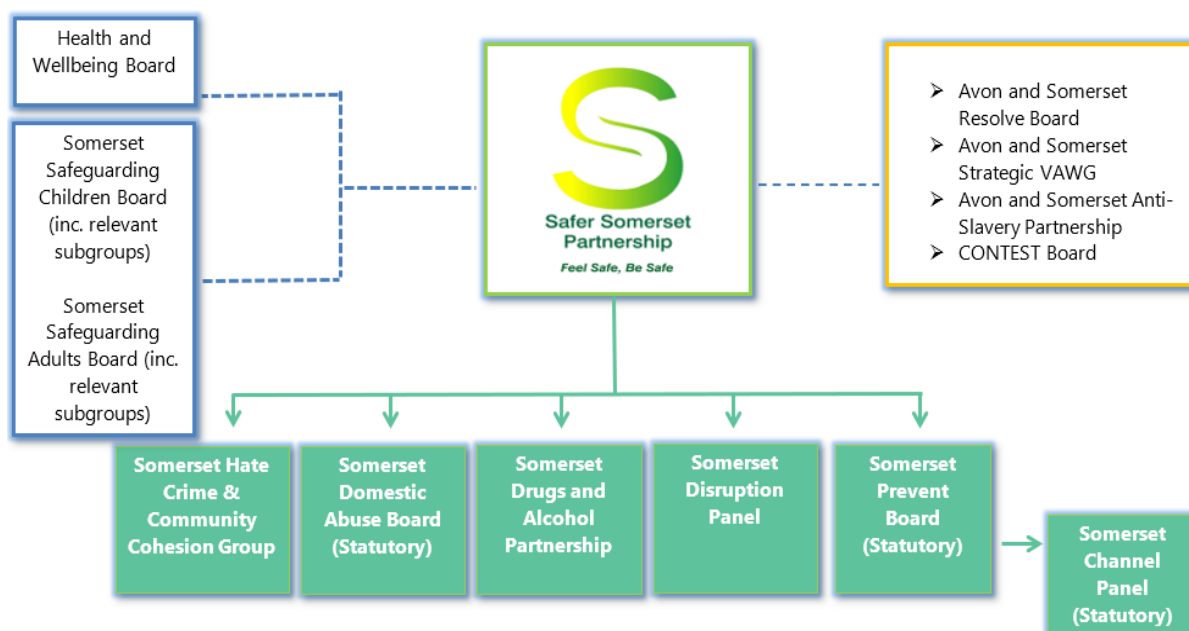
## 1. Introduction to the Partnership

1.1 The Safer Somerset Partnership (SSP) was developed in 2011/12 as a single county wide partnership for delivering duties under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998). This report outlines the function of the Partnership, summarises key activities and achievements in the past 12 months as well as outlining our vision for 2021-22.

1.2 The purpose of the Partnership is to

- provide strategic direction, leadership and improve the effectiveness of the delivery of Community Safety in Somerset
- Make effective links to other strategic Partnerships, ensuring there is a strong voice for Somerset's priorities and interests on other relevant partnerships and work streams aligning to the Protocol for Working Together document
- Ensure that the statutory responsibilities of the Partnership are addressed effectively.

1.3 The Partnership Structure



The Structure of the Partnership is flexible, and changes to reflect local and national priorities and legislation. In 2020, revisions to the Channel Duty and the introduction of new legislation for responding to domestic abuse placed the corresponding multi-agency groups on to a statutory footing. In addition, Task and Finish Groups will meet as and when

required in order to carry out specific short term work such as when making decisions on grant funding allocations.

#### 1.4 Statutory Duties

The Partnership and its constituting partners have a wide range of statutory duties. The table below summarises duties specifically held by the Partnership.

Crime and Disorder Act (1998)	The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on a number of responsible authorities to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder in forums known today as Community Safety Partnerships (formally Crime and Disorder Partnerships).
Police and Justice Act (2006)	The Community Safety Partnership (Safer Somerset Partnership) has a duty to develop and publish a Strategic Assessment of levels of crime and drug misuse in the area and produce a Community Safety Plan.
Police and Crime Act (2009) Section 108	Places a statutory duty on Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to formulate and implement a strategy to reduce reoffending by adult and young offenders.
Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) Section 26	Places a duty on certain "specified authorities" which includes local authorities, schools, universities, health services, police, prisons, and probation to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Lead by Tier 1 Local Authority in each area, the guidance stipulates that this multi-agency activity should be overseen by Community Safety Partnerships. Revised Channel Duty Guidance also stipulated that Channel Panels; multi-agency panels who support individuals from being drawn into terrorism, should be made statutory bodies, and in Somerset, the Channel Panel is placed under the governance of the Safer Somerset Partnership who monitor performance and outcomes.
Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act (2004) Section 9	<p>Stipulates that Local Community Safety partnerships must commission and publish Domestic Homicide Reviews. A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom they were related or with whom they were, or had been, in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as themselves.</p> <p>Since DHRs became a statutory responsibility in April 2011, the Safer Somerset Partnership has received 37 notifications of deaths to consider a review. Of those, 21 have led to a formal DHR and a further 8 have been an "informal review". Reports once approved by the Home Office are published online at <a href="http://www.somerset survivors.org.uk">www.sometsurvivors.org.uk</a>.</p>

### 1.4.1 Community Safety Strategic Assessment and Community Safety Plan

Since 2017, the Safer Somerset Partnership has joined up with the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner to fulfil its obligations in producing the needs Assessment and associated Plan, in the knowledge that working together would bring efficiencies, added value and reduce duplication. Each year, the Partnership contributes to the Avon and Somerset [Police and Crime Needs Assessment](#). The data collated for this document then informs the Police and crime Plan. The Police and Crime Commissioner produces a Force wide overarching document, plus a local Plan with each Community Safety Partnership. For Somerset, this document is entitled [Our Plan](#), and spans 2017-2021.



The Plan presents the Partnership's priorities which are discussed further in section 2. The Partnership and Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner agreed that the current Plan will be carried forward for a further year, due to the delay in Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

### 1.4.2 Domestic Homicide Reviews

A Domestic homicide review (DHR) means a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom he/she was related or with whom he/she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as him/herself, held, with a view to identifying the lessons to be learnt from the death.

In accordance with the DHR statutory guidance, the Safer Somerset Partnership (SSP) Chair must receive and consider notifications of deaths for DHRs and decide whether a review should be commissioned. An independent chair and overview report author must be appointed for each DHR. Once the DHR report has been approved by each individual DHR panel, the SSP must approve it and then each DHR has to be considered by the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel. Once the DHR has been quality assured satisfactorily, it should then be published online.

The SSP is then responsible for ensuring each action plan is completed, including auditing these. The SSP discharges this to its Somerset Domestic Abuse Board sub-group.

### 1.4.3 Reducing Reoffending

The Safer Somerset Partnership discharges its functions to the Avon and Somerset Resolve Board which is Chaired by the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner with members including Local Authorities, DWP, Ministry of Justice, Public Health England, Clinical Commissioning Group, Prisons and Probation Services.

The Board supports and monitors a number of projects/programmes including:

- Ready for Release Project in Bristol Prison – working to make sure those released from prison have access to a plan including settled accommodation. It's a multi-agency hub located at HMP Bristol
- Female Offender Projects - a coordinator at Eastwood Park to work with voluntary sector organisations across the South West to coordinate support to female offenders. Also, Project SHE, which we support from our Police and Crime grant, which works to divert women from the criminal justice system.
- Domestic Abuse Offender Programmes - Part of the PCC's funding has been allocated to fund a trial in South Gloucestershire of the Domestic Abuse offender programme Drive, which has been successfully trialled in a number of other areas including South Wales
- Integrated Offender Management programme

## 2. Partnership Priorities 2017-21

As mentioned in section 1, the Partnership agreed with the OPCC to carry forward our priorities for an additional year, with a refreshed set due in April 2022. A performance framework was set against all current priorities and was refreshed annually to ensure measures remained relevant.

Our Plan Priorities and measures		
Title	Action	Status
1: Protect people from the Harm of Domestic and Sexual Abuse	Maintain the number of cases discussed at MARAC meetings at less than 85 per quarter	G
	Monitor the number of referrals to Domestic abuse perpetrator services in Somerset between April 2020 and 31st March 2021	
	SSP to provide comprehensive awareness of new services with SIDAS April 2020	
	Progress towards implementation of new MARAC model is evidenced each quarter	
2: Identify and Prevent the Exploitation of Vulnerable People	Proportion of individuals aged 10-17 identified as priority potential offenders by the VRU who do not commit a violent offence in the next 6 months.	A
	Deliver joint event on Exploitation with SCSB and SAAB by April 2021	
	Deliver training on county lines and exploitation to key stakeholders involved in service users with mental capacity concerns/learning disabilities by April 2021	
3: Identify and Support those with Inequalities and vulnerabilities and offer support to improve health outcomes and reduce harm	Commission and support production of a hate crime Needs Assessment and use the recommendation to refresh the Hate Crime and Community Cohesion Partnership Plan by April 2021	G
	Actively promote training to allow community safety practitioners to be skilled in identifying and then respond to trauma. i.e. Emotion Coaching training and LIFE beat training	
	Safer Somerset Partnership to be actively engaged in the Stronger Communities Board	
	Encourage all Somerset Housing Authorities to complete a health needs assessment using Homeless Link tool by March 2021.	
4: Meet our Statutory Duties and improve Partnership effectiveness	Partnership to receive evidence of compliance across all Statutory agencies to statutory duties: Prevent, domestic abuse, serious violence and Modern Slavery via Audits and Risk Register	G
	Registered Housing Provider and education representative to attend the Partnership meetings	
	Work with the health and Wellbeing Board to improve processes for collaborative cross-agency data sharing to better identify our	

	most vulnerable (or potentially vulnerable) individuals, families, communities, and locations	
	Develop a Safer Somerset Partnership communications strategy for by July 2020	



### 3. The Partnership's key activities and Achievements 2020-21

#### 3.1 Communications

For the first time, the Safer Somerset Partnership, in Partnership with Somerset's Violence reduction Unit (VRU) saw the benefits of a dedicated communications officer. During 2020-2021, targeted campaigns were carried out to raise awareness of County lines and promote healthy teenage relationships across the County. The campaigns utilised social media, radio, a Bannervan and Admessaging.

**County Lines**  
Spot the signs,  
Stop the exploitation

Children are being exploited by gangs involved in drug crime.  
Know the signs to spot.

CrimeStoppers.  
0800 555111  
100% anonymous. Free to call.

Safer Somerset Partnership

Somerset Council  
@SomersetCouncil

Safer Somerset Partnership has launched its County Lines Campaign in a bid to stop illegal drug related criminal activity operating in Somerset. If you spot the signs of exploitative behaviour, report it anonymously at [crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) #spotthesigns #stoptheexploitation

12:00 pm · 20 Sep 2020 · TweetDeck

5 Retweets · 1 Quote Tweet · 8 Likes

#HealthyTeenRelationship

"I hated it, but I still loved him, and I didn't know what he was doing to me was wrong"

Young people experience the highest rates of domestic abuse of any age group.

Signs of an unhealthy relationship:

- Checking your phone, emails or text messages without permission
- Telling you what to do or can't do
- Isolation from family and friends
- Explosive temper and public humiliation
- Threatening to hurt themselves or others
- Forcing to take part in 'sexting' or participating in sexual activities without consent
- Possessiveness and extreme jealousy

Help and support is available

Visit [www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk](http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk)  
or call 0800 6949 999

helping to keep you safe

Safer Somerset Partnership

Due to the success of the communications strategy this year, the Partnership and VRU have agreed to continue this arrangement in 2021-2022 with a new Strategy being planned.

### 3.2 Hate Crime and Community Cohesion Group

In 2019, Somerset County Council undertook a Strategic needs Assessment of Hate Crime in Somerset to help develop an up to date problem profile. It highlighted the need for partnership activity, the gaps in support, and highlighted underreporting of disability hate crime. The Partnership agreed to reinvigorate the Somerset Hate Crime group with an added focus on community cohesion. The Inaugural meeting took place in January 2021 with a strategy now in place.

### 3.3 Cross Partnership Activity – Child Exploitation

Alongside the Somerset Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Boards, the Safer Somerset Partnership participated in some excellent collaborative work in 2020-2021 to improve Somerset's response to Child Exploitation. The County Council was awarded time with Research in Practice to facilitate a range of workshops to help Somerset establish clear, tangible actions, working towards an ambition to develop a revised partnership strategy for child exploitation. The project culminated in an action plan which highlights work to progress including:

- Review terms of reference of Child Exploitation subgroup
- Improve data dashboard including the undertaking of a Needs Assessment
- Design of exploitation service 2022 that considers the needs of young people who are transitioning between children and adults' services
- Use Needs Assessment to define new Child Exploitation strategy which will incorporate the existing County Lines Strategy developed by the Safer Somerset Partnership.

This project helped to clarify the approach of the Strategic Partnership, including the SSP, in the response to Child Exploitation now and in the future.

### 3.4 Violence Reduction Unit

The Violence Reduction Unit in Somerset forms part of Avon and Somerset's Violence Reduction 'hub and spoke' model, with a local team from each Community Safety Partnership area feeding into a Strategic VRU. It is now completing its first full year of operation with key aims to reduce serious violence and support vulnerable people by:

- Providing targeted interventions and projects
- Facilitating improved sharing of data to help anticipate and respond to serious violence
- Improve community awareness through targeted campaigns
- Provide training for professionals

Achievement in 2020-2021 are summarised below



Avon and Somerset Police have committed VRU officers in each VRU in the Force area and this commitment has helped enhance the capability of the VRU this year. Somerset's VRU continues to be well regarded and will continue in to 2021-2022 at the same resource and capacity levels.

## 4. Responses to key events

### 4.1 Covid-19

This past year has faced unprecedented challenges due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. For the Safer Somerset Partnership, the focus was not just the response to breaches in restrictions, but the impact the restriction has now, and in the future on personal and community wellbeing. A major challenge for the Partnership, was the impact on rates and severity of domestic abuse. Nationally, the stay at home restrictions led to an increase in reports to national helplines and it was imperative that a) local demand was monitored b) local communities were aware of available support and c) local agencies were able to cope with any increases in demand. To facilitate this, a range of activity took place over the year, including:

- The Partnership set up a dedicated Domestic Abuse Covid task group
- The task group developed a data dashboard and collected weekly data to help monitor trends in reports and service demand
- The Task group developed a 'trigger and response' plan and undertook a series of short term pieces of work to help problem solve challenge throughout the year.
- Through the Domestic Abuse Board, support the dedicated campaign #NoClosedDoors2020



During the Summer of 2020, the Partnership and Violence Reduction Unit also participated in a project led by Children's Social Care to identify and provide interventions for young people over the school holiday period during the corona virus and related restrictions. The project provided support for over 100 young people and was a great success in reducing crime and disorder and creating opportunities for young people in Somerset who were experiencing a particularly difficult time.

### 4.2 New legislation

#### 4.2.1 Preparation for the Domestic Act

The Partnership has been monitoring the preparatory work for the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020, led by the County Council with the support and participation of the Somerset Domestic Abuse Board. Activities undertaken to date include:

- Commissioned a County wide scoping exercise of services that support victims of domestic abuse as well as children and families to help prepare for the Needs Assessment, a new duty within the statutory framework.

- Held a multi-agency workshop to help raise awareness of the impending legislation
- Commissioned and assisting in the design of a modular distance learning programme for domestic abuse. This is designed for all agencies, providers and will also include a module for the general public. The full programme will be available from June 2021.
- Agreed to join our neighbouring Local Authorities in Avon and Somerset to plan and commission a Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment.
- Redefine the SSP's sub group – Somerset Domestic Abuse Board to align with the duty to facilitate a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

#### 4.2.2 Revised Channel Duty Guidance

Channel Panels are multi agency forums chaired by the Local Authority to work to help safeguard individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. They share information to assess risk and formulate plans for interventions to help lower the risk posed. Each plan is tailored to support the needs of each individual.

The new guidance for Channel Panels brought with it a series of changes and additional responsibilities which mainly fall to the Tier 1 local Authority. The Partnership too, had to make changes to align with this duty which included amending its own term of Reference to include holding the Governance for Channel Panels in Somerset and as such, considering performance and having the ability to scrutinise the Panel's performance at each meeting

## 5. Funded Projects and Services

The Safer Somerset Partnership is allocated an annual grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner; the Police and Crime Grant which has remained constant year on year since 2017 at £211,344 per annum. The fund is used to enhance existing services, pump prime new projects which must all align with the Partnership's priorities. Services and projects benefitting from the fund 2020-2021 are:

Service/Project	Provider
<b>Positive Lives</b> This is a continuing project essential for supporting high risk of harm and high risk of reoffending offenders.	Julian House
<b>Domestic Abuse – MARAC facilitation</b> to assist the partnership in maintain an effective multi agency process for managing the safety of high risk victims of domestic abuse.	The YOU Trust
<b>Communications Officer</b> to design and implement a communications campaign combining the priorities of the Safer Somerset Partnership and Violence Reduction Unit	Somerset County Council (co-funded between SSP and VRU)
<b>Project SHE</b> SHE diversion workers work across Somerset (based in Bridgwater) to help divert females from the Criminal Justice System by supporting them to engage with support in a safe and therapeutic environment.	The Nelson Trust

## 6. Looking to the Future

### 6.1 VRU continuation

The Violence Reduction Unit continues to perform well and will continue in to 2021-2022. The Partnership will need to consider how the Unit moves from a funded programme of work, into 'business as usual' to ensure the work is sustainable year on year.

### 6.2 Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Bill is due to gain Royal Assent at the end of April 2021, bringing new duties which currently focusses on safe accommodation. The lead agency for these Duties will be the Tier 1 Local Authority, with Tier 2 Authorities having a duty to cooperate. The Somerset Domestic Abuse Board will become a statutory body, retaining its position as a subgroup of the Safer Somerset Partnership.

Chapter 6 of the Draft Statutory Guidance states that there will be clear strategic focus with each area having "...an integrated governance and operational structure, so that agencies are regularly meeting at strategic, operational and decision-making level. Accountability and leadership are clear and effective and is appropriately linked to local bodies such as the Community Safety Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Adult Safeguarding Board".

This legislation brings significant change to the Partnership and Local Authorities in particular and will be a key area of focus for the coming year.

### 6.3 Learning the lessons from Domestic Homicide Reviews

There have been an increasing proportion of recent Somerset DHRs involving the deaths of people aged over 60 years. Additionally, there have been several DHRs where the deceased has been male. In both situations, there is a common theme of lack of awareness of how to effectively respond to victims who are older, and who are male. Additionally, despite the Serious Crime Act 2015 introducing coercive control legislation, there is a continuing evidence of professionals not being able to identify or effectively address coercive control. With new training resources being commissioned, the Partnership will monitor the take up of training in front line practitioners in Somerset and also continue to implement the improvements recommended by Domestic Homicide Reviews.

### 6.4 Serious Violence Duty

The Serious Violence Duty is expected to commence later in 2021. The duty will ensure that serious violence is made a focus within existing multi-agency arrangements, such as multi-

agency safeguarding arrangements or Community Safety Partnerships and allow for collaboration between a much wider set of partners. This duty will also introduce a requirement for local partnerships to establish their local problem profile and produce a local strategy specifically aimed at preventing and reducing serious violence.

#### 6.5 Integrated Offender Management

Established in 2008, knowledge and expertise of Police, Probation, Prison and Recovery Workers came together to work effectively with the most prolific offenders involved in committing serious acquisitive crime, developing specific pathways to create independence and sustain their non-offending behaviour. In 2020, The PCC commissioned an external review of the Integrated Offender Management model for Avon and Somerset with an aim to providing some evidence and recommendations for making improvements. The review had a number of recommendations, including that a more localised model of integrated offender management should be explored, bringing together local services to respond more effectively to the needs of offenders. It also suggested that the cohort of offenders who are eligible for the programme should be revised. The Safer Somerset Partnership has agreed to explore a localised model, with work commencing in 2021.

#### 6.6 Revised Plan

In the coming year, the Partnership will need to review its Community Safety profile and refresh its Community Safety Plan ready to go live from April 2022. Cooperation of all participating agencies and Statutory partners will be essential and also, consultation with local communities to make sure that the Partnership's activities reflect their needs will be equally important.